Final Report of the Boston University Student Task Force on LGBTQIA+ Students

7 November 2022

Executive Summary

We are a United Front of passionate student activists dedicated to creating a future defined by a culture of authenticity: a culture where all people are embraced as who they are and empowered to invite the challenge of personal development. Higher education is a privilege that revolutionizes the process of individual growth by inspiring people to eagerly seek the endless horizon of possibilities. Thus, we begin our journey from the very institution that instilled within us the unyielding desire to learn, grow, and create our future.

In Spring 2022, we actualized a Student Task Force to assess the climate for LGBTQIA+ students and identify systemic areas of concern. We conducted a comprehensive climate survey to learn more about the LGBTQIA+ BU student experience, compared the inclusive practices at 46 peer and peer+ institutions, and interviewed key stakeholders in LGBTQIA+ student inclusion. Our research reveals that while BU has made strides toward implementing inclusive practices, much more can and should be done to support LGBTQIA+ students, especially those who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (QTBIPOC) and transgender, gender non-conforming, and intersex (TGNCI). We put forward this report in an endeavor to encapsulate the complex and multi-faceted role that BU plays in supporting LGBTQIA+ students—not just academically, but in every aspect of their lives.

This report addresses two key themes: I. Improving LGBTQIA+ visibility, communication, and community and II. Making the LGBTQIA+ student experience more equitable and inclusive. We make 16 recommendations addressing multiple structures, systems, and processes, including establishing a professionally-staffed LGBTQIA+ student resource center and website, enhancing training opportunities, and creating more inclusive and accessible Housing policies. We strongly believe that implementing our recommendations will set BU on a path toward achieving its 2030 Strategic Plan and continuing its ascent as a world-leading research university.

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1 This report contains mentions of the following: Ableism, Abuse, AIDS, Anti-Blackness, Classism, Death, Discrimination, Estrangement & Disownment, Forced Outing, Harassment, Hate Speech, Homophobia, Indigenous Genocide, Medical Mistreatment, Mental Illness, Microaggressions, Misogyny, Murder, Police Brutality, Racism, Rape & Sexual Assault, Suicide, Transphobia, Violence
Table of Contents

Membership and Advisors of the Task Force on LGBTQIA+ Students  3
Recommendations in Brief  4
Charge and Task Force Process  6
Improving LGBTQIA+ Student Inclusion at BU Recommendations In Depth  8
  Theme I. Visibility, Communication, Community  8
  Theme II. Equitable And Inclusive Student Experience  49
History and Context in Brief  74
Needs Assessment Conducted with BU Students  76
  Online Climate Survey  76
  Analyses  78
LGBTQIA+ Inclusion Practices at Other Leading Universities  81
  Comparator Landscape Analyses  81
  Effective Practices for LGBTQIA+ Inclusion  88
Appendix 1. Anonymous online climate survey questions  91
Appendix 2. Comments from BU students regarding LGBTQIA+ resources at BU  92
Appendix 3. Comments from BU Students from online climate survey open-ended questions about their experiences  95
Appendix 4. Anonymous online all-gender bathroom survey  108
Appendix 5. Historical Context  112
Appendix 6. Reflections  120
Appendix 7. Glossary  123
Membership and Advisors of the Task Force on LGBTQIA+ Students

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RECOMMENDATIONS IN BRIEF

THEME I. VISIBILITY, COMMUNICATION, COMMUNITY

R1. Establish a professionally-staffed LGBTQIA+ Student Resource Center.

R2. Create and maintain a centralized, dynamic LGBTQIA+ at BU website.

R3. Build an inclusive campus climate by providing intersectional education, training, and resource materials focused on LGBTQIA+ identities.

R4. Participate in external and internal programs to evaluate, inform, and publicize BU's inclusive practices.

R5. Further develop and apply inclusive communication guidelines.

R6. Invest in, value, and promote LGBTQIA+ scholars, scholarship, and teaching.

R7. Report, recognize, and reward service to BU's LGBTQIA+ community.

R8. Commit to inclusion by renaming Silber Way, Myles Standish Hall, and Yawkey Center for Student Services.

THEME II. EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

R9. Housing: Amend Gender-Neutral Housing and Gender-Affirming Housing to be more inclusive of and accessible to transgender, gender non-conforming, and intersex (TGNCI) students.

R10. Campus Planning & Operations: Create additional all-gender bathrooms across BU and increase their accessibility.

R11. Office of the University Registrar: Establish a simple, streamlined process for indicating names, gender identity, and pronouns across all of BU's systems and define clear rationale for collecting and sharing this information.

R12. Student Health Services – Gender-Affirming Healthcare: Amend BU's Gender-Affirming Healthcare services to provide additional services and more inclusive, affirming care.

R13. Student Health Services – Behavioral Medicine: Provide additional mental health resources for LGBTQIA+ students.
**R14. Orientation:** Take steps to ensure incoming LGBTQIA+ students feel welcome as soon as they arrive at BU.

**R15. Center for Career Development:** Provide tailored career services to help LGBTQIA+ students successfully compete in academic and professional job markets and thrive after graduation.

**R16. Alumni & Friends:** Increase engagement and networking opportunities among LGBTQIA+ alums.
CHARGE AND TASK FORCE PROCESS

In 2018, BU charged a Task Force on LGBTQIA+ Faculty and Staff with facilitating University-wide discussions and making recommendations for how BU can accelerate its progress to becoming more inclusive for LGBTQIA+ faculty and staff. A notable outcome of this report was the creation of BU's LGBTQIA+ Center for Faculty & Staff.

Just as there are unique issues pertaining to LGBTQIA+ faculty and staff that deserve progress and attention, just is the case for LGBTQIA+ students. Though components of the 2018 Task Force's Final Report address the LGBTQIA+ student experience, we believe that the lack of student-focused inquiry ultimately meant a lack of progress toward LGBTQIA+ student inclusion at BU.

In March 2022, students Christa Rose, Kris Berg, and Michael Arellano met with 2018 Task Force members to learn more about the processes, barriers, and inspiration that drove their Final Report. This discussion inspired us to create our own Task Force: by students, for students.

Due to the absence of an official group at BU focused on evaluating and addressing the climate for LGBTQIA+ students, we took charge to ensure that BU's LGBTQIA+ student community receives the visibility, attention, and intentionality it deserves.

We developed a diverse team to push the traditional disciplinary boundaries of collaborative problem-solving and strategic inquiry and create novel solutions that address the unique challenges facing LGBTQIA+ students.

Specifically, our goals were to recommend ways for BU to:

1. Improve the quality of life for LGBTQIA+ students in environments, including but not limited to: classrooms, student organizations, campus healthcare, and interactions with faculty, staff, administrators, and peers
2. Foster holistic inclusiveness for LGBTQIA+ students, especially those with intersecting marginalized identities
3. Better identify and address institutional gaps in LGBTQIA+ student support

To demonstrate the vibrant and valuable members of BU's LGBTQIA+ student community, we developed an anonymous, comprehensive online climate survey composed of questions that allowed us to understand the experiences of 156
students. We also released an online survey regarding the availability and accessibility of all-gender bathrooms on campus.

**To investigate the availability of resources for BU’s LGBTQIA+ student community,** we conducted two comparator landscape analyses of 46 peer and peer+ institutions to understand their areas of excellence and determine where BU has the opportunity to progress or lead. We also met individually with the professional LGBTQIA+ support staff at six peer and peer+ institutions which excel in providing LGBTQIA+ student support to discuss the efforts, processes, and barriers involved in advancing LGBTQIA+ student excellence.

**To foster visibility and ensure the BU community is aware of the current climate for BU’s LGBTQIA+ student community,** we will publicly share this report in its entirety. Our goal is to collaborate with BU administration and various departments at every step to make concrete, meaningful progress that will benefit not just all current and future LGBTQIA+ students but the entire BU community and beyond.
IMPROVING LGBTQIA+ STUDENT INCLUSION AT BU
RECOMMENDATIONS IN DEPTH

We present our recommendations organized into themes, including context, rationale, and supporting evidence for each recommendation. Our recommendations center the needs and experiences of LGBTQIA+ undergraduate and graduate BU students.

THEME I. VISIBILITY, COMMUNICATION, COMMUNITY

Comprehensive, representative data on the LGBTQIA+ community is limited. BU's Analytical Services & Institutional Research does not currently collect comparative information on LGBTQIA+ identities. As a result, BU's diverse and vibrant LGBTQIA+ community remains largely hidden, both within BU and to prospective students. In our climate survey, students repeatedly commented that this invisibility is pervasive and interpreted it as indicating an unwelcoming and even hostile campus environment.

Despite a lack of data collected by BU on LGBTQIA+ student demographics, it is clear that there is a vast community of LGBTQIA+ students here: a community that is not currently receiving the resources they need and deserve to succeed.

LGBTQIA+ people have historically been denied sufficient resources, and those with additional intersecting marginalized identities—including QTBIPOC, TGNCI folks, people with disabilities, and people experiencing financial insecurity—are especially under-resourced at BU and beyond. Research shows that in addition to experiencing a lack of acceptance from the general campus community, LGBTQIA+ students often grapple with insufficient representation of their identities in University spaces, curricula, and policies. At BU specifically, the shortage of adequate LGBTQIA+ inclusivity training and community-building opportunities further perpetuates the neglect and invisibility of LGBTQIA+ students.

The recommendations in this theme aim to address these issues and ensure BU can successfully create an environment where all students can thrive academically, socially, physically, and emotionally.

The following recommendations are of the utmost importance and should be made urgent priorities by all relevant parties.
R1. Establish a professionally-staffed LGBTQIA+ Student Resource Center.

The number one priority of our Task Force is the hiring of professional LGBTQIA+ staff members who are specifically dedicated to supporting, empowering, and advocating for BU's LGBTQIA+ student community.

Our comparator landscape analysis found that while the vast majority (94%) of BU's peer and peer+ institutions have paid staff dedicated explicitly to LGBTQIA+ student support, BU is one of the three institutions that do not. Further, the vast majority (91%) of peer and peer+ institutions have a professionally-staffed, student-inclusive LGBTQIA+ resource center, and BU is one of the four that do not. **BU is also the only institution evaluated that offers a professionally-staffed LGBTQIA+ center that is not student-centered.**

Need for a Resource Center

We believe that BU’s current initiatives to better support LGBTQIA+ faculty and staff are imperative. However, our data signals that direct, identity-based support provided to LGBTQIA+ faculty and staff—assumed by many BU administrators to have a positive “trickle-down” effect on improving the quality of student life—is not an adequate substitute for direct LGBTQIA+ student support services. **Thus, we want to emphasize the importance of providing direct support for all LGBTQIA+ BU community members.**

LGBTQIA+ support is not only essential but life-saving. The Trevor Project’s 2022 National Survey found that LGBTQIA+ youth (ages 13-24)—who are at significantly higher risk than their peers of experiencing violence, harassment, and suicidality—are less likely to attempt or consider attempting suicide when provided with accessible and affirming LGBTQIA+ support resources. Further, a study published by the American Psychological Association reveals that the presence of LGBTQIA+ university resource centers is correlated with lower levels of discrimination, less distress, and increased self-acceptance among LGBTQIA+ college students.

With no BU staff whose explicit role is to provide LGBTQIA+ student support, ensuring the sustainable and effective provision of services is difficult. Further, the absence of specific LGBTQIA+ student support resources leads to confusion among LGBTQIA+ students about where to access support. Faculty and staff members
have also expressed confusion about where to refer students in need, especially as the LGBTQIA+ Center for Faculty & Staff is specifically dedicated to LGBTQIA+ faculty and staff support.

We appreciate that BU has made efforts to increase student engagement, including among LGBTQIA+ students. For example, in June 2019, the DOS Office hired a Director of Student Outreach and Engagement, a role dedicated to improving student engagement and promoting the wellbeing of different identities, including of marginalized communities. This Director’s current initiatives include creating a mentorship program, student network affinity spaces, and a monthly Queer Student Leader Consortium. However, similar to other student-support roles at BU, this role is not specific to providing consistent LGBTQIA+ student support services in a way that exists at most of BU’s peer and peer+ institutions evaluated.

In the absence of professional support staff, LGBTQIA+ student organizations have had to contend with a considerable service burden to provide support, resources, and programming for LGBTQIA+ students. In fact, our climate survey revealed that a significant number of students are only familiar with the resources that student organizations provide rather than any formal University-wide resources.

Student activists explained the intense physical and mental strain of dedicating 40+ hours of weekly unpaid labor to provide LGBTQIA+ peer support. These student leaders have experienced high rates of burnout due to lack of support, absence of sensitivity and conflict resolution training, and uncompensated labor, all while balancing other aspects of student life, such as their own experiences of being a marginalized student.

Despite student activists’ dedication, they have received little to no administrative support or recognition. Combined with these issues are the fundamental realities of the lack of longevity and continuity due to 4-year student turnover and varying quality and availability of resources due to changes in student leadership.

Though the work of student organizations is critical to creating a thriving campus community, we want to emphasize that relying solely on the unpaid labor of students, faculty, and staff to provide LGBTQIA+ student support is a dangerously exploitative and ultimately unsustainable practice.

It is standard practice to direct LGBTQIA+ students to the Dean of Students (DOS) Office for professional support and to discuss LGBTQIA+ inclusion at BU. However,
our climate survey indicates widespread patterns of failure of this Office to adequately address LGBTQIA+ students’ concerns.

The DOS Office—particularly the Dean of Students, to whom students are often specifically directed—appears to continuously treat LGBTQIA+ students’ concerns as idiosyncratic rather than systemic. Students also reported a perceived lack of cultural competence among the DOS Office’s staff, often manifested in one-dimensional, monolithic views of LGBTQIA+ identities. This is unsurprising, given that these staff members are not required to undergo LGBTQIA+ inclusivity training.

In addition, students repeatedly expressed concerns about the lack of diverse LGBTQIA+ representation in the DOS Office and the centering of staff members who are cisgender, white, and queer, with little to no representation of QTBIPOC and TGNCI identities (which is also a larger, University-wide issue).

Students have shared with us their experience of bringing a concern to the DOS Office and then being shuffled from department to department to have their concern appropriately addressed. However, students have often given up on seeking support after being consistently redirected, sometimes even back to where they first made their report. Given that direct, specific LGBTQIA+ student support is not prescribed in any current BU role, departments or employees often inform students that they are not the right place to bring their concern.

LGBTQIA+ student activists also shared concerns about receiving consistent pushback and an overall lack of support from BU’s administration—namely, DOS Office staff—for at least the past five years. For example, student activists shared with us that when asking the DOS Office for support in sharing more LGBTQIA+ resources and creating a centralized website for LGBTQIA+ support resources, they were told that this would be “favoritism.”

Overall, our findings indicate that the DOS Office has historically been unreceptive to LGBTQIA+ student advocacy efforts. Often, students are pacified by being told that change is coming soon or that the issue is something they are already working on, but there appears to be little to no progress made after years of follow-up. This pattern continues until students graduate or can no longer continue advocating due to burnout.
We believe that a student response to our climate survey aptly describes a widespread experience that LGBTQIA+ students have with DOS:

“Bringing a concern regarding LGBTQ+ inclusivity to BU administration/Dean of Students always goes a little something like this: ‘Wow, we did not know this was an issue that has existed for decades. This is the first time someone is coming to us about this. We hear you and we should meet again in a month, even though we will have made no progress by then. We just want to placate you and give you the illusion that we are working on this issue until you get burnt out and do not have the energy to keep following up asking for updates, or until you graduate.’ You then soon find out that other students brought the same or very similar concerns to them, and received the exact same response.”

An additional concern regarding the DOS Office is that there appears to be a lack of a centralized documentation system regarding student concerns brought to their Office. In conducting interviews with BU staff members to learn about reporting measures at BU, we discovered that student discrimination complaints reported directly to the DOS are sometimes handled “in-office” rather than forwarded to the Office of Judicial Affairs (OJA) or the Equal Opportunity Office (EOO) depending on context. However, we could not find evidence of official policies or procedures for documenting such reports.

Further, we could not find evidence of how the Dean of Students determines which student complaints are forwarded to the aforementioned investigative resources. Given that LGBTQIA+ identities are currently protected under federal Title IX Policy, we believe that reports of LGBTQIA+ discrimination should always be forwarded to the Office of Equal Opportunity for review rather than handled “in-office” by the Dean of Students. As one student noted in our climate survey, their report of experiencing transgender discrimination to the Dean of Students went unaddressed, but when they later reported the same incident to EOO, the incident was found to be a potential Title IX violation.

If student reports of discrimination are not documented in a centralized location and are left to the discretion of individual staff members, we are concerned that BU may be unable to accurately identify and address individual incidents of misconduct and discrimination, as well as broader areas of systemic concern.

Another place that LGBTQIA+ students are often directed to for support is the Howard Thurman Center for Common Ground (HTC). While the HTC has been a
supportive space for many LGBTQIA+ students, especially QTBIPOC students, it cannot fulfill the responsibilities of an entire center dedicated to LGBTQIA+ students specifically.

The HTC is an incredible space for programming and dialogue about identity-related topics. However, it does not have the support, infrastructure, or bandwidth to provide resources, counsel, or mentorship tailored to specific communities. Currently, HTC staff only have the capacity to host community conversations that encourage students to think about and discuss various topics but not to facilitate ongoing dialogue that should happen as a follow-up to those initial conversations.

There is significant discourse regarding whether broad, non-specific community centers offer a suitable replacement for specific, identity-based centers in supporting marginalized students. Our findings indicate that while the former can certainly be effective by providing engaging spaces to have civil discourse and create meaningful, shared experiences, centers for everyone—regardless of identity—perpetuates invisibility of marginalized students who need and deserve direct, tailored support. Thus, an identity-based LGBTQIA+ Student Resource Center is necessary to effectively and comprehensively address the gaps in support provided to LGBTQIA+ students.

It is essential to dispel the myth that identity-based centers separate or create a divide between communities. Rather, they exist in response to the divisions already present on campus that leave students with marginalized identities without a sense of community or a safe space to be themselves and access resources.

The unparalleled success of the Newbury Center—a center for first-generation students that recognizes and embraces intersectionality—proves that identity-based centers are vital and profoundly impact BU students' lives. Newbury Center Director Maria Dykema Erb explained to our Task Force the impact this Center has had on first-generation students:

“By having a university-wide, centralized student identity center that focuses on the first-generation student experience, the Newbury Center has been successful in building a tight-knit community of support in less than 2 years since its founding. The benefits of having dedicated full-time professional staff, operational funds, and space has allowed for our first-generation students to focus on being students and not have to figure out their own identity.
development, create their own educational and social programming, and navigate barriers and challenges on their own. The Newbury Center has demonstrated best practices of how an institution can provide holistic support and not place the burden directly on the shoulders of a marginalized student group, in this case, first-generation undergraduate, graduate, and professional students.”

**BU Hillel** is another thriving identity-based center that supports students by empowering them to “ignite their Jewish identity, activate community, and engage the world around them.” BU Hillel is also a great example of how identity-based centers can center marginalized identities while still engaging folks who do not share that identity.

Importantly, identity-based centers provide an opportunity for students to safely discover their identities before emerging into greater conversations and community in a place like the HTC. As the HTC acknowledges on its website, Dr. Howard Thurman believed the search for common ground is a two-fold journey: the first step is self-exploration, and the second is community building. BU should follow these steps and first create a space where LGBTQIA+ students can—as Dr. Thurman explains—“go deep down inside [themselves], really know who [they] are and are secure in who [they] are.” Once this happens, LGBTQIA+ students “can find [themselves] in every other human being” and create meaningful, shared experiences.

Thus, **we strongly recommend that BU create an LGBTQIA+ Student Resource Center** where current LGBTQIA+ students can receive resources and support and engage in intellectual exchange, professional development, scholarship, and community-building.

**Creation of a Center**

Given that BU’s existing resources are not specific to LGBTQIA+ student support services, we do not believe this Center should be expanded from or folded into any existing centers, departments, offices, or student organizations on campus. However, the proposed Center should collaborate closely with those whose missions and values align. It is essential that existing student organizations maintain their autonomy and ability to be entirely student-led and that the proposed Center serves as a support resource for these organizations. This is the
case at numerous peer and peer+ institutions, including Harvard University and Tufts University.

If the Center fulfills the role of a professional resource that can help LGBTQIA+ students navigate any hardships that arise, this will help alleviate the service burden that exists on identity-based student organizations and allow them to focus on community-building, identity exploration, and creating peer support networks.

The following is our proposed structure for an LGBTQIA+ Student Resource Center:

a. **Support Services**

We recommend that BU emulate the holistic support services of their peer and peer+ institutions, including but not limited to Tufts University’s LGBT Center, Harvard University’s Office of BGLTQ Student Life, The University of Pennsylvania’s LGBT Center, The Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s LBGTQ+ Center, and Northeastern University’s LGBTQA Center.

As such, we recommend that this proposed Center provide services, including but not limited to:

- Assistance connecting students to culturally-competent support resources on and off campus (including mental health, sexual health, financial, housing, food, etc.)
- Guidance and financial assistance with student-led LGBTQIA+ resources and initiatives, such as the Queer Activist Collective’s Gender-Affirming Product Program
- An emergency fund to support LGBTQ+ students needing resources pertaining to or impacted by their LGBTQIA+ identity (including funding for food, mental health resources, gender-affirming care, wellness and hygiene supplies, etc.)
- Emergency short-term tuition loans for students whose families have suddenly withdrawn funding from their education (see UCLA for a model)
- Support of LGBTQIA+ students in need of emergency housing
- Assistance navigating reporting instances of discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation
- Educational workshops for students (in collaboration with the LGBTQIA+ Center for Faculty & Staff and BU Diversity & Inclusion)
- Educational and allyship LGBTQIA+ resources and toolkits accessible via the proposed centralized website (see R2)
- A relaxed physical space for students to hang out, study, and meet LGBTQIA+ and allied peers
- A community food pantry
- A library with a relevant selection of novels, textbooks, films, manuscripts, archives, and other items
- Mentorship opportunities in collaboration with the LGBTQIA+ Faculty & Staff Center and Dean of Students Office
- Travel advising for international LGBTQIA+ students
- Drop-in hours for QTBIPOC students
- Drop-in hours for graduate and professional students
- Signature programming

Unfortunately, institutions that explicitly promote diversity and inclusion in their mission statements often fall short when it comes to providing resources and funding to efforts on campus that directly support that aspect of the institution's mission. Thus, in order to effectively provide these services, BU must provide this Center with the resources (especially financial and staff support) needed to do so.

**b. Advocacy**

We recommend that one of the foremost priorities of the proposed Center be advocacy for LGBTQIA+ students. This Center—particularly the Center Director—should be heavily involved in student advocacy, including helping address student concerns and engaging in long-term policy change as needed to ensure that BU is in full compliance with its nondiscrimination and equal opportunity policies, as well as fully embodying University values.

In every interview with the directors of LGBTQIA+ centers at BU's peer and peer+ institutions, the importance of having staff consistently engaged in student advocacy and policy change was emphasized. Many interviewees also mentioned that engaging in advocacy and systemic policy change was one of the primary responsibilities of their respective center's director, while other team members were more focused on providing direct support services and programming.

We recommend that the proposed Center take a holistic approach and advocate for students on an individual and systemic level. An example of...
individual advocacy is working with a student struggling to access safe, affordable, and affirming housing on campus. An example of advocating on a larger scale is reviewing the current BU Housing policies and working with the Housing Department and other necessary stakeholders to address any policy-level barriers to access for LGBTQIA+ students.

To create a culture of belonging, it is critical to address the root causes of inequitable student experiences on a systemic level to prevent harm from being caused to LGBTQIA+ students rather than solely responding to individual students who have reported experiencing harm.

Additionally, we recommend that the Center's Director be consulted and updated on any initiatives across the University that relate to or significantly impact the lives of LGBTQIA+ students. For transparency, the Director should then share all information and updates about these initiatives with LGBTQIA+ students through the Center's weekly newsletter.

Currently, there is a widespread lack of transparency at BU when it comes to decision-making processes. Often, LGBTQIA+ students are left out of discussions on decisions that would drastically impact their lives while at BU. As mentioned previously, the vague “change is coming” response many students receive in response to advocacy is ineffective, and it would better serve BU to be clear about inclusivity efforts that are actually being made.

We also recommend that BU be transparent about changes that are implemented as a result of student advocacy. So often, student activists are the impetus for changes that drastically improve the climate and culture of the University, yet there is no acknowledgment or appreciation of this. It is incredibly discouraging for marginalized students to shoulder a service burden and have their labor co-opted by others.

Additionally, it is essential that the proposed Center does not speak on behalf of LGBTQIA+ students. Rather, it should let student voices be heard and give students agency to be a part of conversations on LGBTQIA+-related issues and initiatives across the University.

It should not be the sole responsibility of the proposed Center to make efforts to ensure BU is inclusive and welcoming of LGBTQIA+ students, as all
departments, offices, and centers across BU are responsible for creating the University's climate and culture.

For example, the Division of Student Affairs should approach all efforts through the lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion and should not rely on a singular center to do all of the work to foster inclusion and a sense of belonging for marginalized students. As BU works to create a more centralized, interconnected, and equitable campus, all University resources must collaborate and support each other in their endeavors to promote inclusivity.

c. Programming

Our climate survey indicates that a majority of students would like to see regular LGBTQIA+ programming provided by the University. Currently, the only source of regular, student-centered LGBTQIA+ programming is provided by LGBTQIA+ student organizations, but the quality and availability of this programming vary greatly depending on student capacity and capability.

Student activists noted that the lack of LGBTQIA+ programming efforts by the University places an unreasonable burden upon them to offer regular programming. For example, former leaders of the Queer Activist Collective hosted LGBTQIA+ student-centered programming between one to six times weekly from 2020 to 2022 with event attendance exceeding 300 students on numerous occasions.

While we appreciate that some programming hosted by the LGBTQIA+ Center for Faculty & Staff is open to students, these are not student-centered programs. As such, we recommend that the proposed Center offer student-centered programming that provides opportunities for students to build community with one another. Peer and peer+ programming models include Northeastern University, the University of Pennsylvania, and Tufts University.

While these efforts should be led by full-time, paid staff, there must be continual input from students on the type of programming they would like to see.
We recommend that the LGBTQIA+ Student Resource Center organize and allocate funding toward signature student-focused programming such as:

- Intracommunity affinity groups (e.g., QTBIPOC, TGNCI folks, Aromantic & Asexual folks, LGBTQIA+ students with disabilities)
- **Lavender Ceremony** (in collaboration with the LGBTQIA+ Faculty & Staff Community Network, Queer Activist Collective, and the LGBTQIA+ Center for Faculty & Staff)
- LGBTQIA+ student Orientation sessions (in collaboration with BU Orientation)
- Educational and social events that recognize LGBTQIA+ commemorative days, weeks, and months, including but not limited to:
  - Transgender Day of Remembrance
  - Transgender Awareness Week
  - LGBTQIA+ History Month
  - Campus Pride Month
  - Coming Out Day
  - World AIDS Day

We recommend that the LGBTQIA+ Student Resource Center especially support ongoing programming by student organizations through collaborations, financial assistance when appropriate, and advertising assistance.

As our findings indicate a centering of the undergraduate student experience and even fewer opportunities for LGBTQIA+ graduate student community-building at BU, **we recommend that the proposed Center’s also have specific programming for graduate students.**

To ensure visibility of programming and services offered, **we recommend that the proposed Center send weekly newsletters** regarding upcoming programming, resources, and other information that interests LGBTQIA+ students.

Lastly, it is essential for the proposed Center to collaborate with departments, offices, centers, and student organizations across BU to ensure that programming is as engaging and intersectional as possible.

d. **Staffing**
To ensure the efficacy and fidelity of LGBTQIA+ student support services, we find it essential to build a **team** of staff members who are welcoming, accessible, and consistently present for students. In every interview with the directors of LGBTQIA+ centers at BU's peer and peer+ institutions, the importance of creating a team of paid staff for LGBTQIA+ support, rather than an individual staff member, was stressed. Further, several interviewees noted that it would be impractical and ineffective to expect a singular staff member to support an enormously diverse population of over 36,000 BU students.

In order to provide adequate support to a **rapidly-growing** LGBTQIA+ student population, we recommend that BU turn toward existing staffing models for the proposed LGBTQIA+ Student Resource Center. Great models include the Newbury Center, Howard Thurman Center, and LGBTQIA+ Center for Faculty & Staff. While the LGBTQIA+ Center for Faculty & Staff exclusively employs graduate students, we recommend that the LGBTQIA+ Student Resource Center provide employment opportunities to undergraduate and graduate students to better represent the LGBTQIA+ BU student population.

It is crucial for students to be involved in the creation of this team. Therefore, we recommend that BU collaborate with LGBTQIA+ faculty, staff, students, and members of our Task Force to determine each staff member’s role descriptions, responsibilities, and qualifications.

To expedite these efforts, we created a **Staffing Ladder** which includes role descriptions, essential functions, and qualifications. This staffing ladder is modeled after the staffing structure of Tufts University’s LGBT Center, Harvard University’s Office of BGLTQ Student Life, Princeton University’s LGBTQIA+ Center, BU’s LGBTQIA+ Center for Faculty & Staff, and BU’s Newbury Center.

Additionally, we recommend that BU **highly consider intersectionality when hiring** and recognize the importance of hiring staff with extensive experience working with underrepresented populations in the LGBTQIA+ community, especially QTBIPOC. Our findings indicate a recurring theme of LGBTQIA+ students seeking more intersectional support services and feeling unsupported by current resources which center cisgender and white LGBTQIA+ individuals. Especially given BU’s **history** of centering cisgender
and white LGBTQIA+ individuals in visibility and support campaigns, we find it necessary to prioritize hiring staff with direct and firsthand insight into the experiences and challenges that QTBIPOC face.

We recommend that BU demonstrate continuous, concerted efforts to provide a welcoming and supportive place for multiply marginalized and underrepresented individuals to work. A culture of support and belonging is essential to ensure that the LGBTQIA+ Student Resource Center staff can efficiently fulfill all their prescribed responsibilities and not experience burnout. This includes offering appropriate compensation, ensuring the Center has a full team, and accommodating accessibility needs such as needing to work from home.

We also recommend that BU provide access to professional support networks outside of BU (e.g., Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals and the NASPA Gender and Sexuality Knowledge Community). The respective Directors of BU’s LGBTQIA+ Center for Faculty & Staff and the Newbury Center are currently a part of these networks, as are several of the LGBTQIA+ Center Directors and Associate Directors whom we interviewed.

e. Timeline

Given the urgency of ensuring that students’ safety needs are being properly met, we recommend that BU prioritize the time-sensitive development of this Center. However, we also understand that creating the Center as we have proposed above involves significant strategic planning, budgeting, consultations, and labor. We also recognize the limited availability of physical space on campus. However, if there is not a suitable space for this Center at this time, it should not hinder the progress of the Center’s creation. As such, we would like to propose a 3-year timeline to ensure that continual progress is being made on this recommendation that is of utmost importance:

During fiscal year 2023:

- The budget for fiscal year 2024 is created and includes funding for the Director of the proposed LGBTQIA+ Student Resource Center.
- The job description, essential functions, and qualifications are created for the Director in collaboration with the LGBTQIA+ BU Student Task Force.
A search committee for the Director is formed and is composed of faculty, staff, students, and LGBTQIA+ BU Student Task Force members.

The search for a physical space for the proposed Center begins.

By the start of fiscal year 2024:
- The Director of the proposed Center is hired.
- The Director begins designing and implementing LGBTQIA+ Student Resource Center services, signature programming, and a budget for the 2025 fiscal year.
- A physical space for the Director is designated.
  - If ample space for the entire Center is not available at this time, suitable office spaces for staff are provided.

By the start of fiscal year 2025:
- The Assistant Director of the proposed Center is hired and provided an office space.
- The Program Coordinator of the proposed Center is hired and provided an office space.
- Student employees for the proposed Center are hired.

By the start of fiscal year 2026:
- The proposed Center has its own physical space that includes offices for Center staff and adequate programming, conference, and study/lounge space.

Naming of a Center

After significant consideration, we believe the “Combahee River Collective Center” would be the most appropriate name for this Center, given the values it should embody. As we hope for this Center to center those who have been marginalized in the LGBTQIA+ community and emphasize the importance of Black and antiracist queer feminism and leadership, it would be fitting to name it after one of Boston’s first intersectional social justice organizations. In addition, naming the Center after a historical activist organization is vital to framing the Center as both invested in preserving LGBTQIA+ history and intersectional community-building and activism.
A goal of the proposed LGBTQIA+ Student Resource Center should be to create inclusive practices and support resources that center those most marginalized and underrepresented in higher education. The Combahee River Collective believes that “If Black women were free, it would mean that everyone else would have to be free since our freedom would necessitate the destruction of all the systems of oppression.” If folks who experience multiple forms of oppression are centered in the fight against oppression, everyone will be liberated.

Further, the Combahee River Collective has numerous ties to Boston and BU specifically. One of its founding members, Margo Okazawa-Rey, is a distinguished BU alum. As such, pending the founders’ permission, we put forth the Combahee River Collective Center as an empowering and hopeful indicator of BU’s progress toward diversity, intersectional inclusion, and creating a vibrant and thriving community.

R2. Create and maintain a centralized, dynamic LGBTQIA+ at BU website.

The 2018 Task Force recommended that BU create a website for all BU community members, but the only existing centralized LGBTQIA+ website is for faculty and staff. Currently, students may access LGBTQIA+ resources on various pages of existing websites, including the DOS Office, Howard Thurman Center, and Student Health Services. However, these are not suitable replacements for a centralized and comprehensive LGBTQIA+ website. Further, some of these pages are not regularly updated, leading to confusion and a lack of access to necessary support.

There is no question of significant demand among LGBTQIA+ students at BU for LGBTQIA+ resources. Since 2019, LGBTQIA+ student leaders in the Queer Activist Collective have been addressing the demand for more visible LGBTQIA+ resources by creating and regularly updating 10+ comprehensive LGBTQIA+ resource guides. In the past two years, over 7,700 students have accessed these guides.

LGBTQIA+ student activists have tried to make these resources more publicly visible to the BU community. However, there is a significant gap between the institutional resources, legitimacy, and stability provided to BU employees, offices, and departments than those provided to students and student organizations.

In order to ensure fidelity and efficacy, we recommend that a professional LGBTQIA+ support staff member create and manage a centralized LGBTQIA+
student website (with extensive student input) to provide visibility to LGBTQIA+ resources and opportunities available to BU students. Further, we recommend that this resource be integrated into the official website for the proposed LGBTQIA+ Student Resource Center.

We suggest the following regularly-updated information be included on the website:

- **Resources (BU, Boston-area, and national)**
  - All resources contained in the guides created by the Queer Activist Collective
  - BU Out List
  - BU all-gender bathroom map
  - Coming out resources
  - Pages with identity-based resources for communities within the LGBTQIA+ community, including:
    - QTBIPOC students
    - TGNCI students
    - Students with disabilities
    - First-generation students
    - International students

- **“How to” Section***
  - How to indicate name, pronouns, and gender identity across BU’s systems
  - How to access Gender-Affirming Healthcare
  - How to access Gender-Neutral Housing
  - How to access emergency housing
  - How to report identity-based harm incidents

*The managers of this website must ensure the information in this section is updated semesterly to ensure accuracy.

- **Programming**
  - Calendar of BU, Boston-based, or national events that are of interest and accessible to LGBTQIA+ students

- **Get Involved**
  - Student organizations and initiatives
  - Job/internship opportunities
  - Volunteer opportunities
● Education
  ○ Information for folks questioning their identity
  ○ Glossary of terms
  ○ How to use pronouns and gender-inclusive language
  ○ Active ally toolkits
    ■ How to support LGBTQIA+ friends, peers, colleagues, and loved ones
    ■ How to actively support BU's LGBTQIA+ community
    ■ BU D&I Learning Toolkits
  
● About Us & Feedback
  ○ Introduction to staff members
  ○ An anonymous feedback form where students can recommend improvements or additions to the services offered by the Center
  ○ Appointment signup to schedule a meeting with staff

More information about best practices for LGBTQIA+ websites at universities is available in this section of this report.

We also recommend utilizing BU Spark! to create the website, as it would allow our Task Force and other BU students to provide input and remain involved in the design and development process.

Lastly, we second the 2018 Task Force’s recommendation that BU can add an “LGBTQIA+” tag to the BU Calendar submission page as a quick-to-implement mechanism to promote programming relevant to BU's LGBTQIA+ community. Currently, events can be tagged for “Diversity & Inclusion” or “Special Interest to Women,” but no LGBTQIA+ tag exists.

R3. Build an inclusive campus climate by providing intersectional education, training, and resource materials focused on LGBTQIA+ identities.

We appreciate that faculty, staff, and students across the University have invested in more training and educational opportunities about LGBTQIA+ identities. However, these efforts are often siloed and spearheaded by unpaid students or by individual departments.
Despite these valuable initiatives, LGBTQIA+ students continue to experience microaggressions, bias, and discrimination by faculty, staff, and students. A recurring concern in our climate survey is LGBTQIA+ students feeling unwelcome and unsafe and experiencing repeated instances of harassment and discrimination by BU faculty, staff, and peers. In addition, 132 out of 156 climate survey respondents (85%) want more comprehensive LGBTQIA+ training and education options for faculty, staff, and students.

Since the aforementioned training opportunities are optional and siloed, only some BU community members receive this essential information. However, it is clear from our data that more faculty, staff, and students can benefit from trainings in the interest of preventing harm caused to LGBTQIA+ students.

**It is our strong recommendation that BU provide more comprehensive LGBTQIA+ inclusivity training, education, and resource materials** focused on educating the BU community about LGBTQIA+ identities by doing the following:

a. **Incorporate LGBTQIA+ harassment prevention into existing Title IX training modules**

We appreciate that BU has taken numerous steps to more effectively prevent and respond to sexual misconduct, assault, and gender-based harassment. As noted by Provost Jean Morrison, BU is making necessary strides toward creating “proactive cultural change and the establishment of a positive and constructive welcoming environment, for women in particular.” However, we believe there is room for improvement in tackling gender-based harassment pertaining to LGBTQIA+ people, especially those who are TGNCI.

LGBTQIA+ people experience violence and harassment at disproportionately high rates, especially non-cisgender people. In a 2019 AAU climate survey on sexual assault and misconduct, 59% percent of TGQN (transgender women, transgender men, nonbinary/genderqueer, gender-questioning, or gender-not-listed) college students reported fearfulness and concern for their physical safety due to their gender identity or their perceived sexual orientation. Additionally, 65% of TGQN students reported experiencing harassing behavior since they first enrolled in college. These findings are also reinforced in our climate survey, with LGBTQIA+ BU students reporting that they have felt uncomfortable, feared for their safety, or experienced harassment from BU faculty, staff, and peers.
We appreciate that BU is expanding and improving its Sexual Misconduct training through EVERFI (now called Vector Solutions) with guidance from the Provost, the Committee on Sexual Assault & Harassment Prevention, and the EVERFI Steering Committee. However, our findings lead us to believe there are important opportunities to make these training options more comprehensive. As such, we recommend a more comprehensive overview of LGBTQIA+ identities—especially regarding Title IX policy, BU nondiscrimination policy, and BU’s cultural values—focusing specifically on LGBTQIA+ harassment prevention.

We understand there is significant discourse on mandating training. However, given that gender identity, sex, and sexual orientation are protected under Title IX and at the state, city, and institutional levels, we believe this is an important opportunity and a protective measure to ensure BU remains in compliance with policy requirements and University values of creating an equitable campus. Further, more comprehensive training will ensure that all faculty, staff, and students receive the knowledge required to comply with said policies and contribute to a safer campus climate for LGBTQIA+ students.

Harvard University’s eLearning course is an excellent model for creating a more comprehensive LGBTQIA+ sexual misconduct training, which is required for all students and employees. In an interview with Harvard’s Office for Gender Equity, they noted that these courses take a multi-pronged approach to discussing policy and resources, University values, and campus culture and climate. Their eLearning course was recently updated to include a more comprehensive understanding of LGBTQIA+ identities and scenarios involving LGBTQIA+ people, including gender-based harassment such as deadnaming and misgendering. Their course is also not meant to be a standalone training, but instead offer an introduction to set expectations of University values, with additional opportunities to engage in more in-depth discussions and education.

If BU lacks the staffing capacity and infrastructure to significantly alter its current Sexual Misconduct training, we recommend that BU collaborate with Vector Solutions or another suitable vendor to offer an additional, specific module on gender identity and sexual orientation inclusivity. While a more customizable training module is more effective and adaptable
to the specific needs of the BU community, this alternative would still help ensure that BU community members are receiving essential preventative education.

**b. Increase accessibility, variety, and incentives for LGBTQIA+ inclusivity trainings and workshops available for request by faculty, staff, and student employees**

We recommend that BU continue further investments into and assess the impact, efficacy, and visibility of current training options for faculty and staff.

The 2018 Task Force's [Final Report](#) noted significant interest among faculty and staff to undergo LGBTQIA+ training, but that training options were minimal. Like MIT’s [LBGTQ+ Services](#), we recommend that the LGBTQIA+ Center for Faculty & Staff partner with the Human Resources Department and BU Diversity & Inclusion to host monthly LGBTQIA+ inclusivity training sessions and provide more incentives for participating in these optional trainings.

To ensure maximum visibility and encourage participation, we recommend that the training organizers reach out to all BU employees and invite them to partake in training sessions, emphasizing why it is important to partake.

We also recommend that BU create incentives for participating in LGBTQIA+ inclusivity training. For LGBTQIA+ BU community members featured on BU’s [Out List](#), this could include an indicator on their profile that they have undergone continual training. For non-LGBTQIA+ BU community members, this could include the creation of an “Ally List,” similar in format to the Out List. Trainees could also receive a rainbow sticker, placard, or certificate to indicate their commitment. LGBTQIA+ students in our climate survey also noted they would like to see such visible indicators of allyship.

The Newbury Center offers an excellent model for such a resource: faculty and staff can complete the 3-part [Terrier F1RSTS Advocate Training](#) on supporting first-generation college students and then be provided with a placard and button and listed on the [Terrier F1RSTS Advocate Directory](#).
It is imperative that LGBTQIA+ inclusivity trainings cover not only basic terminology but also best practices for working with LGBTQIA+ faculty, staff, and students, including but not limited to:

- Using and sharing names and pronouns
- Using inclusive language
- Reframing perceptions of LGBTQIA+ people as intersectional, diverse, and multi-faceted
- Identifying and addressing instances of bias or discrimination
- Understanding the student support resources available at BU
- Learning about the unique and varied barriers LGBTQIA+ people face in academia
- Facilitating discussions on LGBTQIA+ topics and other sensitive issues in the classroom
- Practicing scenarios relating to implementing best practices for LGBTQIA+ support

We appreciate that the LGBTQIA+ Center for Faculty & Staff currently offers custom training options to departments and offices within BU and has been working with departments and offices such as the Human Resources Department and the Housing Department, the latter which is requiring ongoing departmental training on a semesterly basis. We recommend that all departments and offices utilize existing training opportunities until more accessible and varied training options are available.

We also recommend the LGBTQIA+ Center for Faculty & Staff provide opportunities for individual consultations, including an LGBTQIA+ accessibility audit, reviewing forms, documents, and syllabi, providing resource suggestions, and more.

We also want to emphasize the importance of implementing student feedback on these trainings, especially on trainings for student-facing departments and offices. LGBTQIA+ students have reported being repeatedly left out of decision-making processes that directly affect them, despite wanting to be involved. For a training to be practical, the organizers must have an accurate understanding of and insight into LGBTQIA+ students' experiences. Therefore, we recommend that any office, center, or department which develops LGBTQIA+ training hosts a focus group, survey, or another method to receive direct feedback from LGBTQIA+ students. There should also be compensation for providing this feedback.
c. Create LGBTQIA+ inclusivity trainings and workshops required for all student organization Executive Board members and available upon request by individual students

While it is crucial for employees to receive LGBTQIA+ inclusivity training, it is equally essential for students to receive this training to learn how to best support their LGBTQIA+ peers.

Students have reported a wide range of experiences relating to peer interactions in the classroom and student organizations: from feeling affirmed and supported to uncomfortable and unwelcome. In particular, the majority of LGBTQIA+ students expressed feeling very uncomfortable being “out” at Greek Life parties and events. Therefore, we recommend that the Student Activities Office (SAO) address these localized concerns to ensure that LGBTQIA+ students feel comfortable participating in the activities of all organizations under their purview.

To create a more supportive environment outside of SAO’s purview, we also recommend that the proposed LGBTQIA+ Student Resource Center work to create LGBTQIA+ inclusivity trainings and workshops that are regularly accessible to all students.

We recommend creating a paid student ambassador program within the proposed LGBTQIA+ Student Resource Center, where paid student ambassadors/employees provide intersectional LGBTQIA+ inclusivity training. Similar to Harvard University’s Diversity Trainings and Consultations, we recommend that topics include assessing organizational culture, building practices of inclusion, identity reflection, how to support first-year students from diverse backgrounds, and core diversity concepts. We also recommend focusing on culture change and best practices to ensure that student organizations comply with federal, state, and institutional policies and BU’s core values. We believe the existing BU SARP Ambassador Program is an effective peer training model to emulate.

Given that the SAO requires all student organizations to complete the SARP’s Step up Step in BU training, we recommend that LGBTQIA+ inclusivity training be required for all student organizations.
d. Create workshops and discussions open to the entire BU community on specific topics

In addition to the LGBTQIA+ training options mentioned above, we recommend that BU provide opportunities for deeper dialogue about topics that address specific communities within the LGBTQIA+ community and intersectionality. As the focus of BU ODI’s Learn More Series this year is LGBTQIA+ Identity & Experiences, multiple events are happening that provide the aforementioned opportunities, including “Queerfolk, Transfolk, Fatfolk, Blackfolk: Intersections of Queer and Black Identities” and “’A’ is for Asexual Liberation: Centering Ace & Aro Identities, Deconstructing Compulsory Sexuality, and Creating a Movement.” We recommend that programming like this continue beyond this year’s “annual theme” of LGBTQIA+ Identity & Experiences.

Additionally, while LGBTQIA+101 trainings are often geared toward allies who do not identify as LGBTQIA+, there must be educational opportunities for folks who are a part of the LGBTQIA+ community and want to practice intracommunity allyship. There is a pervasive misconception that LGBTQIA+ individuals cannot still be transphobic, racist, ableist, classist, etc. Thus, we recommend that educational opportunities discuss the marginalization within the margins, especially for QTBIPOC, TGNCI folks, folks with disabilities, and others who have additional intersecting marginalized identities.

There must also be opportunities for discussions about how folks can reconcile their marginalized identities with their privilege(s), as even the most marginalized folks at BU have the privilege of accessing higher education.

It is essential to note that just as the LGBTQIA+ community is not a monolith, neither are the marginalized populations within the LGBTQIA+ community. Therefore, as BU moves forward with implementing more inclusive practices and resources, it is essential to be mindful of the varied and multidimensional populations they serve and avoid making overgeneralizations or oversimplifications in identity-based support.

e. Create a University-wide reporting system for instances of identity-based harm
Currently, there is no formal way for BU community members to report instances of identity-based harm, including bias, microaggressions, and structural oppression. Such a system is necessary for instances of identity-based harm that are not harassment, discrimination, or sexual misconduct and thus would not qualify as Title IX misconduct.

According to BU Diversity & Inclusion, the process for students to report these instances is to contact the D&I team member at their school. If students want to discuss these instances with a confidential, impartial professional, they can contact the Office of the Ombuds. However, these conversations are informal and off the record. Many Institutions, including Harvard University, often have an Ombuds Office, Title IX Office, and a separate bias reporting system. Thus, we recommend that BU create a University-wide confidential reporting system for instances of identity-based harm. We also recommend that students have the opportunity to remain anonymous if they so choose.

With this, we recommend that BU create mechanisms for delivering a rapid response to incidents reported and visibly publicize how this response typically looks. This should include the formation of a collaborative team of trained professionals from across the University—including BU Diversity & Inclusion, Disability & Access Services, Residence Life, the Newbury Center, and our proposed LGBTQIA+ Student Resource Center—who would work together to determine the best way to address and respond to the incident. This team should also create accountability measures that may include dialogue about the harm caused and how to prevent it going forward, impact statements, restorative practices, and continuing conversations, education, and resources.

Additionally, while students can report incidents to BU’s Equal Opportunity Office anonymously, there does not appear to be a way for students to engage in anonymous follow-up dialogue. Thus, we recommend that BU create a way for students to disclose potential Title IX misconduct anonymously and still be able to communicate with a trained staff member to access resources. A great model for BU would be Harvard University’s Resource for Online Anonymous Disclosures (ROAD). The ROAD provides an online form managed by “an independent, third-party vendor who provides secure, anonymous reporting services.” As a result, Harvard’s Office for Gender Equity staff members can respond to disclosures with
R4. Participate in external and internal programs to evaluate, inform, and publicize BU’s inclusive practices.

External Programs

BU’s climate for LGBTQIA+ BU students has never been comprehensively measured. In fact, a driving factor of this Report is addressing the lack of comprehensive data about BU’s inclusive practices and current LGBTQIA+ student resources. Collecting accurate data on LGBTQIA+ inclusion, climate, and resources is an essential first step toward promoting transparent and inclusive practices. Although we are proud of our initiative for assuming the responsibility of learning, documenting, and engaging with the personal experiences of our peers, leaving this responsibility to students is not sustainable for the future.

As such, we second the 2018 Task Force’s recommendation that BU participate in external programs to evaluate, inform, and publicize their inclusive practices, including the Campus Pride Index. According to Campus Pride Index, such benchmarking tools serve as “overall indicators of institutional commitment to LGBTQ-inclusive policy, program and practice.”

Our comparator landscape analysis found that 40 (87%) of BU’s peer and peer+ institutions are listed on the Campus Pride Index, while BU is only one of 6 (13%) institutions that do not have a listing. Regular participation in benchmarking tools are critical for universities to meaningfully commit to improving the quality of campus life for LGBTQIA+ students.

We also second the recommendation of the 2018 Task Force to establish processes to collect data about campus climate metrics. Currently, BU does not collect comprehensive data on LGBTQIA+ students’ demographics and experiences or assess equity. Thus, analyzing the parity between LGBTQIA+ students and non-LGBTQIA+ students regarding resources, opportunities, and overall inclusivity is impossible. Broad, representative data is crucial for the University to identify areas of concern and opportunities for improvement.

We are thrilled that BU formed a working group in September 2022 to create BU’s first-ever campus-wide culture assessment. The Belonging & Culture Survey aims to
better “assess the sense of belonging and culture at the University for students, staff, and faculty and to identify successes and opportunities for improvement.” As such, **we strongly recommend that the Belonging & Culture Survey include specific questions** about LGBTQIA+ BU community members’ experiences and feedback about LGBTQIA+ inclusion, as well as LGBTQIA+ self-identification options to allow for the most accurate descriptions of LGBTQIA+ identities. For privacy and discretion, we also suggest that this survey allows for anonymous responses to ensure BU community members feel comfortable expressing themselves without the fear of being outed as LGBTQIA+.

It is essential that BU take all steps possible to ensure robust and representative feedback from BU community members. **Thus, we recommend that the Belonging & Culture Survey working group work to address potential lack of survey engagement** by providing incentives such as compensation, ensuring the privacy and anonymity of feedback received, and clearly explaining the purpose of the survey to prospective surveyees. **We also recommend that BU commit to data transparency by publicly releasing the Belonging & Culture Survey results and providing regular updates on how the results will inform necessary changes to BU’s climate.**

**Internal Programs**

In addition to participating in external evaluation programs, we recommend that BU engage in regular, internal evaluations of their inclusive practices by creating a standing University-wide Committee on LGBTQIA+ Affairs. Our Task Force’s comparator landscape analysis found that 24 of the 46 (52%) peer and peer+ institutions have a standing University-wide committee on LGBTQIA+ inclusion. An excellent model includes the UCLA Committee on LGBTQ Affairs, which is dedicated to assessing LGBTQIA+ campus climate and providing an annual report to UCLA’s administration on LGBTQIA+ inclusivity.

Furthermore, BU has also recently set a precedent by forming such a resource: the standing University-wide Committee on Sexual Assault & Harassment Prevention (CSAHP), which Provost Morrison charged in 2021. CSAHP was formed in response to activism by undergraduate student leaders who brought visibility to the infrastructural pitfalls present in BU’s efforts to prevent and respond to sexual violence. CSAHP is comprised of faculty, staff, postdocs, and students of all backgrounds who are charged with gathering data on BU’s climate, resources, and current efforts relating to sexual assault and harassment prevention. This
Committee will issue a report and set of recommendations each year to the University Provost.

We envision that a standing University-wide Committee on LGBTQIA+ Affairs would operate similarly to CSAHP by continually evaluating BU’s inclusive practices, gathering data on the perceived climate for LGBTQIA+ BU community members, and issuing a report and set of recommendations each year to the University Provost. Such a centralized Committee would not only make BU’s inclusive practices more effective and sustainable but would also bolster BU’s visibility as an institution that—as many of its peers have demonstrated—is actively committed to providing a safer and more welcoming environment to students, faculty, and staff of all marginalized gender identities and sexual orientations. Moreover, as BU’s LGBTQIA+ student community expands and its needs evolve, this Committee would ensure that students, faculty, and staff are directly involved in consistently implementing effective and inclusive practices.

Lastly, we recommend that BU establish data collection measures to track LGBTQIA+ student retention. According to the Campus Pride Index, LGBTQIA+ students are at higher risk of dropping out. Several LGBTQIA+ students in our climate survey reported that they took a medical leave of absence, transferred schools, or dropped out due to a perceived lack of LGBTQIA+ support and a welcoming environment at BU. We believe solutions to combat this problem begin with meaningful and consistent inquiry into the challenges LGBTQIA+ students face.

As the percentage of Gen Z individuals identifying as LGBTQIA+ continues to increase, so will the percentage of incoming and prospective LGBTQIA+ BU students. However, this is contingent on providing support resources and commitment to LGBTQIA+ inclusivity.

BU has a unique opportunity to lead in developing a diverse and attractive climate for LGBTQIA+ students. By gaining a comprehensive understanding of the LGBTQIA+ student experience, BU can better foster a positive environment for academic success and intellectual curiosity.

R5. Further develop and apply inclusive communication guidelines.

We recommend that BU remove heteronormative, cis-normative, and non-inclusive language from BU documents, official emails, and digital presence.
and replace it with language that demonstrates positive inclusion of LGBTQIA+ identities.

While BU Marketing & Communication has made progress in this effort by creating inclusive language guidelines, some of the guidelines provide misleading, inaccurate, and even harmful information. Recommendations on how to amend some of the current guidelines are below:

1. “The singular “they” is commonly used by people who are nonbinary, that is, they do not identify as male or female.”

Using “they” pronouns is not synonymous with being nonbinary. “They” pronouns are gender-neutral, and while many nonbinary folks do want to be referred to using “they” pronouns, many do not. Likewise, some individuals who do not identify as nonbinary also use “they” pronouns. It is misleading to imply that individuals who use “they” pronouns do not identify as male or female. Individuals who use “they” pronouns can identify with any sex or gender.

We recommend amending this guideline to say, “The singular “they” is a gender-neutral pronoun that individuals can use regardless of their gender identity or gender expression.”

2. “When writing about nonbinary and transgender students, faculty, and staff, ask the individuals which pronoun, and what name, to use.”

All individuals should be asked which pronouns and what name they would like used. It is not only nonbinary and transgender individuals with pronouns and names that they would like used for them.

First, one may not know the gender identity of the individual they are writing about and that individual may not wish to disclose that. It would be inappropriate to assume that someone identifies as nonbinary or transgender based on their gender expression.

Second, only asking nonbinary and transgender individuals their names and pronouns can be marginalizing. Normalizing those practices to include everyone reduces that marginalization.
Additionally, when writing about individuals, it is important to ask which pronouns and what name the individual would like used in your writing specifically. For some folks, pronouns and names may be context-dependent. For example, an individual may use different pronouns in public contexts than in private contexts due to safety concerns and comfort level.

**We recommend amending this guideline** to say, “Ask all students, faculty, and staff whom you are writing about which pronouns and what name to use.”

3. “The gender-neutral pronouns it and its are preferred when making reference to a storm, regardless of name.

The gender-neutral pronouns it and its are preferred when referring to ships and other vessels, rather than the traditional female pronouns she and her.”

It is trivializing to discuss pronouns for storms and ships after discussing pronouns for people. Using gender-neutral language and asking for an individual's pronouns is incredibly important and necessary and should be treated seriously. There is immense harm that can be caused if incorrect pronouns are used for an individual, and this is not the case for natural disasters, watercraft, or inanimate objects.

**We recommend clearly distinguishing pronoun usage guidelines for people from pronoun usage guidelines for objects and phenomena.**

4. “Avoid reference to gender unless it's relevant to the topic of the piece. If a person’s gender is noteworthy for a particular reason, use “man” or “woman” for nonclinical contexts, rather than ‘male’ or ‘female.’”

For both clinical and nonclinical contexts, gender and sex must be used appropriately and not interchangeably. Additionally, it is important not to use gender or sex when it is not relevant and to use the correct gender identity or sex when it is relevant.

This guideline is also exclusive of TGNCI identities and reinforces the gender binary of “men” and “women.”
There are several recent instances that highlight the need for this guideline to be amended:

As noted in a student response to our climate survey, President Brown’s June 2022 “Letter to the Community on the Supreme Court Decision on Roe v. Wade” is exclusive of TGNCI folks, as he uses the phrase “women’s reproductive rights.” Reproductive rights affect anyone who can become pregnant. As gender identity and sex are distinct, it is not only women who can become pregnant, and not all women can become pregnant.

Additionally, on October 20, 2022 in BU Today, the phrase “women’s health” is used in reference to breast cancer. As with reproductive rights, breast cancer can affect individuals of any gender identity. In fact, breast cancer can affect individuals of any sex as well.

The appropriate way to refer to the aforementioned issues is with the language “people who can become pregnant” and “people who can develop breast cancer.” Neither of these medical-related issues should be assigned to a particular gender identity.

We recommend amending this guideline to emphasize the importance of researching who is affected by the topic of the piece and whether it is relevant to mention the gender or sex of the population affected.

We recommend the addition of the following guidelines:

1. A guideline that explains the difference between sex and gender.

Specifically, this guideline should clarify that when documents request gender identity, “male” and “female” should not be listed as options. Male and female are sexes, not gender identities, and they should not be misrepresented as such. Ideally, all forms soliciting information about gender identity should have a “self-describe” option.

Additionally, this guideline should note that “transgender” should never be listed as a gender identity—it is an adjective that describes a person who does not identify as the gender they were assigned at birth. Further, options should never include “transgender man,” “transgender woman,” “man,” and
“woman.” It is incredibly invalidating to imply that a transgender man is not a
man or a transgender woman is not a woman. Again, “transgender” is an
adjective.

If a document must know whether someone identifies as transgender or
cisgender, it is imperative to include the options as such:

- Transgender man
- Transgender woman
- Cisgender man
- Cisgender woman

Please see recommendation R11 regarding collecting information about
whether a student identifies as transgender.

2. A guideline explaining that when asking for pronouns and names, it is
important not to use the phrasing “preferred pronouns” and “preferred
name.”

Using the word “preferred” implies that an individual's pronouns and name
are a preference, not a fact. In a matter of preference, two options exist that
are both viable, but if given the opportunity, one would be chosen over the
other. This implies that pronouns and names other than the ones specified
are acceptable to use, which is often not the case for folks.

Our final recommendation regarding inclusive communication guidelines is that BU
recognize that terms and definitions are constantly evolving and changing,
and guidelines must remain up-to-date. Therefore, we recommend that they be
reviewed (by internal and external reviewers) and updated annually.

R6. Invest in, value, and promote LGBTQIA+ scholars, scholarship,
and teaching.

There are numerous opportunities for BU to progress in offering diverse,
interdisciplinary scholarship in accordance with its 2030 Strategic Plan's pillar of
creating a “Vibrant Academic Experience.” Thus, we recommend that BU offer
more opportunities to engage with LGBTQIA+ scholars and scholarship, such
as the LGBTQIA+ Center for Faculty & Staff's Scholars Series.
To start, BU’s Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGS) Program’s status as a program, not a department, deprives WGS of dedicated tenure-line faculty and attendant research support. Currently, the program only has two faculty lines, both of which are non-tenure track, one administrative program coordinator, and a chair, who is tenured in a different department. While the two non-tenure line WGS faculty members are in leadership roles within the program, they receive limited research-related resources, have high teaching loads which further limits their capacities to pursue scholarship, and play no part in the hiring process for WGS affiliated tenure-line roles within other departments.

Due to the precarity and limitations of their positions compared to tenure-line faculty, WGS also is limited in their capacities to advocate for students in structurally meaningful ways. The WGS program does have a substantial amount of core and affiliated tenure-line faculty. However, they all have primary appointments in other departments, meaning they are less able to prioritize WGS teaching, research, and mentorship over their efforts in their home departments. Further, because most WGS courses are taught by tenure-line WGS-affiliated faculty from departments across the University, the WGS program is limited in its ability to control which WGS-affiliated courses are taught, by whom, and in what ways. Therefore, we recommend that BU provide WGS with the resources, institutional power, and autonomy it needs and deserves.

Additionally, because of the lack of tenure-line faculty and departmental status, undergraduate students do not have the opportunity to major in WGS, and graduate students only have the option for a certificate in WGS, not a degree. We recommend that students be given these opportunities, as it would enable students to develop an analytical framework for understanding how gender, sexuality, and intersectional inequalities shape everyday life.

We conducted a WGS comparator analysis of peer and peer+ institutions with three criteria: a department or program with dedicated tenure-line faculty, a WGS degree program, and WGS-related research centers or consortiums. Our analysis determined that BU is only one of four out of 46 institutions evaluated that does not meet any of the evaluated criteria, while the majority (87%) of BU’s peer and peer+ institutions offer more opportunities in gender and sexuality scholarship.

In addition to a WGS major, we recommend instituting an LGBTQIA+ Studies minor for students who want to focus specifically on LGBTQIA+ topics. The LGBTQ and Sexuality Studies Program at the University of Michigan provides a great
example of a minor that BU could offer. The University of Michigan also allows students to minor in Gender, Race, and Nation, which focuses on the intersections between gender, race/ethnicity, and gender. Topics of study include changing boundaries of race, gender, and nation, differential relations among nations, histories of imperialism, colonialism, and globalization, and postcolonial resistance and theory. We recommend that WGS consider a minor on this topic as well.

To provide students with a holistic and accurately representative course curriculum, we recommend that BU’s WGS program more explicitly signal which courses already center the intersectionality of race, gender, and sexuality and increase the number of courses that do. Additionally, we recommend that the WGS program add specific courses about the QTBIPOC community and its history, as well as the collective movements of QTBIPOC students who imagined and demanded alternative futures for themselves, their peers, and our campuses.

Once WGS is given the autonomy to do so, we recommend that they prioritize hiring QTBIPOC scholars to teach in the program. This would ensure that students feel accurately represented amidst WGS’ faculty and that more comprehensive perspectives and backgrounds can be cultivated within the program.

We additionally recommend that BU as a whole prioritize the hiring of LGBTQIA+ scholars (and particularly those who are QTBIPOC) and supporting LGBTQIA+ scholarship across the University, not just in WGS. Unfortunately, many students’ course of study does not allow them the opportunity to take a WGS class. However, all students deserve access and exposure to faculty expertise and research related to LGBTQIA+ issues.

Our last recommendation regarding LGBTQIA+ scholarship is that BU offer grants to students, faculty, and staff conducting research to build excellence in LGBTQIA+ scholarship at BU. Such a grant could be funded and administered by WGS once they are given the resources to do so.

R7. Report, recognize, and reward service to BU’s LGBTQIA+ community.

We recommend that BU honor and celebrate student leaders who have made outstanding contributions to the LGBTQIA+ community by offering annual
awards. Especially in the absence of LGBTQIA+ support resources and paid staff at BU dedicated to supporting LGBTQIA+ students, LGBTQIA+ and allied student leaders must contend with a significant service burden in order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their LGBTQIA+ peers.

A recurring theme in our climate survey is that student activists consistently perform extraordinary amounts of unpaid labor in service to BU’s LGBTQIA+ community and its allies. Indeed, the creation of this report is a prime example of such a phenomenon. Many student activists have also expressed the feeling that their efforts to provide LGBTQIA+ student support have been unrecognized or invalidated by BU administration. Thus, offering an award—ideally accompanied by a monetary prize—to recognize the incredible initiatives driven by student activists would be a meaningful way to celebrate these students and strengthen the relationship between LGBTQIA+ students and BU administration.

BU currently offers a variety of awards that recognize student commitment to service and creating community, such as the Susan K. Jackson Award, Bernard Kutner Award, Student Sustainability Leadership Award, Trotman Leadership Award, Scarlet Key Award, and more. Although there is a broad range of subjects for which awards are given out, no award for significant impact on the LGBTQIA+ community is given out. While WGS provides an annual award to students who have contributed to gender and sexuality studies through activism or academic achievement, this award is WGS-specific and not University-wide.

Awards that reward service to the LGBTQIA+ community exist at many of BU’s peer and peer+ institutions, including Brown University and the University of Maryland.

Examples of contributions that may make an individual a candidate for such an award include, but are not limited to:

- Improved campus climate or undergraduate experience for LGBTQIA+ community members
- Fostered collaborations among the diverse facets of BU’s LGBTQIA+ communities
- Promoted communication and collaboration between BU LGBTQIA+ communities and other non-LGBTQIA+ communities on campus
- Bridged the gap between LGBTQIA+ communities at BU and LGBTQIA+ communities in the greater Boston area
These awards could potentially be given out at **BU’s Lavender Ceremony**, an initiative started in 2022 by uncompensated students, faculty, and staff from the **Queer Activist Collective** and **LGBTQIA+ Faculty & Staff Community Network** to recognize the achievements of graduating LGBTQIA+ students. **We also recommend that more institutional support and resources be provided for Lavender Ceremony**; the service burden should not fall upon students to plan their own graduation celebration, nor on faculty and staff who are uncompensated and under-resourced to spearhead such an initiative. This should include **officially integrating the Ceremony into BU’s Commencement activities**, allocating adequate funding toward it, and compensating those who organize it. It is an incredible accomplishment for LGBTQIA+ students to attend college—let alone graduate—due to systemic barriers, and it is essential that BU recognize this.

Additionally, **we recommend that the Student Activities Office reinstate its Student Organization Excellence Awards** to recognize student organizations’ whose contributions positively impact the LGBTQIA+ community at BU.

The **Queer Activist Collective** ("Q") is an example of a student organization that has been at the forefront of providing direct LGBTQIA+ student support and community-building opportunities. Whether through initiatives like the **Gender-Affirming Product Program** or **Housing Inclusivity and Accessibility** initiative, hosting multiple events weekly, consolidating various **resources**, collaborating with the LGBTQIA+ Faculty & Staff Community Network to create **BU Pride**, the **Out List**, and **Lavender Ceremony**, or acting as a peer support system, Q has gone above and beyond to be an organization students can rely on for life-saving resources.

Another exemplary student organization is the **Black, Indigenous, People of Color Mental Health Collective** (BIPOC MHC), which was created from a successful student advocacy initiative that increased BIPOC representation in BU's Student Health Services and created more accessible BIPOC mental health resources for BU students. BIPOC MHC also collaborated with Q and Student Government’s Mental Health Committee to host a successful, intersectional **BIPOC Wellness Fair**, the first of its kind at BU.

Lastly, **we recommend that BU take steps to bring broader visibility to the experiences and achievements of LGBTQIA+ student activists**. This could include publishing all award recipients on our recommended LGBTQIA+ website and featuring recipients in BU Today articles. The recognized accomplishments can
also be added to BU’s LGBTQIA+ history archive, which the LGBTQIA+ Center for Faculty & Staff is currently working on.

**R8. Commit to inclusion by renaming Silber Way, Myles Standish Hall, and Yawkey Center for Student Services.**

We strongly recommend that BU acknowledge and address the past in order to move toward a more inclusive future.

As a public statement concerning diversity and inclusion, it is crucial to remove symbols and relics that do not reflect a culture of inclusion for LGBTQIA+ people. We recommend that BU look toward examples from other academic institutions—such as the University of Oregon, Princeton University, Georgetown University, and Yale University—that have renamed buildings on their campuses that were named after an individual with a racist past.

The 2018 Task Force recommended in their Final Report that BU consider changing the name of the Yawkey Student Services Building and Silber Way to affirm its commitment to fostering an inclusive environment. We additionally recommend BU consider changing the name of Myles Standish Hall.

On July 1, 2020, in a letter about renaming BU’s mascot, “Rhett,” President Brown stated that “it is reasonable for people to question why, at a university founded by abolitionists, we have a mascot nicknamed for a character in a film whose racist depictions are completely at odds with our own tradition. It is time to address this question.” By this logic, it is also reasonable to question why we have buildings and streets named after individuals whose racist, homophobic, and misogynistic actions perpetuate a culture of neglect and alienation of marginalized communities at BU.

We recommend that BU form a name-change committee modeled after the Mascot Committee. We believe that a committee with student and alum involvement, especially those with underrepresented identities, will be able to appropriately select a name that represents student and University values. We also recommend that this name-change committee be formed before the start of the 2023-2024 academic year and that the names be changed by the 2024-2025 academic year.

“Silber Way”
We second the recommendation of the 2018 Task Force for BU to collaborate with the City of Boston to rename Silber Way. While BU’s former President and Chancellor, John Silber, undoubtedly made numerous contributions toward increasing BU’s financial and academic standing, he caused immeasurable harm to marginalized populations at BU and beyond. Through interviews with BU community members present during the “Silber era” and collecting historical research, we were disturbed by findings that Silber was—both in rhetoric and behavior—racist, misogynistic, homophobic, transphobic, and ableist. Our findings also indicate that Silber created a hostile and abusive work environment, encouraged police brutality, and violated students’ rights to free speech, bodily autonomy, and self-expression.

Notably, during his terms, Silber:
- Affirmed BU community members’ rights to discriminate against LGBTQIA+ and other marginalized community members
- Disbanded BU Academy’s Gay-Straight Alliance on the basis of it promoting “homosexual militancy” and “evangelism”
- Laundered the Boy Scouts of America for banning gay Scoutmasters whom he believed would “tempt” or “seduce” young boys into the “homosexual lifestyle”
- Pushed the fourth-oldest LGBT Film Festival in North America off BU’s campus
- Violated student journalists’ First Amendment violations and was sued by the campus newspaper (b.u. exposure) and the Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts for censorship
- Promoted racist stereotypes about Black, Hispanic, and Asian students and Greater Boston community members
- Asserted misogynistic opinions about women and motherhood
- Engaged in victim-blaming rhetoric against survivors of rape and sexual assault
- Opposed abortion rights legislation as well as healthcare procedures for elderly people
- Threatened and wished BU employees dead

BU has recently reaffirmed its commitment to antiracism, sexual assault and harassment prevention, diversity, equity, and inclusion, identity-based community-building, campus safety, right to bodily autonomy, and right to equal opportunity. However, Silber’s rhetoric and actions directly oppose all of BU’s affirmed commitments. As an individual who used his position of power to directly
harm numerous marginalized communities and actively disrupt the LGBTQIA+ community by eradicating life-saving LGBTQIA+ student support resources, **Silber should not be honored with a street name, let alone the University’s official street address.**

We believe that John Silber has played a direct role in setting back BU’s LGBTQIA+ community decades and has contributed to BU ranking last out of all peer and peer+ institutions evaluated in terms of providing LGBTQIA+ support. **As such, our strong belief is that it is neither in BU’s nor the City of Boston's best interests to be strongly associated with such a legacy of harm, intolerance, and discrimination.** Indeed, Silber’s contributions to BU’s financial and academic standing do not absolve him of the long-lasting repercussions of systemic abuse against marginalized populations, the effects of which continue to reverberate across the University.

In a Task Force interview, esteemed LGBTQIA+ journalist and professor Richard Goldstein said, “I don’t like the idea of censorship, but there are certain people who are so notorious and damaging in their time...that it makes sense to take down the commemoration, and I think [Silber] is one of them. He didn’t just say things, but he acted on it... he used his position to hurt people. And that’s the basis to me for [renaming Silber Way].” Goldstein said he believes that BU should be “honoring people by removing someone who was a hardcore, active bigot” and “renaming the street or way after someone who played a role in LGBT issues. This is inviting the [LGBTQIA+] community into the campus. This is very important for [the University] to do.”

Many concerned BU and Boston community members and stakeholders in diversity, equity, and inclusion have echoed our recommendation to rename Silber Way. For example, a Brookline Times editorial suggests that Silber Way be renamed in honor of John Silber’s son David J. Silber, a gay man who died of AIDS-related illness in 1994.

**“Myles Standish Hall”**

In accordance with the petition created by the Massachusett Tribe at Ponkapoag, **we strongly recommend that BU rename Myles Standish Hall to Wituwamat Memorial Hall.** In May 2021, BU decided to recognize the second Monday in October as Indigenous Peoples’ Day rather than “Columbus Day,” which President Brown claimed to be part of an ongoing effort to make BU “the diverse, equitable,
and inclusive community that best embodies our values.” Further, he said the change will help the BU community “to acknowledge and reflect on our complicated colonial history and celebrate the traditions and achievements of Native Americans.” This sentiment contradicts Brown’s remarks in December 2021 that removing Standish’s name “would discount his significant role in our history” and that he is “not prepared to remove his name at this time.”

Myles Standish led assaults against members of the Neponset Band, beheaded their most respected warrior, Wituwamat, and placed his head atop the meetinghouse of the fort at Plymouth Colony. It is not possible to celebrate the achievements of Native Americans while simultaneously revering someone who committed genocide against Native Americans. Therefore, while we believe it is important to acknowledge complicated histories, we do not believe that campus buildings should be named after those responsible for genocide.

Additionally, Standish has no direct connection to BU, only to Massachusetts. However, the state of Massachusetts set a precedent to seriously address this history—precisely, the extreme harm that Standish inflicted upon Indigenous communities. In January 2021, Governor Charlie Baker signed a bill establishing a commission to change the state flag and seal that have existed since 1898, which depict a Native American holding a bow and arrow and standing beneath an arm holding a sword—modeled after Standish’s broadsword—poised to swing. In 2022, this commission voted unanimously to change the state symbols.

It is the responsibility of non-Indigenous people to listen to the insights and experiences of Indigenous activists. To continue to uplift an anti-Indigenous figure as a historical figure worth honoring is anti-Indigenous and flies in the face of BU’s Diversity Statement, in which BU states that it is dedicated to “cultivating an atmosphere of respect.” Consequently, BU also sends the message that Indigenous lives, cultures, and experiences are not valued at this University.

Moreover, the refusal to include Indigenous BU community members in ongoing inclusive practices has directly impacted BU’s retention of Indigenous BU faculty, staff, and students. According to BU Diversity & Inclusion’s data, enrollment of African American/Black, Asian, Hispanic, and multiracial students has increased over the last five years, while the number of American Indian/Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (NHPI) students has decreased by 60% and 45%, respectively. This data shows that Indigenous peoples are the only racially or ethnically marginalized group not growing at BU.
“Yawkey Center for Student Services”

While we understand that the Yawkey Foundation contributes financially to BU and its students, we do not believe that this name is only associated with the good deeds of this Foundation. It is imperative to recognize that the Yawkey name is still associated with the legacy of Tom Yawkey, the owner of the Boston Red Sox from 1933 until 1976. Many stories and allegations have made it clear that Tom Yawkey is a racially divisive figure in history.

The Red Sox was the last team in the Major Leagues to integrate their team and welcome an African American baseball player. This was not until 1959, although three African American baseball players—Jackie Robinson, Sam Jethroe, and Marvin Williams—tried out for the Red Sox in 1945.

In 2018, the Boston Public Improvement Commission voted unanimously to approve the name change of “Yawkey Way” in Fenway to “Jersey Street.” This name change proposal was spearheaded by current Red Sox owner John Henry to distance the team from its past. Additionally, in 2019, the commuter rail stop “Yawkey Station” was renamed “Lansdowne.”

We support 1983-2019 Massachusetts State Representative Bryon Rushing’s statement in an NPR article that “no amount of charity after [Yawkey’s] death can absolve him.” Although the Foundation has donated to great causes since the death of Tom Yawkey, he cannot be absolved of his racist actions because of how his money is currently being spent. If BU is genuinely committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive community, it would be hypocritical to idolize individuals in history whose actions directly contradict the principles of diversity and inclusion. Thus, we recommend that BU rename the Yawkey Center for Student Services.
THEME II. EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

BU Diversity & Inclusion defines the following terms:

- **Equity**: “the provision of personalized resources needed for all individuals to reach common goals. In other words, the goals and expectations are the same for all students, but the supports needed to achieve those goals depends on the students’ needs.”

- **Inclusion**: the fundamental and authentic integration of historically and currently excluded individuals and/or groups (e.g., Black, Indigenous, people of color, women, transgender, and gender nonbinary/non-conforming individuals, and the intersection of marginalized identities) into positions, processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power, values input and engenders belonging.

With these definitions of equity and inclusion in mind, it is essential for BU to reevaluate the systems and processes in place that affect LGBTQIA+ students. The following recommendations address specific areas where LGBTQIA+ BU students have historically been underserved, as evidenced by our findings.

**R9. Housing: Amend Gender-Neutral Housing and Gender-Affirming Housing to be more inclusive of and accessible to transgender, gender non-conforming, and intersex (TGNCI) students.**

Ensuring students’ access to gender-inclusive facilities is essential. A 2016 study by BU researchers and collaborators reinforced pre-existing data that TGNCI students face increased rates of discrimination and harassment and are significantly more likely to attempt suicide when they are denied access to gender-inclusive housing and bathroom options. The researchers explained that they hope their data will encourage more urgent action by campus administrators to support TGNCI students, such as revising housing policies to ensure equitable access.

While we appreciate that steps have been taken to ensure first-year and transfer students can access BU Housing that affirms their gender identity, there are still numerous barriers preventing TGNCI students from accessing safe and affirming
housing on campus. Our research indicates that Gender-Neutral Housing and the recently-created Gender-Affirming Housing currently do not center the needs of transgender, gender non-conforming, and intersex (TGNCI) students at BU.

We believe that since its inception, Gender-Neutral Housing was created for cisgender students to enjoy autonomy rather than for TGNCI students to have a safe and affirming place to live. According to the 2012 BU Student Union (now known as BU Student Government) survey, only four of the 1,282 students surveyed were transgender, and only 1% were genderqueer. The Student Union’s Gender-Neutral Housing proposal recommends that only sophomores, juniors, and seniors be allowed to request Gender-Neutral Housing. They also note that there should be a limited number of gender-neutral dorm rooms, but did not say whether priority should be given to TGNCI students. BU Housing has since instituted this petition’s demands—an important first step—but as previously mentioned, these demands excluded the needs of TGNCI students.

We recommend BU Housing implement the solutions outlined by the Queer Activist Collective’s Housing Inclusivity and Accessibility Initiative that will remove the barriers TGNCI students currently face to accessing safe and affirming housing at BU. Below is the complete list of recommendations. Please see this document for detailed explanations of the current barriers TGNCI students face that inform these recommendations.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. We recommend BU Housing remove the policy which prevents people with the same legal sex from living together in Gender-Neutral Housing.
   a. We recommend BU Housing update its records in compliance with the new Student Information System within one month of its launch, which is projected for Spring 2023.
   b. We recommend BU Housing remove the policy which assigns people by legal sex and instead assign people by gender identity.

2. We recommend gender-neutral roommate selection and gendered roommate selection be treated equally.
   a. We recommend BU Housing provide an option for random roommate selection on the Gender-Neutral Housing application that also pairs students requesting gender neutral-housing based on safety needs.
b. We recommend that if a room is designated gender-neutral, BU Housing allow the room to remain gender-neutral even if a student moves out.

c. We recommend BU Housing assume the responsibility of finding a roommate replacement without burdening the remaining student(s) to do so within one week or else be reassigned.

3. We recommend BU Housing expand the number of gender-neutral rooms available to accommodate every BU student who requests to live in Gender-Neutral Housing.

   a. If BU Housing cannot guarantee Gender-Neutral Housing to every student who requests it, we recommend that priority be given to students with housing-related safety needs.

4. We recommend that students with both safety concerns and financial needs who require a single room and/or a room with a private, single-stall, or all-gender bathroom (in their room or on their floor) have the extra costs associated with the room waived.

5. We recommend that students with safety concerns be given swift, priority room relocation.

   a. We recommend that students experiencing safety concerns in their current living environment be relocated to another room within two (2) weeks of submitting their room swap request form.

   b. We recommend that the room swap request form be revised to allow students to note any safety concerns they are experiencing to expedite the process of removing them from an unsafe environment.

   c. We recommend that any additional costs associated with the new room assignment be waived if a student must be reassigned to another room due to a safety concern.

6. We recommend BU Housing expand the dormitory locations where Gender-Affirming Housing is offered.

7. We recommend that Residence Life create a link on their website under “Info for Students” that reads “Emergency Housing,” which includes all the relevant information on accessing and qualifying for emergency housing.
a. We also recommend that LGBTQIA+ students experiencing homophobia, transphobia, or any other form of oppression (racism, ableism, etc.) perpetrated by their roommate or any other person they live with at home or BU be qualified to request and obtain emergency housing free of charge.

8. We recommend that the BU StarRez Housing portal allow students to change their name and add their pronouns and gender identity.

   a. We recommend that if a student changes their name to reflect their chosen name, their legal name no longer be visible in the system.

   b. We recommend that the StarRez Housing Portal be updated and in compliance with all of the information listed in the forthcoming Student Information System (SIS) within one month of the official SIS launch.

9. We recommend that BU Housing provide accessible Gender-Neutral Housing options to all students with disability accommodations who request Gender-Neutral Housing.

   a. We recommend BU Housing and Disability & Access Services collaborate to ensure all information shared regarding Gender-Neutral Housing is the same.

10. We recommend that BU Housing staff undergo regular LGBTQIA+ inclusivity training.

   a. We recommend that at least once annually, BU Housing staff members undergo LGBTQIA+ inclusivity training, which includes, but is not limited to, appropriate terminology and best practices for working with TGNCI BU community members.

   b. We recommend additional training sessions by BU Housing as needed within one (1) month of a student reporting to an official BU resource or employee any instance of misgendering, deadnaming, or other forms of discrimination by a Housing staff member.

11. We recommend that BU Housing take concrete steps toward promoting transparency and informed consent.

   a. We recommend that the BU Housing website be updated with all the information about accessing Gender-Neutral Housing and
Gender-Affirming Housing, with new changes to the Housing process reflected on the website within one (1) month.

b. We recommend that BU Housing develop a clear outreach plan to all current students (including sending an email to all students) regarding the process of requesting Gender-Neutral Housing before each BU Housing selection occurs.

c. We recommend that BU Housing develop a clear outreach plan to all incoming students (including sending an email to all students) regarding the process of requesting Gender-Affirming Housing before each BU Housing selection occurs.

12. We recommend BU Housing make clear the difference between Gender-Neutral Housing and Gender-Affirming Housing and work toward integrating these into one cohesive resource.

R10. Campus Planning & Operations: Create additional all-gender bathrooms across BU and increase their accessibility.

We appreciate the progress Campus Planning & Operations made in 2019—spurred by student advocacy—to convert single-stall bathrooms across campus into all-gender bathrooms, as well as the work currently being done to think strategically about all-gender bathrooms. However, as Campus Planning & Operations has not had an opportunity to receive feedback from students directly, we would like to provide a critical student perspective.

The request for additional all-gender bathrooms came up in 140 out of 156 responses (90%) in our climate survey. The request also came up in every community meeting hosted by the 2018 Task Force. Therefore, we second the 2018 Task Force’s recommendation to create more all-gender bathrooms and wish to expand on the needed improvements.

To better understand where students believe BU should create more all-gender bathrooms and how to make them more accessible, we released an anonymous online survey open to all BU students. More information about the contents of and responses to this survey is in Appendix 4.

To receive continuous feedback on where students would like to see all-gender bathrooms, we recommend that BU create a widely-publicized request form.
where students can request the creation of all-gender bathrooms in specific locations on campus.

Our recommendations regarding all-gender bathrooms can be separated into four sections:

a. **Create additional all-gender bathrooms**

The graph below depicts the level of satisfaction of 65 respondents with the availability of all-gender bathrooms on BU's Charles River Campus. Response options for satisfaction ranged from 1 (very unsatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). The average satisfaction level is \(2.43/5\).

![Graph showing satisfaction levels of respondents](image)

A list of the buildings where students would like to see more all-gender bathrooms is in Appendix 4. The location with the most requests for additional all-gender bathrooms is the College of Arts & Sciences (CAS), which despite having 6,949 undergraduate students enrolled, has only one all-gender bathroom in the entire building. While BU has 797 non-residential all-gender bathrooms, many require special access or are in locations that are not easily accessible.

Thus, **we recommend that BU create at least one all-gender bathroom that is mobility device-accessible and does not require special access on each floor of every building on campus.** As we recognize that this process
is complex and involves significant planning and budgeting, we recommend that BU start by creating all-gender bathrooms in the locations students find to be the most urgent and necessary.

We also recommend that BU think strategically about ways to deal with building codes and restrictions currently hindering the creation of additional all-gender bathrooms. This could include submitting variance requests to the MA Plumbing Board. To gain insight on precedent, BU could request public records on all-gender bathroom variance requests that the MA Plumbing Board has received. We also recommend that BU work with the state to advocate for a more inclusive state plumbing code.

Additionally, we recommend at least one single-occupancy all-gender bathroom with a shower on each floor of large traditional-style residences that do not have in-room or in-suite bathrooms (West Campus, Warren Towers, and The Towers). While this is the plan for Warren’s upcoming 2024 renovation, we recommend that BU come up with a temporary solution in the meantime—such as creating multiple all-gender bathrooms on the first floor of these residences—especially for residences where large-scale renovations are not currently in the works.

We also recommend at least one all-gender bathroom in each dining hall or nearby in a place that is accessible to all students regardless of if they live in the residence where the dining hall is located.

A general theme across climate survey responses is that students would like to see more all-gender bathrooms on the first floor of buildings. Often, all-gender bathrooms are on upper levels and out of the way of classrooms. With only 15 minutes in between classes and considering that all-gender bathrooms are often in remote locations, it is unsurprising that students reported being late to their classes and unable to focus in class because they could not access an all-gender bathroom near their classes for the entire day.

Comments received on the survey that speak to the need for more all-gender bathrooms on campus can be found in Appendix 4.

b. Increase visibility and improve wayfinding of all-gender bathrooms
89% of survey respondents believe that all-gender bathroom wayfinding signage is not adequate in buildings where they exist. This signage is inconsistent across and even within buildings, and many buildings do not have any signage at all. Thus, we recommend that all buildings with all-gender bathrooms provide clear wayfinding signage directing folks to their location(s). This signage should be visible when entering a building. This could include signs in the lobby of buildings or signs with arrows attached to walls pointing in the direction of all-gender bathrooms (as is the case for gendered bathrooms in CAS).

57% of survey respondents are unaware of the online BU all-gender bathrooms map. Thus, we recommend that the University consider ways to make this map more visible.

Additional feedback we received regarding the map is that several locations are inaccurate and it does not provide clear enough instructions on locating the bathrooms. Task Force member Christa Rose connected with BU staff member Rachel Johnson—responsible for adding, editing, and deleting locations on the map—to update it and add more detailed directions. Although Rose was able to create detailed directions for all-gender bathrooms in 30 buildings, including all undergraduate college buildings and some graduate colleges, she was unable to complete them all. Thus, we recommend that a paid staff member continue the work Rose has started and conduct a complete census to ensure all bathroom locations are accurately reflected on the online map and that it includes clear directions on how to locate them.

To make the online map as accessible and user-friendly as possible, we also recommend creating a mobile device app that can determine a student’s location (when permission is given) and provide them with the locations of and step-by-step directions to the nearest all-gender bathrooms.

Additionally, we recommend that the online map note which all-gender bathrooms are mobility device-accessible, as not all of them are.

The University of Pennsylvania’s all-gender bathroom list provides a great example of how to include all necessary information for accessibility (precise location details, hours of access, whether special access is required, and
mobility device-accessibility information). We believe this information could easily be incorporated into BU’s existing online map of all-gender bathrooms.

We would also like to acknowledge and recommend that BU follow the University of Pennsylvania’s exemplary commitment to providing detailed accessibility information for all buildings on their campus, including:

- An access map and description of each building’s features
- Designated accessible entrances
- Elevator and accessible bathroom information
- Routes of travel and areas where barriers exist

c. Increase education surrounding all-gender bathrooms

Students have reported experiencing stigma and a lack of awareness from BU community members about the importance of all-gender bathrooms. As such, we recommend the creation of an awareness and educational campaign to highlight this important resource and emphasize the significance of all-gender bathrooms to BU community members, especially TGNCI community members.

Educational materials could include but are not limited to:

- The purpose and importance of all-gender bathrooms
- The specific barriers TGNCI people face when accessing gender-inclusive bathrooms
- Best practices for helping someone access an all-gender bathroom (such as not asking why they need that particular bathroom or making assumptions about their identity)

d. Provide free menstrual products in all-gender bathrooms

Our final recommendation regarding all-gender bathrooms at BU is that free menstrual products—including pads and tampons—be available in all of them. In addition, it is essential that these products are stocked weekly and that their dispensers are checked weekly to ensure they are working properly.
R11. Office of the University Registrar: Establish a simple, streamlined process for indicating names, gender identity, and pronouns across all of BU’s systems and define clear rationale for collecting and sharing this information.

Due to the absence of a streamlined process and the inability to change one’s name and add pronouns in all of BU’s systems, TGNCI students are often misgendered (misattributing one’s gender identity, pronouns, etc.) and deadnamed (using the name someone was given or used before they transitioned but no longer use). Our Task Force’s climate survey found that numerous students repeatedly experienced deadnaming and misgendering by peers and professors in classroom environments, thus negatively impacting their academic performance and feelings of safety and well-being.

Repeated acts of misgendering and deadnaming are forms of discrimination that pose an insidious threat to the well-being of TGNCI young people. The Trevor Project’s 2021 Survey on TGNCI youth and their disproportionate rates of suicidality found that transgender and nonbinary youth attempt suicide less “when their pronouns are respected, when they are allowed to officially change the gender marker on their legal documents, and when they have access to spaces (online, at school, and home) that affirm their gender identity.” In sum, it is essential—and even life-saving—to create systems that uphold people of all genders’ rights to autonomy, dignity, and self-identification, not just cisgender men and women.

We appreciate the efforts of the Student Information Systems (SIS) Renewal Program team to ensure that the experiences and needs of LGBTQIA+ students are being taken into consideration when creating the new system. We want to expand on areas we recommend this team take into consideration:

a. Names and Pronouns

Changing one’s legal name is a complex, lengthy, and often costly process, and thus members of the LGBTQIA+ community may instead use a name that differs from their legal name (commonly called a “chosen name”).

Updating a name in BU’s various systems is challenging and often confusing. Currently, BU students must separately update their name in the following places: BU Directory, Blackboard, Terrier Card/BU ID Card, BU
email/Kerberos login username, and Student Health Services (SHS) Medical Record.

Additionally, there is currently no way for students to change their name in the Faculty link. Since faculty draw their rosters from Faculty Link at the beginning of each semester, they see students’ legal names. Although students can change their name in Blackboard, this does not change their name on professors’ class rosters or in their grade submission system. This leads to frequent deadnaming, which is incredibly distressing. Thus, we recommend that BU allow students to display their chosen name in the Faculty Link. Further, if a student changes their name mid-semester, we recommend that students have the option to send an automated message to their professors informing them of the change.

Another concern for many students is that the only systems where pronouns can be shared are the BU Directory, SHS Medical Record, and Blackboard. Even if students indicate their pronouns on Blackboard, they are not listed anywhere for professors to easily see them.

We recommend a simple, streamlined process where students can indicate their name and pronouns in one place and have it updated across all of BU’s systems. This was a repeated request in our climate survey.

Lastly, we recommend that, similar to Princeton University, BU offer support to students navigating the legal name change process, including financial support and access to legal advice.

b. Transparency and Reporting

In July 2022, it became possible for students to self-indicate their gender identity, select whether they identify as transgender, and add their pronouns through the BU Directory. This information is said to be “confidential, for use by BU offices with a valid business need to know in order to provide necessary programs and services,” but it is unclear which offices this includes. BU’s current standards for storing and using name, sex/gender, and pronouns do not clarify this for students.
TGNCI individuals’ comfort in sharing gender identity information often depends upon context and intended use. Given the sensitive nature of TGNCI individuals’ demographic information, it is not appropriate to collect data without clarifying the purpose of collection and adequately protecting this information. Inappropriately collecting legal name, sex, gender identity, and pronoun information also puts LGBTQIA+ students at risk of deadnaming, misgendering, and “outing,” which can have serious and harmful consequences.

We recommend that BU clarify and broadly publicize the current and intended internal and external uses of gender identity and pronoun information, including:

- Who will have access to this information, and why
- When and why an individual’s legal sex or legal name will be collected, used, or shared in addition to (or instead of) their self-indicated gender identity or name
- How updates to gender identity and pronoun-sharing policies will be communicated to allow opting out of any broader sharing implemented later

We also recommend that BU address existing issues with data requests, sharing, and privacy by ensuring that:

- Legal name, legal sex, and gender identity information is requested, displayed, and circulated only on a minimal need-to-know basis/when legally required
- Chosen names are consistently used in communications with and about individuals, except when they elect to use legal names for privacy reasons
  - This includes on faculty rosters and in grading systems, BU Housing, Dining Services, Residence Life, Financial Aid, Student Health Services, Student Employment Office, and any additional departments, offices, and systems that a student must interact with during their time at BU

Considering that BU’s SIS Renewal Program is an ongoing project, that the ability to self-indicate gender identity and pronouns is new, and that information systems are not static, there must be a way for students to voice issues or concerns with various systems and forms that request
demographic information. Unfortunately, BU does not have a well-documented process for addressing these concerns, which places an undue burden on students to determine why the issue is occurring, identify who is responsible for addressing the issue, and follow up until the issue is resolved.

Thus, **we recommend that BU institute and broadly publicize a centralized process for collecting and addressing gender identity and name-related complaints concerning BU's systems.** This process should address inappropriate exposure and unnecessary requests for legal name and legal sex. Please see R3 for more information on such a process.

Finally, while the BU Directory page where students can update their listing makes clear that pronouns are shown in the BU Directory, it is not clear to students that the BU Directory is visible to anyone, including non-BU affiliates. All individuals listed in the BU Directory have the right to privacy and informed consent regarding whom they are sharing their personal information. For example, LGBTQIA+ students often have concerns about being outed to unaccepting family members who may search for them in the BU Directory and therefore would be hesitant to indicate their pronouns on their profile if they knew this information would be visible to their family members. Due to this information's sensitive and private nature, **we recommend that the BU Directory page where students can update their listing make clear to whom the BU Directory is visible.**

Several of the above recommendations are derived from an open letter by MIT graduate students to MIT's Gender Identity Initiative. As of June 2022, MIT's Gender Identity Initiative has been working with these students to discuss their requests.

Lastly, while we greatly appreciate the timeline that the SIS Project Renewal team has created, **we recommend that the team continue to think strategically about short-term solutions that can be implemented in the meantime.**

**R12. Student Health Services – Gender-Affirming Healthcare:** Amend BU’s Gender-Affirming Healthcare services to provide additional services and more inclusive, affirming care.

The need for better access to affirming healthcare services for transgender, gender non-conforming, and otherwise non-cisgender students is a prevalent theme in our
climate survey responses. College is a time when students can start safely exploring and coming into their identities, especially for those who may have been experiencing abuse, isolation, or lack of acceptance at home that prevented them from expressing their true identities. Thus, accessing affirming support resources from Student Health Services (SHS) is essential.

a. Insurance Coverage

BU currently covers many medical procedures and prescription drugs for individuals hoping to transition. However, certain gender-affirming services—including facial hair removal, nipple reconstruction, and voice therapy or vocal surgery—are not covered. All of these practices are defined as medically necessary by the World Professional Association for Transgender Health.

Gender-affirming healthcare is evolving, and needs and coverage will likely change over time. To contribute to positive change, we recommend that BU work with Aetna to cover medically necessary procedures and/or consider a University reimbursement model.

b. SHS Website and Communications

It is currently unclear which services are available to students who do not have the Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP), which deters these students from attempting to access the services. Therefore, we recommend that SHS add an FAQ to the Gender-Affirming Healthcare website that answers the question, “What services are available to students without SHIP?”

Additionally, it is unclear that students can schedule a Gender-Affirming Healthcare appointment via PatientConnect by selecting “Messages” on and then “Gender-Affirming Healthcare.” If a student believes that the only way they can access these services is by calling, this could potentially deter them from attempting to access these services—especially if they do not know whether the person they speak to over the phone will be affirming or knowledgeable about gender-affirming healthcare. Thus, we recommend that SHS clarify on the Gender-Affirming Healthcare website all the ways students can access the services available.
We also recommend that SHS add a space on all online profiles in the staff directory where staff members can add their pronouns. Providing this option will send the message that SHS understands that pronouns cannot be assumed based on a person’s gender expression. It will also signify that staff members understand the importance of pronouns and will use a student’s correct pronouns. **We recommend this change be paired with educational opportunities** so that staff do, in fact, understand the importance of pronouns and how to respect a student’s pronouns.

c. Barriers to Care and Cultural Competency Training

It is essential to discuss the barriers LGBTQIA+ students face to accessing care and their experiences once they have engaged in care. Regardless of the services offered, the actual delivery of the services must be inclusive and affirming to those receiving them.

Stigma, bias, and systemic inequalities in healthcare settings intersect to prevent LGBTQIA+ individuals from receiving the care they deserve. Many LGBTQIA+ individuals struggle to find providers who are knowledgeable about their needs, face discrimination from insurers or providers, or do not engage in care because of concerns about how they will be treated. Despite existing protections, LGBTQIA+ people face alarming rates of healthcare discrimination, especially LGBTQIA+ people of color, TGNCI individuals, and individuals with disabilities. According to a 2019 paper by Casey et al., more than 1 in 6 LGBTQIA+ adults reported avoiding healthcare due to anticipated discrimination, and 16% of LGBTQIA+ adults reported discrimination in healthcare encounters.

Although beginning at the federal level, LGBTQIA+ healthcare discrimination is perpetuated all the way to the level of individual providers. Often, bias, stigma, or discrimination against LGBTQIA+ patients results from insufficient knowledge. Despite how well-meaning a provider may be, they may still fail to provide competent and affirming care to LGBTQIA+ individuals without sufficient training.

For many, the negative experience starts during their first interaction, such as when they call to make an appointment or when they arrive for their appointment. For example, a BU student reported in our climate survey that they were repeatedly deadnamed by the SHS staff member scheduling their appointment.
appointment. **Thus, we recommend that the whole care team—including administrative staff—be provided with yearly intersectional LGBTQIA+ inclusivity training.** This recommendation includes all SHS staff, not just staff on the Gender-Affirming Healthcare Team.

An additional response of significance is a TGNCI student having to explain to a nurse what “nonbinary” meant, which is unfortunately not an uncommon experience for TGNCI folks. A Center for American Progress study found that one in three transgender individuals reported having to teach their doctor or provider about transgender people in order to get appropriate care.

Further support for providing extensive training can be found in additional student responses to our climate survey, where students recount experiences of providers attempting to convince them to pursue fertility preservation treatments, violating patient confidentiality, misgendering them repeatedly, and failing to provide them with culturally-competent referrals to resources outside of BU.

Given that the majority of the aforementioned concerns are from QTBIPOC and TGNCI students, we want to emphasize that all LGBTQIA+ inclusivity training must be intersectional and specific—rather than more broadly focused on DEI—to truly be effective.

It is important to note that training must be ongoing to ensure providers are up-to-date with the latest terminology, treatments, and best practices relating to LGBTQIA+ and gender-affirming care.

d. **Transparency and Accountability**

It is important to note that even if SHS staff members are providing competent and affirming care to LGBTQIA+ students, previous experiences that students have had with medical providers could leave them with trauma and a reluctance to seek care while at BU. A 2017 nationally representative survey conducted by the Center for American Progress found that LGBTQIA+ people who experienced discrimination in the past year were seven times more likely than those who had not experienced discrimination to avoid going to a doctor’s office. Thus, we recommend that SHS make known its commitment to providing inclusive and affirming healthcare and be transparent about its staff’s educational training.
Additionally, we recommend that SHS create an accountability process for staff members who are reported for instances of bias, stigma, discrimination, or harm. This accountability process should include communication with the staff member about the harm(s) they have caused, additional educational training based on the incident, and continued evaluation of the provider’s competency. Additionally, the information provided in any students’ reports should be used to inform and implement specific policies and education practices.

We also recommend that SHS make a concerted effort to include TGNCI students on their newly-created Student Advisory Board to ensure continuous feedback from TGNCI students. This board should regularly assess the quality of Gender-Affirming Healthcare at BU and provide recommendations and guidance to improve it.

Lastly, we recommend that SHS annually review the guidelines in the World Professional Association for Transgender Health’s “Standards of Care” and ensure that all practices are in accordance with these guidelines, especially as gender-affirming healthcare is a rapidly evolving interdisciplinary field.

e. Visibility

Another barrier to accessing care for LGBTQIA+ students is a lack of awareness of the services offered. According to our climate survey, only 5 out of 156 students (3%) are aware of Student Health Service’s Gender-Affirming Healthcare services. Thus, we recommend that SHS take concrete steps to regularly publicize these services, including hosting information sessions where students can ask questions about accessing and utilizing the available services.

f. Representation

Developing a team that reflects the population it serves is essential, especially for historically disenfranchised and marginalized communities. For example, according to a study by New York University’s Silver School of Social Work, one of the most significant barriers to healthcare for TGNCI patients is patient-provider communication. Various participants in the study expressed
having difficulties communicating freely with non-LGBT-identified providers. Such feelings were especially prevalent among participants who identified as QTBIPOC. **Thus, we recommend that the Gender-Affirming Healthcare Team recruit more TGNCI providers, especially TGNCI providers of color.**

**R13. Student Health Services – Behavioral Medicine: Provide additional mental health resources for LGBTQIA+ students.**

Our climate survey indicated a widespread need for more effective, culturally-competent, and diverse mental health resources. As LGBTQIA+ young people are more likely to experience harassment, discrimination, and other challenges than their non-LGBTQIA+ peers due to homophobia and transphobia, they also experience disproportionately high rates of anxiety, depression, and suicidality. For example, the Trevor Project’s [2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health](https://www.trevorproject.org) found that 45% of LGBTQIA+ youth (ages 13 to 24) seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year, including more than half of transgender and nonbinary youth. This rate is even higher among LGBTQIA+ youth of color, especially Black and Indigenous transgender youth. In addition, a 2016 study by BU researchers and collaborators found that transgender and nonbinary students are between two and four times more likely to experience mental health problems than the rest of their peers.

**Thus, we recommend the following resources that will support students’ mental well-being:**

- A support group for TGNCI/non-cisgender and questioning students led by a TGNCI/non-cisgender licensed mental healthcare provider (who is compensated appropriately for their labor)

- A support group for QTBIPOC students led by a QTBIPOC licensed mental healthcare provider (who is compensated appropriately for their labor)

- Short-term support groups facilitated by a licensed mental healthcare provider on an as-needed basis to address sudden and potentially traumatizing events which acutely affect LGBTQIA+ students
  - Examples of such events include a transphobic speaker coming to BU’s campus; an increase in anti-LGBTQIA+ legislation across the country; targeted fatal violence against LGBTQIA+ people, especially when it occurs locally or to a large number of people; etc.
● The addition of culturally-competent providers who specialize in LGBTQIA+ care to SHS’s referral database, as well as the option for 1-on-1 referral coordinating appointments where students can receive tailored support for finding a therapist or connecting with other mental health resources

● A more centralized and accessible way for students to book private rooms for telehealth appointments and other confidential conversations

● Free, anonymous, and easily-accessible HIV and STI testing for all BU students, regardless of whether they have the Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP)

● Collaboration with Campus Planning & Operations to create sensory-friendly spaces across campus paired with event accessibility awareness campaigns (see Agganis Arena Sensory Room as a model)

● Assistance with MassHealth enrollment

● Assistance with accessing food resources, such as navigating the MA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) application and locating food pantries/fridges

● Advertising campaigns to make visible LGBTQIA+ mental health resources at BU and in the Boston area

Given the societal barriers and stigma that discourage LGBTQIA+ individuals from seeking professional support, Behavioral Medicine’s staff must be culturally-competent and affirming. Therefore, we recommend all SHS Behavioral Medicine providers be educated on hardships LGBTQIA+ students face at higher rates than their non-LGBTQIA+ peers—including gender dysphoria, discrimination and harassment, forced outing, family and societal rejection, struggles with substance use, and violence—and how to support students through those hardships. They must also be educated on the specific challenges faced by communities within the LGBTQIA+ community, including QTBIPOC, TGNCI folks, and folks with disabilities.

We recommend regularly providing more educational opportunities for Behavioral Medicine staff through intersectional LGBTQIA+ inclusivity training, ongoing conversations with LGBTQIA+ health experts at leading healthcare organizations, practicing patient-provider case scenarios, and hosting speaker events and discussions on LGBTQIA+ health-related topics.
We also recommend that all SHS Behavioral Medicine providers be informed of the LGBTQIA+ resources at BU, locally, and nationally. Providers must recognize what resources would be helpful to share and remain up-to-date on resources available that could improve the mental well-being of LGBTQIA+ students.

**R14. Orientation: Take steps to ensure incoming LGBTQIA+ students feel welcome as soon as they arrive at BU.**

**BU Orientation** provides opportunities for incoming students to learn about and engage with all that BU has to offer, as well as to “find [their] belonging” and “set the tone for the experience that [they] want.” An essential part of creating an environment where incoming LGBTQIA+ students can do those things is welcoming them to BU in a way that respectfully and informatively acknowledges how their experiences and needs may differ from that of other students.

Thus, we recommend that BU host an optional session during Orientation where LGBTQIA+ students are introduced to the support resources available and allowed to connect so that they begin to form supportive social networks. Given that 38% of respondents to our climate survey reported not knowing of any LGBTQIA+ resources at BU, offering this session would ensure students are aware from the start of resources available that will help them succeed during their time at BU.

This session should be led by current LGBTQIA+ BU students who can provide their student perspectives and experiences. Ideally, this session would be peer-led by Orientation’s student staff members who voluntarily express interest in facilitating. As great models, Orientation could look toward several of BU’s peer and peer+ institutions that host similar sessions, including the University of California, San Diego and Northeastern University.

We also recommend that free Pride swag be given out during this session (flags, stickers, shirts, pins, etc.) that students can proudly display during their time at BU.

Additionally, we recommend that BU consider hosting a specific session during Orientation for QTBIPOC students, as it can be even more difficult for QTBIPOC students to find community and feel a sense of belonging at BU. One of BU’s peers,
the University of California Santa Cruz, annually hosts a QTBIPOC Orientation that can serve as a model. QTBIPOC Orientation is “a space that validates students as a whole, not based on the intersecting systems of oppression meant to alienate QTBIPOC students from a well-rounded, stress-free, academic experience.” It also empowers QTBIPOC students' self-advocacy rights by teaching them how to advocate for themselves and others.

An additional recommendation regarding Orientation is that all staff members—regardless of whether they would be facilitating the aforementioned session—be provided intersectional LGBTQIA+ inclusivity training and informed about the LGBTQIA+ resources available at BU and in the Boston area.

Our last recommendation to ensure that all students feel affirmed and welcome at BU as soon as they arrive is to allow students staying overnight on campus during Orientation to specify the details of their temporary living arrangement when registering. In other words, students should be able to specify the following:

- Whether they would like to be on a gendered floor (and if so, which) or a gender-neutral floor
- The gender identity of their roommate
- Whether they would like a single-stall, all-gender bathroom and shower available in proximity to their room
- Any additional accommodations that would ensure they feel safe and affirmed in all of their identities

**R15. Center for Career Development: Provide tailored career services to help LGBTQIA+ students successfully compete in academic and professional job markets and thrive after graduation.**

LGBTQIA+ students encounter unique obstacles in the academic and professional job markets due to implicit and explicit social bias. Exploring career paths while holding marginalized identities can create additional challenges for students planning for their future. Further, LGBTQIA+ individuals are more likely to face discrimination, harassment, and unequal treatment once in the workplace than their non-LGBTQIA+ peers.
The Human Rights Campaign Foundation’s Workplace Equality Program’s 2018 LGBTQ Workplace Climate Survey found that one in five LGBTQIA+ workers report having been told or had coworkers imply that they should dress in a more feminine or masculine manner (compared to 1 in 24 non-LGBTQIA+ workers). In addition, according to a 2011 National Center for Transgender Equality study, more than one in four transgender people have lost a job due to bias, and more than three-fourths have experienced some form of workplace mistreatment or discrimination.

We recommend that the Center for Career Development (CCD) hire an Assistant Director dedicated to counseling LGBTQIA+ academic and professional job-seekers. This person should be able to individually meet with students to assist with the following questions and concerns:

- What could “coming out” to my employer look like?
- Can I include my chosen name on my resume and applications rather than my legal name? Will I have to use my legal name at any point in the job search?
- How do I navigate transitioning in the workplace (socially, interpersonally, medically/clinically, therapeutically, etc.)?
- When is an appropriate time to share my pronouns in the workplace?
- What identity-related interview questions are illegal for an employer to ask?
- How do I know if I am experiencing discrimination in the workplace?
  - Are microaggressions considered acts of discrimination (e.g. misgendering or deadnaming someone, invasive questioning, forced outing, etc.)?
- How common is discrimination in the workplace?
- What do I do if I experience discrimination in the workplace?
- How do I determine whether or not a prospective workplace is LGBTQIA+ inclusive or offers LGBTQIA+ inclusive employee benefits and healthcare policies?
- How can I navigate professional dress codes that reinforce the gender binary?
- How do I present my involvement in LGBTQIA+ student groups and activities on my resume?
- If I participate in a social justice protest or demonstration, does my workplace/university have the right to discontinue my employment or suspend enrollment?
- Do my rights differ if my place of employment is also the school in which I am enrolled?
This Director should also be able to direct students toward helpful resources, including but not limited to the Human Rights Campaign’s Corporate Equality Index, Lambda Legal’s Out At Work: A Toolkit for Workplace Equality, Lambda Legal’s LGBTQ Employee Protections by State resource, and LGBTQIA+ job posting sites such as the Massachusetts LGBT Chamber of Commerce and Pink Jobs.

We also recommend that the CCD create an Associative Director of Career Equity and Inclusion position to whom the Assistant Director dedicated to LGBTQIA+ support would directly report.

Additionally, we recommend that the CCD collaborate with the proposed LGBTQIA+ Student Resource Center to establish annual professional LGBTQIA+ conferences. Such a conference would serve as an opportunity for LGBTQIA+ students to learn tools to overcome the unique obstacles they encounter in the professional and academic world. This conference should bring together experts and professionals from diverse industries, including media, public and private health, business, politics, grassroots organizing, and the nonprofit sector. It should address various topics through a series of keynote speakers, panels, workshops, networking sessions, and panel discussions.

It is crucial that intersectionality be considered when planning conferences, as the intersection of individuals’ gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, immigration status, ability, etc. has a significant impact on their experiences, especially in professional settings and academia. Thus, we also recommend the creation of conferences (or specific sessions within conferences) centering communities within the LGBTQIA+ community, including QTBIPOC, TGNCI folks, folks with disabilities, international students, and first-generation students.

A great model for BU to emulate is Northeastern’s annual Reach(OUT) LGBTQA+ Career Conference, which focuses on the perspectives and concerns of LGBTQIA+ students in preparation for internships and professional life beyond campus. Northeastern’s conference includes a day dedicated to “identity,” where participants have the opportunity to look deeper into intersectionality through workshops focusing on identity-based dialogue and discourse. Sessions on this day include “Tackling Imposter Syndrome in the Job Search and Workforce,” “My Body Is Political: Employment in the Age of COVID-19 and #BlackLivesMatter,” and a TGNC panel and affinity breakout.
Lastly, we recommend that all career counselors at BU—at the CCD and within all college-specific career centers—undergo educational training on supporting LGBTQIA+ academic and professional job-seekers.

**R16. Alumni & Friends: Increase engagement and networking opportunities among LGBTQIA+ alums.**

Given the number of successful LGBTQIA+ alums which have emerged from BU and the steadily-growing percentage of students who identify as LGBTQIA+, increased efforts toward LGBTQIA+ alum engagement (and re-engagement) offer an exciting opportunity for BU to encourage further University development and philanthropy.

Notable LGBTQIA+ alums include Margo Okazawa Rey (SSW ’74), Gina Ortiz Jones (GRS ’03, Pardee ’03), Kori Pacyniak (STH ’15), John Ward (LAW ’76), Joe Solmonese (COM ’87), Liz Feldman (COM ’99), and Peter Paige (CFA ’91). Additional notable alums who have been public proponents of LGBTQIA+ rights and inclusion are Ayanna Pressley (CGS’ 94), Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (Pardee ‘11), Julianne Moore (CFA ’83), and Uzo Aduba (CFA ’05).

BU has made excellent strides to better engage underrepresented alums, such as creating numerous Alum Councils, including the Black Alumni Leadership Council, the Indian Alumni Leadership Council, the Latinx & Hispanic Leadership Council, and the Women’s Leadership Council. Each council is dedicated to improving engagement and support of respective underrepresented communities within BU. However, there is currently no LGBTQIA+ Leadership Council.

Alum councils provide important opportunities for past and current students to network, mentor, and further their professional and personal development. In our interviews with LGBTQIA+ Directors and Associate Directors at BU’s peer and peer+ institutions, it was frequently noted that LGBTQIA+ alum participation and intergenerational community-building through alum leadership and programming is essential to the stability and success of a University.

We appreciate that as a result of a 2018 Task Force recommendation to improve alum engagement, BU Alumni & Friends created an “LGBTQIA+ Network” on BU Connects in 2020. However, despite having 214 members, the Network currently has very low online engagement. To increase engagement and participation, we recommend BU Alumni & Friends create an LGBTQIA+ Alum Council dedicated to establishing support and interconnectedness among LGBTQIA+ and allied alums.
students, faculty, and staff, particularly for those with additional marginalized and underrepresented identities.

A great peer model is Boston College’s LGBTQ+ Alumni Council, which is dedicated to creating community-building, mentorship, and professional and personal development opportunities. This Council creates “opportunities for personal, professional, and spiritual growth and celebration that elevate historically and systematically excluded voices” and acknowledges LGBTQIA+ history at BC.

We also recommend that BU Alumni & Friends allocate funding toward signature annual programming for LGBTQIA+ alums, especially including during BU’s annual Alumni Weekend. To encourage vertical integration of LGBTQIA+ support at BU, we also recommend that the proposed Council collaborate with the proposed LGBTQIA+ Student Resource Center and the BU LGBTQIA+ Center for Faculty & Staff to host networking events throughout the year that are open to LGBTQIA+ alums, faculty, staff, and current students.

Especially given the historical lack of community-building opportunities for LGBTQIA+ students and the hostile environment for LGBTQIA+ students created during John Silber’s presidency, we firmly believe that a considerable percentage of LGBTQIA+ BU alums are yet to be engaged in post-graduate University life. By implementing the aforementioned recommendations, BU will be well-positioned to revitalize and re-engage its diverse and dynamic alum community.
HISTORY AND CONTEXT IN BRIEF

The 1969 Stonewall Riots are often cited as the birth of Gay Liberation. However, such an interpretation of 20th-century LGBTQIA+ history often fails to recognize events and activism preceding Stonewall that usher us away from what Dr. Roderick Ferguson describes in his book *One-Dimensional Queer* as a “one-dimensional” understanding of Gay Liberation. Instead, we argue that 20th Century LGBTQIA+ activism existed as a complex web of competing and connected interests, with Stonewall acting as one defining moment of many. As Sylvia Rivera stresses in her 2001 speech, everyone at Stonewall was “all involved in different struggles,” and Stonewall was birthed out of the “outcasts” of those struggles. Thus, Stonewall was the outcome of activist history and the beginning of a shift in subsequent activist history.

The story of LGBTQIA+ rights has been dictated by a divide between QTBIPOC and white LGBTQIA+ activism. Put simply, those who take an intersectional approach to LGBTQIA+ activism traditionally seek to reimagine systems rather than assimilate into them. In fact, the contemporary wave of court cases such as *Obergefell v. Hodges* and *Windsor v. DOMA* represents the continuation of white supremacist LGBTQIA+ activism. However, QTBIPOC activists who started the Gay Liberation movement did not prioritize marriage equality or many civil rights which center white and cisgender people in LGBTQIA+ activism.

Turning toward BU's LGBTQIA+ history, BU frequently boasts the 1969 Student Homophile League as a symbol of BU's progressivism. While the Student Homophile League was the first of its kind and paved the way for future organizations, it participated in the white supremacist and pro-assimilationist history of Homophile activism. Sylvia Rivera notes in her 2001 speech that homophiles were so invested in being “normal” that they ostracized the transgender community. Uplifting only the Student Homophile League as part of BU's LGBTQIA+ history implies that only cisgender white queer history matters, further obscuring the diverse experiences and achievements of BU's LGBTQIA+ community members who are BIPOC and TGNCI.

BU's LGBTQIA+ history helps explain the ways in which existing resources continue to center cisgender and white LGBTQIA+ individuals, creating a deficit of support for LGBTQIA+ community members who are not cisgender or white. For example, the origins of Gender-Neutral Housing activism reveal that it was never made with...
transgender people in mind, and the Student Homophile reveals that BU’s LGBTQIA+ activism has—since its inception—failed to include QTBIPOC. 

To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the current campus climate and the systemic factors which shape it, we must turn toward history. Please see Appendix 5 to learn more about LGBTQIA+ history at BU and beyond.
NEEDS ASSESSMENT CONDUCTED WITH BU STUDENTS

We gathered quantitative and qualitative data through an anonymous online climate survey to better understand the needs of the LGBTQIA+ student community at BU. Descriptive statistics from close-ended survey questions (see Appendix 1) are included in this section. We also conducted a thematic analysis of the responses to open-ended survey questions. Themes helped to frame the report, and representative quotes, are included in Appendix 3. Please note that this is a convenience sample of BU students who chose to respond to our survey administered by students, not BU administration. An additional limitation is that the majority of our responses are from undergraduate students on the Charles River Campus.

Extrapolating from the 2021 Gallup estimate that 20.8% of Generation Z individuals (those born between 1997 and 2012) identify as LGBT to the BU student population of 17,590 undergraduate students in 2022 would suggest an estimated 3,659 students identify as LGBTQIA+. Thus, the 141 undergraduate students who responded to our survey may represent an estimated 3.85% of LGBTQIA+ students. Therefore, when BU plans and administers a comprehensive climate survey, it should include questions addressing the experience of LGBTQIA+ members of the BU community to gain a more comprehensive picture.

It is essential to note that according to Gallup estimates, the percentage of Generation Z individuals identifying as LGBT increased from 15.9% to 20.8% in only one year (from 2020 to 2021). From 2017 to 2021, the percentage of Generation Z individuals identifying as LGBT increased from 10.5% to 20.8%. While we cannot accurately predict future demographic changes, based on these trends, we can reasonably argue that BU's LGBTQIA+ population is growing and deserving of more systematic, inclusive, and sustainable support, both currently and in the University's future.

ONLINE CLIMATE SURVEY

Our Task Force created an online LGBTQIA+ BU Student Climate survey (Appendix 1) open to all LGBTQIA+ BU students. This survey asked participants for demographic information and assessed their satisfaction level with LGBTQIA+ resources currently provided by BU's administrators. It also assessed participants' belief as to whether BU's administrators provide a welcoming environment for LGBTQIA+ students and how comfortable students feel being openly LGBTQIA+.
(a.k.a. “out”) in various settings on campus. These settings include the classroom, in student organizations, at sporting events, when traveling or spending time on campus, at Greek Life parties/events, when spending time with friends, in BU work settings, and at BU’s Fitness and Recreation Center.

We disseminated a link to the survey through the Queer Activist Collective’s and BU Student Government’s social media accounts and in an email from the Student Government President that went out to all BU students. To ensure only BU students completed the survey, BU SSO authentication was required. The survey was open from April 4th-June 12th, 2022.

In total, 156 LGBTQIA+ self-identified BU students completed the survey. Respondents included 141 undergraduate students and 15 graduate students. Respondents included students from the following class years: 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, and 2026.

Due to small sample sizes in certain identity categories, we present the data grouping together all sexual orientations, all transgender, gender non-conforming, intersex (TGNCI)/non-cisgender identities, and all Black, Indigenous, & People of Color (BIPOC) identities. In other words, our data do not distinguish whether participants identify as, for example, queer or asexual, genderqueer or nonbinary, or Black or Asian. However, it is important to note that an individual’s particular identities do inform their experiences at BU, and there is not one monolithic LGBTQIA+ BU student experience.

All of the survey respondents identify as LGBTQIA+. In addition, 60 respondents identify as TGNCI/non-cisgender (38%), and 79 identify as cisgender (51%), while the remainder opted out of the question. Analyses comparing the responses from TGNCI/non-cisgender and cisgender respondents are below.

Additionally, 58 respondents identify as BIPOC (37%), and 98 identify as white (63%). Analyses comparing the responses from BIPOC and white respondents were conducted, but the results showed no significant difference in the level of satisfaction or beliefs between these two groups. Despite this, it is important to note that the experiences of LGBTQIA+ community members who have intersecting BIPOC identities do have experiences of non-inclusion or inequity that are multiplied by combined oppressed identities, as is also supported in our climate survey responses.
ANALYSES

Response options for satisfaction ranged from 1 (very unsatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied), and for belief ranged from 1 (strongly disbelieving) to 5 (strongly believing).

What is your level of satisfaction with the LGBTQIA+ resources currently provided by Boston University’s administrators?

The average satisfaction level with the LGBTQIA+ resources currently provided by BU's administrators is 2.38/5, with only 1.3% of respondents rating their satisfaction level as a 5. This data overwhelmingly makes clear that LGBTQIA+ students are dissatisfied with the resources currently available.

Do you believe that BU’s administrators provide a welcoming environment for LGBTQIA+ students?
The average level of belief that BU's administrators provide a welcoming environment for LGBTQIA+ students is 2.67/5, with only 1.3% of respondents rating their level of belief as a 5. This data shows that the feelings of LGBTQIA+ students fall between a line of not feeling welcome and neutral.

**How generally comfortable do you feel being openly LGBTQIA+ (aka “out”) at BU?**

It is important to point out that 29% of LGBTQIA+ students feel somewhat uncomfortable being openly LGBTQIA+ in the classroom, and only 16% of students feel very comfortable. Regarding BU work settings, the level of comfortability greatly ranges, likely due to the broad range of work environments at BU. On the other hand, 49% of LGBTQIA+ students feel very comfortable in student organizations other than in Greek Life settings.

**Analysis by TGNCI identity**

Transgender, gender non-conforming, intersex (TGNCI), and non-cisgender respondents had a lower level of satisfaction than cisgender respondents with the
LGBTQIA+ resources currently provided by BU's administrators. TGNCI and non-cisgender respondents also had greater disbelief than cisgender respondents that BU's administrators provide a welcoming environment for LGBTQIA+ students.

What is your level of satisfaction with the LGBTQIA+ resources currently provided by Boston University's administrators?

Do you believe that BU's administrators provide a welcoming environment for LGBTQIA+ students?
LGBTQIA+ INCLUSION PRACTICES AT OTHER LEADING UNIVERSITIES

COMPARATOR LANDSCAPE ANALYSES

Given its mission statement, BU should be a model institution in terms of providing student-inclusive LGBTQIA+ resources. However, while many of its peers are ranked highly on lists including the Campus Pride Index and Best Colleges 25 Most LGBTQ+-Friendly Colleges, College Choice’s 50 Best LGBTQ Schools, and the Advocate’s 20 Most LGBT-Friendly Colleges, BU is consistently left off these lists.

To better understand and compare BU’s current LGBTQIA+ resources and inclusive practices to its peers, our Task Force conducted a comparator landscape analysis comparing BU to 45 of its peer and peer+ institutions. The criteria used were determined by our Task Force, respondents in the climate survey, and the nation’s premier benchmarking tool, the Campus Pride Index, as essential LGBTQIA+ institutional resources:

- Professionally-staffed, student-inclusive LGBTQIA+ resource center or office
- Paid staff specifically for LGBTQIA+ student support services
- Dedicated, centralized LGBTQIA+ resource website
- Listing on the Campus Pride Index
- Standing LGBTQIA+ Advisory Committee

Our findings indicate that BU lags behind many of its peers in terms of providing LGBTQIA+ student support. As is evidenced by the table below, BU does not meet any of the listed criteria for LGBTQIA+ student resource provision, thus ranking last out of all 46 peer and peer+ institutions evaluated.

Additionally, we conducted a second comparator landscape analysis of Women’s, Gender, & Sexuality Studies Programs across 46 peer and peer+ institutions, including BU. The criteria were:

- WGS Department or Program with Dedicated Tenure-Line Faculty*
- WGS Degree Program**
- WGS-Related Research Center or Consortium

*Because of WGS’s history as an interdisciplinary discipline, many universities still have WGS programs rather than departments. However, even when still titled a
program, most have tenure-line faculty and undergraduate majors, and some also have graduate degrees.

**Different universities use different language to signal undergraduate majors, minors, and graduate certificates. For example, Harvard and Brown call their majors “concentrations” while other universities call their minors “concentrations,” “secondary fields,” “designated emphasis programs,” etc. To simplify, each has been converted to the equivalent of what they would be called at BU.**

Consistent with the first comparator landscape analysis, BU also lags behind the majority of its peer and peer+ institutions in terms of offering comprehensive Women’s, Gender, & Sexuality Studies program opportunities. **While 91% of peer and peer+ institutions evaluated meet at least one of the evaluated criteria, BU is one of the four institutions that does not meet any of the criteria listed.**

In order to demonstrate a tangible commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, BU must follow the lead of its peer and peer+ institutions by implementing the aforementioned LGBTQIA+ resources as soon as possible.

### Comparator Analysis of LGBTQIA+ Student Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peer &amp; Peer+ Institutions</th>
<th>Professionally-Staffed LGBTQIA+ Center (Student-Inclusive)</th>
<th>Paid staff specifically for LGBTQIA+ student support services</th>
<th>Dedicated LGBTQIA+ Website (Student-Inclusive)</th>
<th>Listing on the Campus Pride Index/Rating</th>
<th>Standing LGBTQIA+ Advisory Committee</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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Back to ToC
### Comparator Analysis of LGBTQIA+ Student Resources

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<th>Standing LGBTQIA+ Advisory Committee</th>
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<th>Dedicated LGBTQIA+ Website (Student-Inclusive)</th>
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### Comparator Analysis of Women’s, Gender, & Sexuality (WGS) Studies

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Peer &amp; Peer+ Institutions</th>
<th>WGS Department or Program with Dedicated Tenure-Line Faculty*</th>
<th>WGS Degree Program**</th>
<th>WGS-Related Research Center or Consortium</th>
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<tr>
<td>Boston University</td>
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## Comparator Analysis of Women’s, Gender, & Sexuality (WGS) Studies Departments/Programs

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<tr>
<th>Peer &amp; Peer+ Institutions</th>
<th>WGS Department or Program with Dedicated Tenure-Line Faculty*</th>
<th>WGS Degree Program**</th>
<th>WGS-Related Research Center or Consortium</th>
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<tr>
<td>Northeastern University</td>
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*WGS Department or Program with Dedicated Tenure-Line Faculty*

**WGS Degree Program**

*Back to ToC*
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<td>YES</td>
<td>YES: BA</td>
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<td>University of Rochester</td>
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<td>University of Southern California</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yale University</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES: BA, PhD (dual-title)</td>
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EFFECTIVE PRACTICES FOR LGBTQIA+ INCLUSION

Our Task Force interviewed the LGBTQIA+ Center Directors and Associate Directors at six strategic and local peer institutions renowned for their achievements in LGBTQIA+ inclusion to understand better what makes their LGBTQIA+ resource provision and inclusive practices successful. These institutions included Tufts University, Harvard University, University of Massachusetts Amherst, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Northeastern University, and the University of Pennsylvania. In addition, we reviewed the LGBTQIA+ resources and inclusive practices of 39 other Association of American Universities (AAU) and peer+ institutions by researching their respective websites and their listings on premier benchmarking programs such as the **Campus Pride Index**.

A Center for LGBTQIA+ programming and support. Our comparator landscape analysis found that BU is only one of four out of 46 institutions (9%) that do not have an official, professionally-staffed LGBTQIA+ resource center that is student-inclusive and the only institution which does not meet any of the aforementioned benchmark criteria. While BU recently established the LGBTQIA+ Center for Faculty & Staff, it does not directly provide support to students. All peer and peer+ LGBTQIA+ Center staff interviewees stressed the importance of a professionally-staffed center or office with physical space to be available for students as a critical support resource.

Opportunities for philanthropic support. According to the 2018 Task Force, each university they polled noted “growing philanthropy coming from alums, parents, and other stakeholders in the LGBTQIA+ community. Endowed professorships, student scholarships, lectures, and research can be targets for Development.” Further, several peer and peer+ institutions indicated having active engagement from their LGBTQIA+ alums. Especially given the rapidly-increasing percentage of college students identifying as LGBTQIA+, we believe that more engagement of LGBTQIA+ individuals, experiences, and topics will provide significant yet untapped opportunities for institutional growth.

Feedback and accountability processes. A recurring theme among peer and peer+ institutions is the importance of offering meaningful ways of engaging with and implementing feedback from LGBTQIA+ student populations. For example, UC Santa Barbara offers an anonymous feedback form and follow-up opportunities for discussion regarding the implementation of said feedback. Other peer and peer+ institutions, such as Northeastern University's **LGBTQA Resource Center** and Tufts...
University's LGBT Center, stressed the importance of creating a more secure and transparent dynamic between LGBTQIA+ students and LGBTQIA+ support staff by making themselves consistently available to receive and respond to student feedback about issues such as resource provision.

**Intersectionally inclusive practices and leadership.** Those in leadership positions on campus must be equipped to support people with diverse, intersectional identities. The 2018 Task Force recommended that “the University prioritize training for those in leadership and communications roles, as well as for those whose work faces outward or reaches across the University,” especially emphasizing the importance of “higher level training" as a means to foster a safer, more positive environment. Additionally, BU should seek more diverse employment, as many of its peers have made efforts to hire LGBTQIA+ employees and uplift and support its current LGBTQIA+ employees. Most of our interviews with peer and peer+ leaders in LGBTQIA+ support stressed the importance of intersectionality in both leadership representation and direct services provided, especially regarding QTBIPOC and TGNCI representation.

**Program administration.** The 2018 Task Force recommended that programming be “directed to the entire University community.” While BU has begun to provide programming for faculty and staff as part of its strategic initiatives, it has not provided adequate LGBTQIA+ programming to its student community. BU notes the importance of intersectional programming with its own intersectional identity initiative, citing “empowerment (the art of becoming)” and “interconnectedness (the art of belonging)” as two of three perspectives required for “improved student engagement.” The vast majority of peer and peer+ institutions evaluated offered some form of regular LGBTQIA+ programming to students, and many LGBTQIA+ Centers consistently offer signature programming every year.

**Web-based, centralized resources.** The first comparator landscape analysis we conducted revealed that BU is only one of four out of 46 peer and peer+ institutions (9%) that does not have a centralized website for the LGBTQIA+ community. While some departments within BU have subsections containing LGBTQIA+ resources, there is no centralized location to access resources. It is crucial that BU create and maintain a website to provide visibility of LGBTQIA+ resources. Creating a centralized website would also help LGBTQIA+ students find support on campus beyond student-led organizations.
LGBTQIA+ scholars and scholarship. Our second comparator landscape analysis revealed that BU has numerous opportunities to progress by investing in robust LGBTQIA+ scholars and scholarship, especially relating to WGS. Our findings indicate that 76% of peer and peer+ institutions have a WGS Department or Program with Dedicated Tenure-Line Faculty, 87% have a WGS degree program, and 49% have a WGS-related research center or consortium. However, BU is only one of the four peer and peer+ institutions evaluated (9%) that do not meet any of the evaluated criteria. Providing more institutional resources for LGBTQIA+ scholars and scholarship is an important step toward promoting University values and a key area for academic success and development.
APPENDIX 1. Anonymous online climate survey questions

1. Demographics

College and class year: Self-describe [text]
Race/ethnicity/cultural identities: Self-describe [text]
LGBTQIA+ Identity [multiple choice]
LGBTQIA+ Identity: Self-describe [text]

2. Satisfaction and comfortability

What is your level of satisfaction with the LGBTQIA+ resources currently provided by Boston University's administrators? (1 = very unsatisfied, 5 = very satisfied)

Indicate your level of comfortability being openly LGBTQIA+ (aka "out") at BU in the following contexts ... (1 = very uncomfortable, 5 = very comfortable)

   In Classroom Settings
   In Student Organizations (i.e. Clubs)
   At Sporting Events
   Traveling or Spending Time On-Campus
   Greek Life Parties/Events
   When Spending Time with Friends
   In BU Work Settings
   At BU FitRec

3. Open-ended questions

What LGBTQIA+ resources are you aware of that BU provides for students? Please provide as much detail as possible.

Would you like to see more LGBTQ+ resources on-campus? If so, what resources would you like to see? [Some potential resources are provided to choose from, and there is an opportunity to write-in other resources]
APPENDIX 2. Comments from BU students regarding LGBTQIA+ resources at BU

For resources that more than one student listed, the number of students who listed that resource are noted.

What LGBTQIA+ resources are you aware of that BU provides for students? Please provide as much detail as possible.

- Gender-Neutral Housing (21)
- All-gender bathrooms (15)
- Ability to change your name in various systems (7)
- SHS LGBTQ+ support group (6)
- Gender-Affirming Healthcare at SHS (5)
- SHS counseling (4)
- SHS LGBTQ+ resource page (2)
- Condom Fairy
- PrEP at SHS
- LGBTQIA+ Center for Faculty & Staff (4)
- Howard Thurman Center (3)
- SARP counseling (2)
- Questrom DEI Office
- KHC LGBT Circle
- BU Today articles on queer topics
- DOS Pride BBQ

We would like to distinguish the following responses, as they are not resources provided by BU administration, but by student-led organizations and initiatives (some with the assistance of faculty and staff volunteering outside their prescribed roles):

- Queer Activist Collective (26)
- Q’s Gender-Affirming Product Program (5)
- Out List (4)
- Lavender Graduation (3)
- Center for Gender, Sexuality, and Activism (3)
- CGS Intersection (2)
• Trans Listening Circle

The following are notable responses that speak to the fact that the majority of LGBTQIA+ resources for students at BU are being provided by other students:

*I am unaware of any resources provided by BU, I am only aware of resources provided by student-run initiatives.*

*It honestly feels like the majority of programs and initiatives and LGBTQ+ resources are pushed and led by student groups and faculty members, not BU in general.*

*I just know of Q itself, but I do not know of any LGBTQIA+ resources that BU itself provides students.*

*I rely a lot on the power of student-driven initiatives.*

*As far as I know, BU does not provide any resources for LGBTQIA+ students, everything that exists is due to the efforts of students.*

*Most of what I see happening around campus seems to come from student initiatives rather than admin.*

*If Q didn’t exist, there would be 0 resources for the LGBTQ+ community.*

There were also 44 responses (38% of respondents) in which the answer was “none.”

Would you like to see more LGBTQ+ resources on-campus? If so, what resources would you like to see? [Some potential resources are provided to choose from, and there is an opportunity to write-in other resources]

• More gender-neutral facilities (e.g. housing and bathrooms) (140)
• LGBTQ+ inclusivity training for faculty, staff, and student organizations (132)
• A centralized website for LGBTQ+ resources (125)
• A staffed LGBTQ+ resource center that supports students (116)
• Regular LGBTQ+ meetings, events, and programming (101)
• University-wide Committee to promote LGBTQIA+ inclusion (101)
• Accessible, simple process for students to change their name and gender identity across all of BU's systems, records, and documents (7)
• LGBTQ+ mental health resources (3)
• LGBTQ+ DEI Liaison to the President
• An organization/support for graduate students
• Intersectionality training (i.e. how race and gender and sexuality intersect and what faculty, staff, and students can do to support and lift up BIPOC queer members of the BU community)
• Inclusion of LGBTQIA+-focused workshops and resources from each academic department (e.g. what is it like to be queer in STEM or International Relations?)
• Free rainbow/other queer identity-representing merch like flags, stickers, to put on your door or backpack to show our queer friends that we love and welcome them
• Opportunities for student allies or questioning students to learn and engage with the community
• LGBTQ living space, floor, and/or living-learning community
• Roommate matching for LGBTQ students to find LGBTQ-friendly roommate
• Procedure for reporting LGBTQ-related bias incidents and hate crimes
• Accountability process for faculty who consistently deadname and misgender students
• Training on how Title IX regulations impact mandatory reporting for anti-LGBTQ discrimination and how changing U.S. presidential administrations impacts staff/faculty/grad student workers’ legal obligations for reporting
APPENDIX 3. Comments from BU Students from online climate survey open-ended questions about their experiences

The responses below have been condensed for the sake of concision. Please see the unabridged version with all responses here.

THEME I. VISIBILITY, COMMUNICATION, COMMUNITY

Pervasive Invisibility

I had the opportunity to speak with a current member of the Board of Trustees about my experience as a Queer student on campus and I asked if/how the Board of Trustees intends to support Queer students or push initiatives that would benefit Queer students at BU. I gave her my ideas for ways that she can use her power to support Queer students. Her response was "We don't do that sort of thing, we don't stick our necks out for certain groups of students." In that moment I felt silenced. It makes me feel like BU administration doesn't give a shit about me or my community.

I generally feel like I'm taken more seriously and given more consideration by faculty and staff, both in the classroom (by professors), and in other student services (dining, billing, maintenance staff) if I am straight-passing. If I “look gay” or “sound gay” I feel like some staff and faculty are less interested in interacting with me or taking me seriously. When I speak and dress differently, I get more favorable treatment. It makes me feel like I have to completely remove my identity in order to succeed professionally. Obviously not all staff and faculty do this, but it’s something I’ve had to live with all my life, including here at BU.

A large part of my identity is erased on the first day of class, and continues to be invisible for the rest of the semester, when a professor doesn't provide me an opportunity to share my pronouns. On the rare occasion I feel comfortable enough to share my pronouns without being invited to, I know I am opening the door to being misgendered because many professors I've had are unknowledgeable about pronouns other than “she/her” and “he/him.” This issue would be solved if BU offered LGBTQ+ inclusivity training to professors and provided suggestions on making classrooms inclusive and affirming environments.
I really resonate with Derald Wing Sue’s descriptions of minorities experiencing consistent microaggressions as “death by a thousand cuts.” It feels like a good encapsulation of my friends’ and my experiences at BU. I think a lot of people have a misconception that discrimination only manifests as large, flashy acts of violence — true in some cases, yes, but there is so much more to it than that. There is also a more insidious form of harm and “othering” that minority BU students experience daily. At first, I could handle the “everyday slights or indignities;” but going every day being misgendered, deadnamed, wrongly presumed, treated differently, etc. by my classmates, professors, advisors, staff, roommates, etc. just really wore me down over my 4 years at BU, until I was just so exhausted that I didn’t have the emotional energy or patience to correct and educate those around me. Now that I’m graduated, I look back at my college experience and just feel disappointed, empty, and alone, like the past 4 years were spent gritting my teeth and trying to survive rather than being able to find connection and what brings me joy. To my trans and queer peers considering attending BU: Don’t go through what I had to go through. Your life is too important, and you deserve so much better.

Need for LGBTQIA+ Student Center, website, programming, and resources

Organizations like CGS Intersection and primarily the Queer Activist Collective have allowed me to personally explore my sexuality and find comfort in it at BU far more than any administrative effort. I have experienced not only a sense of community, but also genuine attempts by fellow students for meaningful change (gender affirmation products programs, gender inclusive housing, social awareness workshops and more) that I wish were championed by administration.

BU is a place where I’ve felt safe coming to terms with who I am, but the university seems hesitant to commit to a comprehensive understanding of the well-being of trans students in particular. There’s a key difference between trans acceptance and the material allocation of resources for their success, especially in terms of housing.

I feel safe being out on campus and in classes but I think that’s just because I’m not afraid to hide. I would like if there were resources for students who come out in college. My girlfriend was outed to her parents while she was here and they tormented her. Threatened to cut her off, and were verbally and emotionally abusive. But there was no one to help. Could they stop paying her parent plus
loan? Could they call BU and unenroll her? How does she become independent in the middle of college? Is there emergency housing during breaks? Because she didn’t have those resources or people to talk to, she had to go back into the closet. She’s home for the summer and it’s emotionally abusive. If there were resources for students who come out during college, then maybe she could have had the ability to be out and proud, safe, and loved by everyone around her for who she is.

I honestly feel like the university tries but are just unsuccessful in their approach to inclusivity and Queer allyship. It’s very performative and relies on very small student led groups to enforce its policies rather than creating a large, widely seen network of resources, support, and student-event opportunities for its Queer student populations.

Need for LGBTQIA+ scholars, scholarship, and teaching

I’d love to see more resources provided to LGBTQ+ scholars and topics. The way that WGS doesn’t even get its own department and is only offered as a minor (despite many other schools offering it as a major) really shows how little BU actually values that field of academia.

I took a course on gender (taught by a cishet white woman), and trans and gender non-conforming folks were not discussed at all. I thought this course would provide me with an opportunity to think outside of the gender binary but instead the binary was only reinforced. There was also not an LGBTQ+ terminology 101 that provided students with the language they needed to discuss identities other than cis men and women, and this led to students using language that was inaccurate, unaffirming, invalidating, and sometimes outright offensive. There was also very little discussion about intersectionality. BU needs classes and professors who are dedicated to educating students about trans people, especially trans people of color.

The majority of current scholarship on gender and sexuality focuses on white and cis people, and most of my professors have also been cis and white. It would be great if BU could provide more resources toward underrepresented faculty and topics, especially QTBIPOC.

In multiple classes last year, I had positive experiences in which we discussed the foundations of race, sexuality and gender. It stuck with me because the professor
was adamant about having productive and respectful conversations about the topics, with a focus on historical context, and recognition of wrongdoings. I felt comfortable in the setting and proud that my professors were open about discussing the topic.

Communications

One thing that could be more visible is some sort of indicator of professors and staff who are allies or have undergone LGBTQ+ and QPOC inclusion training. My undergraduate university had a program where professors received a small “Ally” sticker with a rainbow on it to indicate to out or closeted LGBTQ+ students they were a resource and a safe person to share any concerns or questions around LGBTQ+ inclusion and identity.

There is a lack of knowledge at BU about using gender-inclusive language, and it is prevalent in all areas of BU’s communications, especially those coming from the very top. In President Brown’s “Letter to the Community on the Supreme Court Decision on Roe v. Wade,” he refers to “women’s reproductive rights” when the Supreme Court Decision is not one that only affects women. It affects everyone who can become pregnant, and his language fails to include trans masculine, nonbinary, intersex, and genderqueer folks.

I feel very unsupported here at BU and it is so clear once you get here that the BU administration does not care about supporting LGBTQ students. I was also very upset by BU’s decision to allow a speaker to come and talk about getting rid of LGBTQ people and calling us pedophiles. It makes me feel more unsafe than I already feel, which is saying something because I’ve already gotten harassed and targeted for being queer on campus by both BU students and employees. I am just glad to graduate soon because I can’t handle much more of this toxic environment.

The more I learn about BU’s former president [John Silber], the more disturbed I become. Why is he still celebrated by BU leadership and the street named after him is listed as BU’s official address? The man spewed a near-endless stream of bigoted comments, set back queer activism decades, and terrorized the LGBTQ community at BU. He basically attacked every minority group you could think of. The fact that this has never been addressed by BU is unconscionable and speaks volumes about BU’s priorities.
President Brown publicly misgendering a nonbinary student leader during 2022 Commencement, being publicly corrected by that student, and then immediately misgendering them again — in front of thousands of people, no less — is a perfect example of the culture of ignorance and disregard toward LGBTQIA+ students at BU. The President, Provost, and Board of Trustees *should* be exemplary leaders in promoting LGBTQ+ excellence, but I have only seen evidence to the contrary.

BU treats LGBTQ+ people like a monolith, thereby erasing the experiences of any LGBTQ+ person who isn't cisgender, white, rich, able-bodied, etc. The first step BU needs to take is to have a more intersectional understanding of LGBTQ+ people. For example, when my classmate and I met with the Dean of Students in April 2021 and asked why there wasn’t more training focused on supporting LGBTQ+ students, he said that they were focused on BIPOC training right now - as if the two were mutually exclusive. This can also be seen by how BU elevates cis and white queer people into positions of power as the “spokespeople” for the LGBTQ+ community, despite those people often not understanding how to meaningfully engage with and support LGBTQ+ folks who are less privileged than them.

**Need for Training**

The lack of training given to students and faculty concerning LGBTQIA+ issues is very apparent in the way that the queer and trans community are tolerated rather than celebrated.

Making LGBTQ+ trainings “optional” sends the message that it is also “optional” to treat LGBTQ+ people with the respect and dignity every human deserves. This is an incredibly harmful message, especially to LGBTQ+ youth.

There are many well-meaning BU employees who have expressed that they want to support LGBTQ+ students but aren’t being given the knowledge they need to do so, and just don’t know where to start or who to ask. It's important for BU to be providing regular trainings and encouraging education and implementation of D&I best practices.

I had a really bad experience with a professor who created an unsafe space in her classroom this semester. When I met with her to discuss my concerns (regarding pronouns) she refused to take accountability and gaslit me for telling her the way she set up the class created an unsafe space for me.
Professors need to make saying pronouns normalized. One of my professors argues with students who use they/them that she is trying her best but in a harsh tone.

Institutional Responsiveness

As a trans student, I’m made to feel like my mere existence is a massive burden for BU staff to accommodate. It’s exhausting navigating systems that are so clearly hostile toward me. Even something as simple as asking people to use my correct name is treated like I’m asking too much.

I have had an absolutely horrendous time at BU trying to get support. The Dean of Students and everyone who I’m directed to have acted extremely unsupportive and sometimes even hostile toward me. They told me, "sorry about this, we're working on being more inclusive. things are coming." But it’s been years and I had to take a medical leave because I was struggling so much. Despite seeking help from every department, program, etc. that BU offers for "wellbeing and support" I had horrible experiences and no one helped me or took me seriously. I became extremely suicidal and had to leave BU entirely to find a more supportive environment. All of my friends left too because they couldn't cope in such a hostile environment. I am ashamed that BU claims to be a pinnacle of diversity and inclusion when they severely abuse and neglect such a large portion of their student population. I am ashamed to take part in an institution that causes such harm to my community.

BU’s Dean of Students has been a historically unsafe and indifferent space for queer and trans students seeking help. The amount of times I've been ignored or downright gaslit by their staff members, even their token “queer” staff, is concerning and hypocritical.

Holding a DOS consortium for “queer student leaders on campus” to help “increase engagement within the queer community” is not nearly enough. I've rehashed my trauma caused by homophobic institutional abuse too many times, only for “support staff” to string me along to no avail.

In my experience, Dean Battaglino has been the only dean of students admin who has genuinely tried to support me as a queer student having a difficult time at BU. I really appreciate him doing that when no one else did.
BU needs to make concrete steps toward connecting with and listening to the concerns, needs, and experiences of LGBTQ+ students. Not only are we (queer students) the ones experiencing harm on a daily basis, but we are also the ones that often have the solutions. However, we are left out of all decision-making processes.

No more performative listening sessions — I’m done talking. BU knows what they need to do.

Service Burden

As an LGBTQ+ student activist, I’ve sacrificed most of my college career (social life, academic performance, time, money, sanity, health) in service to supporting other LGBTQ+ students who were in crisis and not getting the help they needed from an apathetic administration.

It’s beyond ridiculous that I put in 40+ hours of unpaid labor per week to do the life-saving work of what should be a full-time, paid staff member’s job. BU needs to do better and not rely on unpaid student labor. It’s cheap, exploitative, unprofessional, and downright embarrassing on their part. If I were a part of BU’s leadership team, I would be incredibly ashamed to “BU.”

A lot of LGBTQ+ and allied faculty and staff are incredible and do so much to support student activism on campus. However, these employees are not compensated for doing so much work (much of it emotionally taxing) outside of their role. It feels exploitative for BU admin to allow this dynamic to continue instead of actually hiring paid staff to do this.

My professor was about to give a lecture involving trans people and I noticed that his presentation used a lot of stigmatizing language. He agreed to meet with me prior to the lecture so I could teach him about the correct terminology to use and omit some inaccuracies. I’m grateful that he was so receptive, but I shouldn’t have had to “teach the teacher.”

Dr. Miller has helped me through multiple crises and has truly been my saving grace during my time at BU. She genuinely saved my life. However, I feel really worried about how she and other amazing queer professors face additional pressure to support queer students without proper compensation/recognition,
when it should really be BU's job as a whole. I also worry for students who are like me but who couldn't find that kind of supportive figure at BU (especially since they're hard to find).

The lack of infrastructure and attention given to LGBTQ inclusivity at BU at a systemic level leads to faculty, staff, and students individually putting in physical and emotional unpaid labor to address harm being caused to LGBTQ BU community members. It's pretty shameful for BU to exploit LGBTQ people and allies in this way.

THEME II. EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

BU Housing

I don't think it's fair that BU claims to offer “equal opportunity” services when trans and nonbinary students are denied safe and affirming housing outright or made to jump through hoops to receive it that cisgender students don't have to deal with (paying more, finding a roommate, outing yourself to housing staff, educating staff on your gender identity, being misgendered/deadnamed, etc.).

BU Housing is very confusing and inaccessible. The staff are at best clueless and at worst openly hostile to trans students. I tried to work individually with housing staff members and DOS staff who forced me to over-explain myself and justify why I needed gender-neutral housing. I ended up moving off-campus because it was a horrible experience; I refused to further degrade myself in a failed attempt to prove my humanity to BU staff members who could not care less about me or other trans students.

The BU housing person I worked with demanded that I speak with them on the phone and made me extremely uncomfortable. He talked a lot basically to cover up the fact that there was basically no official process for requesting housing accommodations for trans students. It was overall a really bad experience and I ended up taking time off of school because I was getting no support and I was stuck in a hostile environment at BU.

Coming in to BU, I tried to get Gender-Neutral Housing and was forced on a phone call with a member of BU Housing. Despite handling all cases for Gender-Neutral Housing, this person asked me to define every other term I said and forced me to defend why I even wanted Gender-Neutral Housing in the first
place. He also never mentioned that if I could not find another roommate I would be forced to pay $5,000 more for a single. He also asked me invasive questions such as ‘how would you feel if I was your roommate’ and ‘would you feel comfortable changing in front of me?’ Even if I wasn’t 17 and in high school at the time, I would still call it pedophilic that a middle-aged cisgender straight white man was asking me as a QTBIPOC these questions. I haven’t recovered from this trauma and have spent the past two summers dealing with chronic insomnia and an overwhelming sense of doom; I lie awake until well after the sun rises pacing the floor and feeling like I’m going to die. I never moved on from that day; I want the decision of where to go to college back, I want who I was before I knew such deep hurt back, but most importantly, I want to move on past that day when I took that phone call with BU Housing.

**BU Student Health Services**

The providers under the gender-affirming team at BU SHS are grossly underqualified and could *highly* benefit from cultural and gender diversity sensitivity training. One of the providers, [name redacted], misgendered me repeatedly and attempted to convince me to pursue fertility preservation treatments when I expressed I was not interested. She also held our gender-affirming hormone appointments in non-private settings, without headphones, and where other people could be seen walking around in the background (including her family).

The assistant scheduling my appointment deadnamed me and I politely corrected her. She nodded but then 5 minutes later deadnamed me again.

A nurse I had an appointment with on the gender-affirming healthcare team asked me to explain what “nonbinary” meant.

I reached out to BU’s referral coordinator seeking a therapist who identifies as an LGBTQ+ woman of color and was referred to a therapist who was a cisgender, heterosexual white man. I eventually discovered Boston GLASS through my own research, an organization that offers free therapy to LGBTQ+ youth of color. SHS needs to educate their referral coordinators on culturally competent resources outside of BU.

I tried to talk to an SHS therapist about my struggles with gender and they froze and had a look of panic on their face when I brought it up. It’s pretty clear they
didn’t know how to respond and it was super uncomfortable. Needless to say, I didn’t schedule a follow-up appointment.

BU Disability & Access Services

I worked with [name redacted] in DAS, who deadnamed me after I had told her my chosen name multiple times, which was super frustrating. In general, I feel like she didn’t really “get” trans students. She gave me a ridiculously hard time about receiving accommodations and clearly didn’t understand the intersections of gender identity and disability. The whole situation was super uncomfortable and disappointing.

I feel like disability and access services should do a better job about using the right language and terminology when working with LGBTQ students.

In 2020, a staff member in disability and access services misgendered my friend asking for assistance getting accommodations, even though they had literally signed off with their pronouns for the last few emails. It felt ironic considering this staff member was queer (although cis white) and branded herself as the “go-to person” for LGBTQ students who need support. It made me not want to reach out to get accommodations for myself.

I asked to switch [DAS] staff members [from] the person I was working with because I didn’t feel comfortable, and the newer person was a breath of fresh air with understanding trans-inclusive language, pronouns, etc.

In my experience, many BU people don’t understand that you can be queer, AND trans, AND disabled, etc. It’s like they tell me to pick which of my marginalized identities, because being multiply marginalized and needing multiple types of support is just too complicated for them to understand for some reason.

Classroom Environment

I’ve had professors misgender and deadname me in class despite telling them ahead of time about my name and pronouns. A script I wrote about being trans was selected for a production class in which one of the professors repeatedly misgendered the main character and clearly had no idea how to deal with misgendering due to lack of inclusivity training.
I was misgendered in a class so much this semester that CFA administration told me I could stop going to the class. They said they would provide training but I highly doubt anything will change. The experience was horrible and ruined my mental health this semester.

I’m tired of the ordeal of having a conversation with my professors at the beginning of every semester explaining that the name in the directory is not the name I go by and then worrying that if I don’t include my legal name I won’t get course credit. It’s exhausting and frustrating having to give my dead name out to university services when trying to resolve housing issues or ask questions about advising, financial aid, etc.

I noticed that the climate towards LGBTQIA+ people is different in different departments, and was particularly surprised to notice that the attitude was much more inclusive and positive in the bio department than the womens/gender studies (people are much more respectful of my pronouns in bio classes for example).

I don’t feel comfortable outing myself as a nonbinary person when my professors and peers often unnecessarily use binary gendered language in the classroom, i.e. "men/women are X", "he or she did Y", etc.

Professors typically are pretty bad at navigating preferred names versus legal names, and I’ve been outed multiple times by various professors and had to explain to classmates that I’m not my legal name.

I’ve had negative experiences in the psych department with a professor using outdated and transphobic language for the sake of “physiological psychology”. He showed extremely uncomfortable videos highlighting gay and trans student experiences without trigger warnings.

I’m treated differently by my professors when I dress the way I’m comfortable/ gender-neutral fits etc versus when I’m dressed to go to work after class (heteronormative/ "expected" clothing, business casual).

I have had some very wonderful, openly queer professors during my time at BU, which has been amazing, especially coming from a more conservative area of the country.
BU Work Environment

As an RA, my boss misgendered me and deadnamed me consistently, using the excuse that I was not out when I applied to the job even though I was out before I started working at the job.

I was harassed very much by my mentor during graduate school for being gay. There was a serious lack of any understanding of how harmful those behaviors were. There felt like no good institutional support either.

For the first 1.5 years (out of my 2 year degree) I dealt with misgendering from my graduate PI which took a large toll on my mental state and strained our relationship.

Working at Tsai performance center and knowing my bosses are out as non-binary makes it a great work environment.

Student Organizations

I've been in situations where I left student org meetings because I felt really uncomfortable and unwelcome as a trans person. It's definitely deterred me from pursuing extracurricular activities and feeling like a true part of the BU community.

CGSA and SRF made me feel very isolated. I think it was a combination of my race and then my sexuality on top of that, so I had to move away from them.

I was cornered by students who were in leadership positions in the Catholic Association who tried to convince me to undergo conversion therapy and to “resist the temptation” of being queer. It was a very frightening and upsetting experience which only exacerbated my intense struggles to reconcile my faith and queer identities. When I reported this to an SAO professional staff member, I felt like she just brushed me off. I didn't know what else to do, so I tried to just forget the whole thing — but it still haunts me.

Being a part of my student org is the #1 reason I feel comfortable as a queer person on campus. If I didn't have that kind of community and support system, it would be very difficult for me. I've definitely felt less connected with the queer community here than I did even in high school.
I just want to emphasize how much I truly rely on student provided resources. Q in particular has been so incredibly helpful for me, and I really think that the work that various student organizations do is the reason that I’m comfortable being openly queer at BU.
APPENDIX 4. Anonymous online all-gender bathroom survey

1. Questions

Our BU All-Gender Bathroom survey, open to all BU students, asked the following questions:

1. How satisfied are you with the availability of all-gender bathrooms on BU’s Charles River Campus?

2. Where would you like to see more all-gender bathrooms on BU’s Charles River Campus?

3. Are you aware of the BU all-gender bathrooms online map?

4. Do you believe all-gender bathroom location signage is adequate in buildings where they exist?

We disseminated a link to the all-gender bathroom survey through the Queer Activist Collective’s and the Student Government IMPACT Committee’s social media accounts. The survey was open from September 22-October 10, 2022. In total, 65 BU students completed the survey. To ensure only BU students were completing the survey, BU SSO authentication was required. Please note that this is a convenience sample of BU students who chose to respond to our survey administered by students, not BU administration.

2. Results

Below are buildings where students would like to see more all-gender bathrooms. For locations that more than one student listed, the number of students who listed that location are noted.

- College of Arts & Sciences (26)
- Dormitories
  - Warren Towers (8)
  - West Campus (4)
  - The Towers (3)
- George Sherman Union (16)
- Metcalf Science Center (13)
The comments below speak to the need for more all-gender bathrooms on campus:

Some buildings have several gender neutral bathrooms and others have zero, leaving me with the choice of either going into the wrong bathroom or going out of my way to another building to find a bathroom, which has sometimes made me miss class unnecessarily.

The fact that there are some buildings without gender neutral bathrooms has meant that I've had to go entire 6+ hour class days without using the bathroom, which was detrimental to my ability to focus in class.

More [all-gender] bathrooms are highly necessary. I have friends who were unable to use the bathroom for their entire 13 hour school day because the only gender neutral bathroom in our building was constantly occupied.
I don’t like how a lot of the buildings have all gender bathrooms only on one floor; usually, I have to end up taking the stairs just to go to it and it wastes a lot of my time. Sometimes they’re difficult to find too and on the first time in the building, I spend a lot of time looking for them.

It’s really demoralizing for [nonbinary] students to have to enter a bathroom that doesn’t align with their gender identity, and then they often get comments about it (“this isn’t your bathroom!”) that make the experience, which should be simple, extremely difficult and anxiety-inducing. For cis people, try to imagine if there were no bathrooms for your gender in a building, so you had to use one for the “other” gender. It would be wildly uncomfortable if not downright harmful to you.

As a nonbinary person, not only do I struggle with choosing a gendered bathroom, but I often experience low-key bullying based on my bathroom choice from people who KNOW that I’m nonbinary. BU needs better nonbinary education and more all-gender bathrooms so that nonbinary students can have choices and feel safe choosing.

The comments below speak to the need for an improved map and better wayfinding signage:

A lot of the bathrooms are very out of the way, hidden with little to no signage, and just generally inaccessible to students going about their day.

An issue I think a lot of students run into is that the online bathroom maps system is really unclear and sometimes isn’t even correct. Also, just saying that a bathroom is on "the third floor" of a building for example is ineffective because I rarely ever see signs pointing me to the bathroom, leading me to search some really huge buildings for bathrooms.

I recently spent 10-15 minutes searching the entire third floor of the COM building for an all-gender bathroom because there weren’t any signs for it and it wasn’t located near the men’s and women’s bathrooms. I shouldn’t have to go on a scavenger hunt in the middle of the day just to use the damn bathroom!

Below are additional comments received on the survey that speak to students’ beliefs and experiences regarding all-gender bathrooms on campus:
GNC students are definitely at a disadvantage compared to cis students when it comes to accessing basic utilities like bathrooms.

Some bathrooms are clearly of lower quality or in less convenient locations than single-gender bathrooms.

All gender restrooms and [disability-accessible] restrooms being lumped together limits the use for BOTH unresourced groups. Also, the all-gender restrooms being the ONLY restroom on a floor make it a stop for cis students making it a harder resource to access for genderqueer and trans students.

The ones I have found have been a relief. They make such a difference in my daily life.

Ignoring this problem continues to push trans/[nonbinary] students to the side - is this really the inclusive/welcoming school I transferred into?
APPENDIX 5. Historical Context

Outside BU LGBTQIA+ History: Context for BU’s LGBTQIA+ History

To better understand the inadequacy of current LGBTQIA+ rights in the United States, we must acknowledge the history of how racism impacted Gay Liberation and thus set LGBTQIA+ activism on track to prioritizing the amelioration of white LGBTQIA+ lives over the lives of QTBIPOC. From a history of the tension between Homophile activism and Gay Liberation activism, we derive the following conclusions:

1. The cisgender white queer community has historically prioritized their comfort at the expense of QTBIPOC, whose needs have been disregarded and excluded from the community.

2. “Mainstreaming,” “normalizing,” and creating a “respectable” LGBTQIA+ community has always worked as a tool of white supremacy and transphobia.

3. Effective and inclusive Queer Liberation advocates for more than just the reformation of systems; it completely reimagines and sometimes abolishes them. Such systemic reimaginings include but are not limited to the abolition of policing, institutionalizing safe and affordable housing, and ensuring transgender people have bodily autonomy.

In 1951, Harry Hay founded the Mattachine Foundation (which later became the Mattachine Society). Hay’s Mattachine Foundation laid the foundation for LGBTQIA+ people to understand themselves as a socially, politically, and economically oppressed minority. In 1953, Hal Call took over the organization. Unlike Hay, Call was not apolitical and made the Society state, "We do not advocate a homosexual culture or community, and we believe none exists." As such a statement suggests, Call envisioned a “respectable” LGBTQIA+ community that would assimilate into a heterosexist culture and denied the importance of community building.

For this reason, Sylvia Rivera would later criticize this early homophile organization for its rigid adherence to “normal” gender roles. For example, at protests, Mattachine would require that all men wear suits and ties and all women wear dresses. Such a rigid dress code implies that LGBTQIA+ people must be “normal” and conform to white and cisheteronormative standards of professionalism to be
 respected, thus excluding all LGBTQIA+ community members outside of these norms, including QTBIPOC and TGNCI folks.

While Stonewall is often cited as the birthplace of Gay Liberation, we believe that Gay Liberation has a history long before that: one that demonstrates both the necessity of Gay Liberation to reimagine and abolish social systems and demonstrates the necessity of queer community building as a necessary part of queer survival and community care. As early as 1959, 10 years before the Stonewall riots, QTBIPOC were banding together to protect themselves against transphobic, racist, and violent police raids. The first of these riots began at Cooper’s Donuts in Los Angeles. To stand up for the drag queens being arrested, all the patrons decided to fight to stop the policing of transgender bodies.

Similarly, in 1965, a group of working-class QTBIPOC organized a protest against Dewey’s—a restaurant in Philadelphia—because they refused to serve people who wore clothing associated with people of the “opposite” gender. More reformist Homophile organizations such as Mattachine would have likely been fine with Dewey’s transphobia. However, the QTBIPOC community aligned themselves to protest transphobia even though QTBIPOC had no direct, self-serving interest to gain from the protest.

A year later, QTBIPOC riots at Compton’s Cafeteria would demonstrate a similar dependence on community solidarity. These riots are similar to those at Cooper’s Donuts and the Stonewall Inn. However, these riots are notable for their success in reimagining and changing the institution of policing. As a result of Compton’s Cafeteria and the QTBIPOC organizing that followed, the police department established a community liaison for the “homophile” community. While the inherent white supremacy and transphobia within the word “homophile” have already been discussed, this was the first change made to policing as a result of queer activism and thus demonstrates the vital need for the QTBIPOC community’s activism.

Stonewall acts as an incident that conveys how fundamental intersectionality is to the project of Gay Liberation. As Sylvia Rivera notes in her 2001 speech, everyone at Stonewall was “involved in different struggles […] But in these struggles, in the Civil Rights movement, in the war movement, in the women’s movement, we were still outcasts.” Stonewall, then, becomes a way for QTBIPOC to make themselves the subject of a liberation movement. Stonewall also symbolizes that Gay Liberation, at its core, seeks to reinstate bodily autonomy to transgender people and to push
back against the policing of transgender bodies. In the words of Marsha P. Johnson, Stonewall was a community saying “no more police brutality.” Likewise, As Merle Woo argues in her essay for *Smash the Church Smash the State: The Early Years of Gay Liberation*, Stonewall represented an adamant denial of one-dimensional politics and instead was an act of resistance against racism, homophobia, transphobia, and classism.

Despite having such intersectional origins, Gay Liberation would later be stripped of its intersectional ties in the name of assimilation at the hands of Homophile groups. In an interview with Marsha P. Johnson, Randy Wicker—a former member of Mattachine—states that after Stonewall, Mattachine asked everyone to obey the police and “respect law and order.” Siding with the police positions the homophile project as antithetical to the project of Gay Liberation. Therefore, we see that the decision of whether or not to center QTBIPOC or cisgender white gay men makes all the difference in determining how inclusive LGBTQIA+ activism truly is.

Cisgender white homophiles also utilized anti-Black racism as a tool to destroy Gay Liberation and replace it with their exclusionary values of gay assimilation. Dr. Roderick Ferguson writes in *One-Dimensional Queer* that the intersectional roots of Stonewall were used to delegitimize it. Multiple articles from Homophile publications criticize these intersectional origins by stating that QTBIPOC were “outnumbered by Black Panthers” who were “using the gay power movement for their own ends.”

The actions of Homophiles would then lead to the symbolic splitting off of former Gay Liberation Front members to make the more reformist and white-centered Gay Activist Alliance. The year after Gay Activist Alliance formed, Gay Liberation Front disbanded, leading to Sylvia Rivera calling the queer community “a white, middle-class, white club” because of her experiences as a transgender woman of color.

**Boston University History**

Just as LGBTQIA+ history provides the necessary context for understanding the current moment of LGBTQIA+ activism, BU’s LGBTQIA+ history is necessary to understand the recent experiences of LGBTQIA+ BU students. **It is imperative to acknowledge the history BU has had in creating an unwelcoming and, at times, dangerous environment for LGBTQIA+ students.** For this reason, we have
selected relevant episodes in BU's LGBTQIA+ history that best explain the current climate for LGBTQIA+ students at BU.

**Student Homophile League: 1969**

The history of LGBTQIA+ students at BU is not as progressive as is typically portrayed. While BU has been cited for its role in 1970's LGBTQIA+ activism, we believe that the Student Homophile League BU claims to be so proud of participated in exclusionary and anti-Black organizational practices.

In an essay from the anthology *Smash the Church, Smash the State: The Early Years of Gay Liberation*, John Kyper describes his experiences being involved in queer activism in Boston in the years directly after the Stonewall Riots. Most notably, Kyper complicates the idea that the Student Homophile League acted as a revolutionary part of queer history. Kyper writes that the principal goal of the Student Homophile League was to provide “social functions” for the queer community and that “political activism was an afterthought.”

On a similar note, Kyper states that Boston's chapter of the Gay Liberation Front was formed as a “political extension” to the Student Homophile League. Given the extreme Homophile print campaign dedicated to making Homophile activism antithetical to the intersectional origins of Gay Liberation, such a chapter of the Gay Liberation Front should not exist. However, it does, and it would seem that it is a rather conservative chapter that adheres to the white supremacist and misogynistic standards of Homophile activism.

At one point, Kyper writes, “members of GML could not overcome the ghetto mentality that encourages homosexuals to despise themselves and each other.” “Ghetto” here functions as an implicit way of establishing homophobia as exclusive and typical of Black people. Like the national Homophile activism of the time, Kyper seeks to position Blackness as inherently homophobic. Additionally, Kyper uses the term GML—standing for Gay Male Liberation—which the Boston chapter of the Gay Liberation Front later renames itself, thus reinforcing the idea that this organization was solely to advocate for and support cisgender white gay men.

The Student Homophile League does not represent BU's dedication toward intersectional progressivism; instead, we find it emblematic of BU administration's centering of cisgender, white, gay men. LGBTQIA+ activism at BU originates in white supremacy, misogyny, and assimilation into systems of oppression, thereby setting
the foundation for the current climate, which centers cisgender and white LGBTQIA+ community members while failing to provide holistic support to others within the LGBTQIA+ community.

**Gender-Neutral Housing Activism: 2012-Present**

In 2012, the BU Student Union (now known as BU Student Government) collaborated with Gender-Neutral BU, a collective dedicated to establishing Gender-Neutral Housing at BU, to collect data and write a proposal recommending BU create Gender-Neutral Housing for students. Ultimately, the initiative was successful; BU Housing instituted the proposal's demands in 2013.

However, the survey on which the Gender Neutral Housing proposal was based received very limited responses from TGNCI students. According to the 2012 BU Student Union survey, only 3% of students surveyed would use gender-neutral housing because they are either transgender or nonbinary, 62% of students would use Gender-Neutral Housing to live with friends of the “opposite” sex, and 22% of students would use it to live with their partner. These percentages show that TGNCI students who need gender-neutral housing were relegated to the background. In fact, only four of the 1,282 students surveyed were transgender, and only 1% were genderqueer. This limited feedback from TGNCI students led to the inability to effectively advocate for the equity and inclusion of TGNCI students.

It is clear that the Student Union recognizes transgender students’ affirmation of their gender as the core reason why Gender-Neutral Housing must be available to students. The proposal shares a student response that says, “if BU automatically puts a transgender student in housing based off their biological sex, chances are that student will be uncomfortable.” However, while well-intentioned, the actual demands made by the proposal do not center the safety and accessibility needs of TGNCI students. Perhaps most notably, the proposal recommends that only sophomores, juniors, and seniors be allowed to request gender-neutral housing, as allowing first-year students to access it would be “more problematic than beneficial.” They also note that there should be a limited number of gender-neutral rooms available.

As we uncover more of the history of Gender-Neutral Housing, we also become more concerned with BU administration’s repeated history of ignoring and trivializing calls for more TGNCI-inclusive policy. For example, a 2012 Daily Free Press article states that the former Dean of Students, Kenneth Elmore, called the
police on 50 student activists staging a sit-in in President Brown’s office. Despite peacefully protesting, the students were met by police officers who showed up “armed with zip ties and pepper spray.” Further, from 2012-2021, numerous LGBTQIA+ and allied students have advocated for a more accessible Gender-Neutral Housing policy but received little to no institutional responsiveness on the issue.

In the Fall 2021 semester, Sergio Aguirre—with the assistance of Christa Rose and Kris Berg—founded the Queer Activist Collective’s Housing Inclusivity and Accessibility Initiative. Together, they researched BU Housing’s policies and listened to the experiences of TGNCI students to develop a list of 10 barriers and solutions to accessing BU Housing. On February 28, 2022, the Initiative leaders publicized their barriers and solutions. Most notable among their solutions was that first-year and transfer students be allowed to live in Gender-Neutral Housing and that BU Housing must not limit the number of dorms designated as gender-neutral—two elements the Student Union opposed initially. While BU Housing has implemented Gender-Affirming Housing for first-year and transfer students, not all the proposed solutions have been implemented.

**Anti-LGBTQIA+ Rhetoric and Speakers: 2019, 2020, and 2022**

Since the release of the 2018 Task Force’s Final Report, BU has had three notable instances in which the safety, solidarity, and support of BU’s LGBTQIA+ community was severely compromised.

**Ben Shapiro**

On November 13, 2019, Ben Shapiro was invited by a student organization to speak at BU. There was much discourse amongst the student body leading up to this event, with students rightfully concerned and upset about the racist and anti-Black, homophobic, transphobic, and misogynistic rhetoric he used. Notably, Shapiro has a history of problematic rhetoric and ideology around the LGBTQIA+ community, such as believing that LGBTQIA+ identities are mental illnesses.

Many BU community members condemned BU’s decision to help fund the event and provide a platform for it, especially as Shapiro’s speech, “America Was Not Built On Slavery, It Was Built on Freedom,” contained copious amounts of anti-Black racist rhetoric. On social media, 133 Black students shared how they felt
“abandoned, triggered, frustrated, disheartened, devalued, infuriated, overwhelmed, ignored, and embarrassed of BU.”

Even over 2,200 BU community members signing a petition to stop Shapiro from speaking because of hate speech did not deter the University from allowing this event. This event negatively impacted several marginalized communities. BU failed to prioritize these students' wellbeing, safety, and inclusion; instead, BU ignored the voices of those directly harmed by Shapiro’s rhetoric.

**Transphobia on Campus**

BU has a well-known tradition where students spray paint the rock on the BU Beach. Multiple student organizations throughout the University partake in painting this rock with their organization’s name and colors.

On November 20, 2020, the rock was spray painted with the colors of the transgender pride flag in honor of Trans Remembrance Day (TDOR). TDOR was started in 1999 as a vigil to honor the memory of Rita Hester, a Black transgender woman who was murdered in Allston. It is now a day observed annually that honors the memory of the transgender people whose lives were lost in acts of anti-transgender violence.

Immediately after the rock was spray painted, members of the Kappa Sigma fraternity painted over the trans pride flag. The Kappa Sigma President at the time openly acknowledged that the fraternity was aware that it was TDOR, thus making it clear that it was an act of transphobia.

Student Government denounced the fraternity’s transphobic act and passed an action plan to work alongside Greek Life leaders and improve the culture by recommending trainings occur in the following areas: anti-hazing, diversity and inclusion, LGBTQ+ allyship and inclusivity, mental health, and sexual assault prevention.

**Michael Knowles**

On April 21, 2022, BU allowed Michael Knowles—a political commentator who frequently directs his rhetoric against the LGBTQIA+ community—to speak at a student organization’s event. The topic of the event was originally set to be on America’s response to COVID-19, but was switched a week before the event to a
new topic: “Teach the ABCs, not the LGB(T)s.” At this poorly-attended event, Knowles referred to LGBTQIA+ students participating in a peaceful walkout as “creeps” and “groomers.” It is also important to acknowledge that Knowles used his social media following to target an LGBTQIA+ BU student near the event date.

We want to highlight a portion of the Queer Activist Collective’s statement on this event:

“Knowles’ widely-condemned speaker engagements are grounded in the dangerous misconception that the existence of LGBTQIA+ people—especially the transgender and gender-nonconforming community—poses a threat to young people, and should therefore be suppressed and erased. This rhetoric echoes an effort across the country to fear-monger and spread misinformation in order to violate the human rights of millions of people.

BU claims to value free speech. However, hate speech especially comes with consequences. Knowles’ ‘free speech’ contributes to an intolerant culture of violence that seeks to incite fear and terrorize LGBTQIA+ people.

BU’s Statement on Free Speech and Expression explains that speech “incompatible with the safety of the [University] community” is not protected. Yet, BU’s administration permits the spread of Knowles’ transphobic rhetoric on campus. This implies that transphobic rhetoric is not only deemed acceptable by BU, but is also ‘protected.’”

We appreciate BU’s commitment to upholding a campus of free speech and expression but allowing for a speaker that directly denies the existence of and glorifies violence against LGBTQIA+ individuals must never be tolerated.
APPENDIX 6. Reflections

In conclusion of this report, we want to emphasize that one of our utmost priorities is to collaborate with BU community members and engage in dialogue on how to enact positive social change.

**To BU students:** if you are interested in LGBTQIA+ inclusion at BU, hope to engage in similar advocacy work, or would like to connect with us, we encourage you to reach out to us at lgbtqia.bust@gmail.com.

**To BU faculty and staff, centers, departments, and offices:** if you would like guidance on implementing the recommendations put forth in this report or on better supporting LGBTQIA+ students, please utilize our Task Force as a resource and reach out to us at lgbtqia.bust@gmail.com.

We hope this report will serve as a foundation upon which future student activists can build to further our shared mission of creating a safer, more supportive, and empowering environment for all marginalized community members.

In the interest of transparency, we have noted our report’s limitations and Task Force demographics below.

**Limitations**

**Access.** As a student-created and led initiative, our access to spaces was limited. For example, when conducting the all-gender bathroom census, we were barred from faculty and staff-specific spaces that contained all-gender bathrooms. Our advertising capabilities were also limited, as we lacked the institutional resources and permission to send University-wide communications. As a result, our data samples were convenience samples of students who filled out our surveys. Future research would benefit from more all-inclusive access to spaces and widespread communication capabilities.

**Longitudinal effects.** Due to a deadline given by BU administration, we had to contend with limited time to collect data and create this report. Task Force members also assumed this initiative’s responsibilities on top of their full-time jobs, classes, extracurricular activities, and other essential duties. Future research would likely benefit from operating on a more extended timeline.

Back to ToC
Sample size. Given our limited outreach capacity, our survey respondents are a
convenience sample primarily of BU undergraduate students on the Charles River
Campus. Further, as we are a newly-formed Task Force, we lacked the rapport
needed to especially engage underrepresented populations within BU, such as
QTBIPOC. While 37% of our sample size identified as QTBIPOC, we would have liked
to better capture the experiences and needs of the QTBIPOC community at BU,
especially Black and Indigenous LGBTQIA+ students.

Funding constraints. This report was led by Task Force members who were not
personally compensated for this initiative. Our research budget was provided by a
$700 grant from CAS Student Academic Enhancement Fund, which was used
toward in-depth interviews with students, purchasing textbooks and other
academic materials, and local travel for stakeholder interviews. However, our
budget constraints resulted in the need to limit the number of student surveys and
in-depth interviews; given the sensitive and taxing nature of the interviews, we did
not feel it appropriate to request uncompensated labor from underrepresented
communities, nor were we able to incentivize participation to the extent we wanted.
We recommend that, if possible, future studies operate with a larger budget to
better incentivize participation and appropriately compensate researchers.

Bias and self-reporting measures. As a climate survey relies on self-reported
data, we could not independently confirm each unit of qualitative data, especially
relating to students’ reported experiences. We also believe that our personal
identities and positionalities inform our research and advocacy work. As such, we
have noted our Task Force demographics below. We attempted to mitigate any
instances of researcher bias by creating a diverse Task Force containing individuals
of many different backgrounds, recruiting faculty and staff advisors, and centering
our report on data collected through numerous methods rather than centering the
report on Task Force members’ personal experiences.

Language. We find it important to recognize that language and terminology rapidly
change and evolve. We also acknowledge that given the personal nature of
identity-based language, different people sometimes define the same terminology
in different ways. As such, the language, terminology, and definitions in this
report—especially identity-based language—may be considered inaccurate or
outdated in the future.
Demographics of Task Force Members & Advisors

**Race/Ethnicity:** Afro-Latinx; Black; Chinese; Indigenous & Latine; Iranian & White; White; White & Ashkenazi Jewish; White, Indigenous, & Latinx

**Nationality:** American; Asian American; Brazilian; Cuban; Dominican; Ecuadorian; El Salvadorian; Italian; Puerto Rican

**Sexual & Romantic Orientation:** Asexual; Bisexual/Non-monosexual; Demiromantic; Demisexual; Gay; Heterosexual; Pansexual; Queer; Sapphic

**Gender Identity:** Agender; Bigender; Cisgender Man; Cisgender Woman; Gender Non-conforming; Gender Non-conforming Woman; Genderfluid; Genderqueer; Gender-questioning; Nonbinary; Transmasculine Nonbinary

**Religion/Spirituality:** Agnostic Atheist; Catholic; Jewish; Non-Spiritual; Spiritual; Universalist Unitarian

**Socioeconomic Status:** Low-Income; Middle Class/Working Class; Upper-Middle Class

**Education Level:** Bachelor’s; Master’s; PhD; Some College (Undergraduate)

**Ability:** Able-bodied; Disabled; Neurodivergent/Mentally Ill; Neurotypical

**Person Who Has Experienced/Survivor of:** Attempted Suicide; Conversion Therapy; Cults; Domestic Violence; Forced Outing & Estrangement; Hate Crimes; Police Brutality/Misconduct; Sexual Violence

**Additional Identities:** Fat/Larger-Bodied; First-Generation Immigrant; First-Generation Student; Food/Housing-Insecure; Transracial Adoptee of Two Moms
APPENDIX 7. Glossary

**AFAB:** Acronym typically used in relation to sex that stands for “assigned female at birth.”

**AMAB:** Acronym typically used in relation to sex that stands for “assigned male at birth.”

**Chosen name:** The name a person goes by and wants others to use in personal communication with and about them.

**Cisgender:** An adjective that describes a person who identifies as the gender they were assigned at birth. Although sex and gender are distinct, most parents will raise their child with socially constructed ideas and norms of gender based on their sex (e.g. parents whose child is assigned female at birth will often assign them the socially constructed gender identity of “woman”).

**Cishet:** An abbreviated term for a person who is cisgender and heterosexual and who is typically considered non-LGBTQIA+.

**Closeted:** Refers to LGBTQIA+ people who have not disclosed their gender identity and/or sexual orientation, often due to social pressure, stigma, or safety concerns.

**Combahee River Collective (CRC):** An Boston-based organization formed by Black lesbian feminists to center their experiences and create space for intersectional activism. Read their full statement [here](#).

**Coming out:** The process in which an LGBTQIA+ person discloses their LGBTQIA+ identity to themselves or others. Coming out can be context-dependent and occur numerous times throughout one’s life.

**Deadname:** Referring to a person by a name they no longer use; most commonly referred to as calling a non-cisgender person by their legal name, despite them no longer using that name.

**Gender-affirming:** Accepting someone’s true gender through explicit language or practices and treating them in ways that actively support them living authentically in that gender.
**Gender dysphoria:** The discomfort or distress that arises from the incongruence of one’s true gender identity and their gender assigned at birth.

**Gender expression:** The external appearance of one’s gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, body characteristics, or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine. People of the same gender may have different ways of personally expressing their gender.

**Gender identity:** Often abbreviated to “gender,” a person’s internal sense of their own gender. This does not have to match “biological sex” or “sex assigned at birth.” Gender identity is socially constructed and distinct from sex and gender expression.

**Gender/sex binary:** The (false) belief that sex is binary and determines gender.

**GNC:** Acronym that stands for “gender non-conforming.”

**Heteronormativity:** The belief that heterosexuality is the only natural and socially acceptable sexual orientation.

**Heterosexual:** A sexual orientation in which a person is exclusively attracted to people of a gender other than their own.

**HRT:** Acronym that stands for hormone replacement therapy.

**Intersectionality:** A framework coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw that classifies social categories such as race, class, sexuality, gender, etc. as societally interconnected and interdependent.

**Intersex:** A term for people whose reproductive or sexual anatomy does not fall into binary categories and understandings of “male” or “female.” Intersex traits exist on a wide spectrum.

**LGBTQIA+:** Acronym that stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual/Aromantic. The plus (+) represents the many non-cisgender identities and sexual orientations that are not specifically covered by the acronym.
**Microaggression:** An unintentional, subtle, or indirect act of discrimination against a member or members of a marginalized group.

**Misgender:** The act of referring to someone in a way that does not reflect that person's gender identity. For example, using incorrect pronouns, calling someone by their deadname, or using an incorrect prefix (e.g. Mr., Ms., ma'am, or sir).

**Outing:** Involuntary or unwanted disclosure of another person's sexual orientation or gender identity.

**Passing:** Being perceived by people as cisgender and/or heterosexual despite being transgender and/or queer.

**Sex:** Usually refers to biology, but there is no one way to define biological sex. Most people attempt to define biological sex with external genitalia or chromosomes, but the reality is there are five main major components of biological sex: chromosomes, hormones, expression of hormones, internal genitalia, and external genitalia. While most individuals exist within the two binaries of 'male' and ‘female,’ biological sex is a spectrum, and many people exist between these categories. These folks are called “intersex.” Sex is distinct from [gender identity].

**TGNCI:** Acronym that stands for transgender, gender non-conforming, and intersex.

**TGQN:** Acronym that stands for transgender women, transgender men, nonbinary/genderqueer, gender-questioning, and gender-not-listed.

**Transfeminine:** An adjective for transgender and/or nonbinary people (often those who were assigned male at birth) who seek to present more femininely, to transition to look more feminine, or who identify with a feminine gender identity or expression rather than a masculine one.

**Transmasculine:** An adjective for transgender and/or nonbinary people (often those who were assigned female at birth) who seek to present more masculinely, to transition to look more masculine, or who identify with a masculine gender identity or expression rather than a feminine one.

**Transgender:** An adjective that describes a person who does not identify as the gender they were assigned at birth. Although sex and gender are distinct, most
parents will raise their child with socially constructed ideas and norms of gender based on their sex (e.g. parents whose child is assigned female at birth will often assign them the socially constructed gender identity of “woman”).

**Transitioning:** The process of taking steps to live as one's true gender identity. Transitioning is different for each individual and may or may not involve medical interventions like taking hormones or having surgery. Transitioning may include socially transitioning, such as switching to pronouns that are affirming of their gender identity. Transitioning can also involve making changes to one's physical appearance and changing legal documents to match one's authentic sense of self.

**Trigger/content warning:** A statement made prior to sharing potentially disturbing content. This content might include graphic references to topics such as homophobia, sexual abuse, self-harm, violence, and eating disorders. This content can also take the form of an image, video clip, audio clip, or piece of text.

**Queer:** An adjective used by some people whose sexual orientation is not exclusively heterosexual. Once considered a pejorative term and used as a slur, queer has been reclaimed by some LGBTQIA+ people to describe themselves. However, it is not a universally accepted term even within the LGBTQIA+ community, so folks should be mindful when using it outside of describing the way someone self-identifies or in a direct quote.

**Questioning:** Describes a person who is unsure about, or is exploring, their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

**QTBIPOC:** Acronym that stands for “Queer, Trans, Black, Indigenous, People of Color;” used to refer to BIPOC within the LGBTQIA+ community.

**WOC:** Acronym that stands for “women of color.”