LGBTQ History & Background

This is a student-driven initiative that began at the 2011 Washington Community and Technical College (CTC) Students Legislative Voice Academy. Five Community College students, Matthew Shrader, Jacob Kovacs, Jonathan Russell, Dante Obcena, and Jake Atwell-Scrivner were engaged in developing a white paper and conducting presentations to the Admissions & Registrars Council (ARC), Council of Unions and Student Programs (CUSP), Multicultural Students Services Directors Council (MSSDC), and Washington State Student Services Commission (WSSSC).

The white paper promoted the Voice Academy's priorities for the upcoming legislative session. One of the five critical issues brought to the forefront was the recommendation to include LGBTQ demographic categories as part of our data collection on the CTC uniform admissions application.

On February 3, 2012, the students presented a PowerPoint entitled "Washington State CTC Student Coalition for LGBTQ Demographics" to WSSSC. The commission responded by agreeing that this was an important issue and recommended that a task force be formed.

Subsequently, the WSSSC LGBTQ Student Success Task Force was formed representing the following councils and constituencies: WSSSC, ARC, student leaders, Institutional Research, and State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) Information Technology.

The Task Force held its first meeting on March 26, 2012. It concluded that further research was necessary to determine the following:

1. The impact of this initiative on student success, achievement, and campus climate;

2. Steps needed to implement the process from decision to operational level, including IT support; and

3. A communication strategy to educate campuses and the broader community on the significant benefits of this timely initiative.

While limited research has been conducted regarding LGBTQ students who attend community colleges, what is available clearly supports the need for colleges to be cognizant and aware of the LGBTQ students enrolled in their institutions. This information helps to create programs and services, curricular offerings and safe spaces for all students to study and learn free from harassment and discrimination.

The LGBTQ Student Success Task Force has determined through research, practitioner knowledge and student experience that implementing this initiative will serve as a visible testimony of the CTC's commitment to diversity, academic achievement and student success.

In September, 2012 the LGBTQ Task Force presented their final [Report to the Washington Community and Technical Colleges (WACTC) Educational Services Committee](). The Task Force implementation plan was endorsed by WACTC, and WSSSC members agreed to contribute the financial support necessary to implement this initiative.

The Task Force determined that data will be most effectively collected quarterly on registration forms used by colleges. Detailed guidelines have been developed indicating who will have access to the aggregated data, which will be non-identifiable to specific students. These data elements will be included as part of the student's biographical record.

Collecting this data will allow colleges to know more about their students' progress and academic success. As a result, colleges will be better prepared to design and develop curricular and co-curricular offerings that reflect their students' diverse perspectives, and that promote and safe and welcoming learning environment for all students.

Based on preliminary research, it appears that the Washington State Community and Technical College system is the first of two-year public institutions in the country to begin collecting this data. The LGBTQ Student Success Task Force is proud of the work that has been done to implement this important initiative, and is appreciative of the support provided by college constituents across the State of Washington.