‘Flying under the Radar’

The experiences and perceptions of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Questioning students and how they differed from heterosexual experiences and perceptions of the campus climate at Unitec Campus in New Zealand in 2012

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of Master of Health Sciences, Unitec Institute of Technology 2013.
Declaration

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This Thesis entitled

"Flying under the Radar"

The experiences and perceptions of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Questioning students and how they differed from heterosexual experiences and perceptions of the campus climate at Unitec Campus in New Zealand in 2012

is submitted in partial fulfilment for the requirements for the Unitec degree of

Master of Health Sciences

Candidate's Declaration

I confirm that:

• This Thesis represents my own work;
• Research for this work has been conducted in accordance with the Unitec Research Ethics Committee Policy and Procedures, and has fulfilled any requirements set for this project by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee.

Research Ethics Committee Approval Number: UREC 2012-1063

Candidate Signature: [Signature]

Date: 1/2/2013

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the perception of students in regard to the campus climate as it affected Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Questioning (LGBTIQ) students at Unitec Institute of Technology (Unitec), in New Zealand in 2012 and whether this perception differed between heterosexual and LGBTIQ students.

An online questionnaire incorporating both quantitative and qualitative type questions was developed utilising Sue Rankin’s (2003) national campus climate assessment questionnaire. The questionnaire was modified to reflect the New Zealand context and the Unitec campus.

The population was drawn from the entire student body and consisted of those students who were enrolled to study at Unitec in August 2012 and had a current student email account (11,446 students). A link to the questionnaire was emailed to these 11,446 students. Three hundred and fifty-five students completed the questionnaire; 195 identified as heterosexual and 145 identified as LGBTIQ.

While the findings of the study indicate that, overall, most students, both heterosexual and LGBTIQ, spoke positively regarding their experiences of studying at Unitec. The research did uncover some differences between the campus climate perceptions of LGBTIQ students and those of heterosexual students.

Analysis revealed that LGBTIQ students experienced a level of invisibility and had a strong desire for a sense of community with other LGBTIQ students. They also revealed a reluctance to be “fully out”, both professionally and personally, on the Unitec campus. The theme of non-disclosure appeared to be related to perceptions of fear regarding sexual orientation. The data from this research suggests that, while the students who identified as heterosexual felt LGBTIQ identity was a non-issue, and were largely uncertain if LGBTIQ students were harassed on the Unitec campus, both heterosexual and LGBTIQ students identified uncertainty regarding institutional responses, policies, resources and curriculum for LGBTIQ students on campus.

The results of this survey may be utilised to impact on the focus and delivery of student services for LGBTIQ Unitec students, staff training and diversity initiatives at Unitec. Future opportunities exist to utilise this study as a baseline Unitec campus climate assessment for LGBTIQ students.
Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my mother Jan Crawford who sadly passed away unexpectedly on the 8th of October, 2012 while I was completing my writing. My Mum was a proud and kind person who raised me to treat others with dignity, compassion and understanding no matter who they were.

My life was full of eclectic characters when I was growing up; many came and went and some stayed for the distance. My Mum always had a smile and a laugh for everyone and she believed in endurance and resilience. She demonstrated her own resilience through a multitude of difficult circumstances in her life and as such she taught me to never give up and to believe anything is possible as long as you believe in yourself.

Mum passed her resilience on to me. “It has held me in good stead Mum, and allowed me to achieve many of my dreams and enhanced my soul and my character.”

My Mum was a firm believer in karma, “what goes around comes around” and as such she always taught me to “pass it forward”. If someone does something good for you, or is kind to you or helps you, pass that kindness or good deed or help onto another person.

And so Mum, I pass this piece of work onto others so that they can read, understand, extend their knowledge and hopefully enhance the lives of future Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Questioning (LGBTIQ) students.

Thank you for the sacrifices you made for me. I am eternally grateful to have been your daughter. Thank you for the enlightenment, the understanding, the little bit of magic and the sheer joy you brought not only into my life but into a great deal of others’ lives.

It is your spirit and memory which has empowered me to be able to complete this journey, which without you, never would have happened.

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Glossary

Please note that definitions/meanings of terms are often contested and change over time. The terms are often utilised differently in different texts such as those quoted in the literature review. The following definitions relate to what the terms mean in this particular research study.

- **Bisexual**: Refers to people who are sexually attracted to both sexes, i.e. males and females.
- **Coming Out**: There are many and varied definitions of coming out. In this thesis the term coming out is used to refer to the person declaring their homosexuality or same sex attraction to themselves or others, such as family, friends, peers, community, and lastly, to the public.
- **FSHS**: Faculty of Social and Health Sciences
- **FCIB**: Faculty of Creative Industries and Business
- **FTBE**: Faculty of Technology and Built Environment
- **Fa'afafine**: Fa'afafine is the gender liminal or third-gendered people of Samoa. A recognised and integral part of traditional Samoan culture, fa'afafine, born biologically male, embody both male and female gender traits
- **Gay**: Refers to homosexuals and lesbians. Most lesbians prefer the term lesbian and gay is more commonly used to denote the male relationship.
- **Gender**: Socially constructed behavioural characteristics attributed to being male or female, i.e. roles, expectations, norms and behaviour.
- **GLBT**: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered.
- **Heteronormativity**: The reinforcement of heterosexual norms by many institutions i.e. schools, church, workplace etc.
- **Heterosexism**: The assumption or belief that everyone is heterosexual or that heterosexuality should be the only acceptable form of sexual orientation.
- **Homophobia**: A fear or hatred of homosexuals, gay and/or lesbians.
- **Homosexual**: A term used to denote all people who are sexually attracted to members of the same sex.
- **Intersex**: Is the presence of intermediate or atypical combinations of physical features that usually distinguish females from males. An intersex individual may have biological characteristics of both the male and the female sexes.
- **Lesbian**: The term lesbian is used here to denote women who self-identify as emotionally or sexually attracted to other women.
- **LGBT**: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered
- **LGBTQ**: The acronym utilised in some research where Q stands for Queer, Questioning, Intersex and all other sexual identities not otherwise specified
- **LGBTIQ**: The acronym utilised within this research where LGBT stands for Lesbian, Gay,
Bisexual and Transgendered and IQ stands individually for Intersex and Questioning

- **Outing or being Outed**: Refers to a gay or lesbians sexuality being disclosed to others by a third person.
- **Questioning**: Identifies those people who are still uncertain in regards to their sexual orientation.
- **Sex**: Sex is the physical aspect of identity as male or female on the basis of biological make-up such as chromosomes, hormones, external genitalia and reproductive organs.
- **Sexual Minority**: A term utilised for all groups who do not identify with the dominant heterosexual or gender norms.
- **Sexual Orientation**: The direction of a person’s sexuality relative to their own sex. Usually classified according to the sex of the person one finds sexually attractive.
- **Sexuality**: Sexual feelings or behaviours and the expression of physical or psychological sexual relationships.
- **Transgendered**: A term used to describe people who may act, feel, think, or look different from the gender that they were born with.
- **Takataapui**: The Māori word meaning a devoted partner of the same sex.
- **Whakawahine**: The Māori word meaning the equivalent of the Samoan term Fa’afafine.
Chapter One: Introduction

Outline of the Research Project

Even at the point of initially exploring thesis topics and discussions with my academic peers, many people asked “why?” Why research the experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, Intersex and Questioning (LGBTIQ)\(^1\) students at Unitec in New Zealand in 2012? Comments such as “Surely in today’s society in New Zealand, there is no longer discrimination?” or “Who cares what their sexuality is? I just treat all students the same”, were common reactions. Sexual Orientation appears to be couched in Unitec’s philosophies under the broad umbrella of “diversity”. There is no specific reference to sexual minorities in any of Unitec’s core organisational policies. As recent discussion and research within New Zealand secondary schools and tertiary education sector reveals, the current socio-political arena appears to treat sexual minorities as a “non-issue” (Carpenter & Lee, 2010; Riches, 2011).

So why bother? The primary answer to this question is a law-based one. The Human Rights Act (1993) in New Zealand is designed to protect all individuals living in New Zealand from unfair or discriminatory treatment. It is illegal within New Zealand to discriminate and there are a variety of grounds that apply, one of which is sexual orientation. The Human Rights Act (1993) defines discrimination as occurring when a person is treated unfairly or less favourably than another person in the same or similar circumstances (Human Rights Act, 1993).

All higher education facilities within New Zealand are bound by this legislation and as such are required to:

A Note on Language\(^1\)

LGBTIQ, for the purposes of this research, stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, Intersex and Questioning. This research utilises the terms: “gay,” “lesbian”, “bisexual”, “heterosexual”, and “questioning (uncertain)” when referring to sexual orientation or identity. It uses the terms “man,” “woman,” “transgender,” and “intersex” when referring to gender identity. This language has been used to be as inclusive as possible. However, as previous research has identified, many individuals prefer other terms such as: “same sex attracted,” “same gender loving”, “asexual”, “pansexual” or “women loving women” etc. The term “questioning” (uncertain) has been included so participants do not have to conform to any distinct categorisation of sexuality. The study acknowledges that most transgender and intersex people also identify as “men” or “women.”

Language, within any research that includes issues related to “non-heterosexual” identity, has always been, and will remain, highly contentious and continually changing. While, I have chosen LGBTIQ, I realise that these terms are not all inclusive of how others may choose to identify their sexuality.

Where other research is referenced within this work, I will refer to the acronyms or terms used by the original researcher such as (GBLT), (LGBT) or “same sex attracted”. Where previous research has explored “homosexual” orientation, I will refer to this as LGBT.
• provide a safe and fair environment for all including those of a sexual minority
• eliminate discrimination
• provide for equal opportunity
• foster an environment where diversity is valued and everyone is able to be free from prejudice and unlawful discrimination (Human Rights Commission, 2010).

Equally, all graduates of the Unitec environment who are to work within the New Zealand are bound by the Human Rights Act (1993). This means that each graduate of Unitec in their professional practice, for instance as an architect, nurse, social worker, engineer, medical radiologist or IT specialist, must ensure that they put their own personal belief systems aside. This relates to personal, religious or cultural beliefs; all customers, clients and work colleagues must be treated with respect and equality and without discrimination in regards to sexual orientation and gender identity. While students at Unitec come from a diverse range of ethnic, cultural, religious and societal belief systems, if they are to practice within New Zealand they must comply with New Zealand legislation and regulations. As a higher education institution, it is Unitec’s mandate to prepare students for their future professional practice.

The Human Rights Act (1993) is based on the Yogyakarta principles which set out international human rights standards (Yogyakarta Principles, 2007). These standards specify that everyone has the right to an education. Specifically, in regard to education and gender identity and the rights of the sexual minorities, they advise all “States will take all necessary legislative, administrative and other measures to ensure equal access to education, and equal treatment of students, staff and teachers within the education system, without discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity” (Yogyakarta Principles, 2007, p. 10).

If these legal requirements are to be fully instituted in an effective manner, then all education institutions within New Zealand should be prioritising consideration of the issues LGBTIQ students experience on the campus or in the educational environment. All New Zealand education institutions are obligated therefore to ensure LGBTIQ students are afforded equality in the same way as any ethnic minority or other marginalised minority groups. Historical and current research clearly identifies LGBT people as a particularly marginalised minority group (Eliason, 1996; Mayer et al., 2008).

Over and above this legal requirement, there is the moral teaching/education perspective. Current research from the United States of America (USA), United Kingdom (UK), Australia and New Zealand notes that LGBT students frequently report the following:

• fears for their physical safety
• frequent disparaging remarks or jokes regarding sexual orientation
• anti-gay graffiti
• concealing their sexual identity based on perceived threat of intimidation, harassment or discrimination
• lack of integration of sexual orientation into curriculum
• censoring themselves in class for fear of negative consequences
• conflicts in class regarding the topic of sexual orientation, particularly in relation to clashes with religious beliefs
• lack of visibility of other LGBT students or LGBT role models
• lack of access to LGBT-specific support services.

Mayer et al. (2008) identify that, while attitudes in society are gradually changing, there continues to be a level of homophobia and mixed feelings about LGBT behaviours and identities.

Most historical research only examines LGBT experiences. This research incorporated intersex students and those students who were questioning (uncertain) about their sexuality experiences (see Glossary) to provide a more inclusive and less discriminatory group. The purpose of the research was to identify from a student perspective the experiences faced by LGBTIQ Unitec students in today’s society. The research allowed students to provide information regarding their personal experience of the Unitec campus and their perception of Unitec institutional actions and policies in regard to LGBTIQ students; as well as providing an opportunity for the students “to tell their story” regarding positive and negative experiences; and personal recommendations for change.

Brown and Gortmaker (2009) acknowledge that the purpose of any LGBT research study must not only evolve out of, but also be consistent with, the institution’s diversity goals and strategies. Unitec’s Equity and Diversity officer has developed an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. The strategy sets goals for 2010-2015 and states it is aiming towards “inclusive excellence”. The goal is to move diversity and inclusion from the peripheries of the institution to a central, core part of the institution. The strategy identifies diversity as an asset instead of a problem and provides a plan towards inclusive excellence (Farry, 2010).

The goals of this research reflected Unitec’s Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, with the aim being to assess how well the current campus climate provides a safe, supportive and inclusive learning environment as identified by student experiences. Additionally, it examined whether the LGBTIQ student perception and experiences of Unitec campus differs from that of heterosexual students. It aimed to identify what supports or positive practices currently existed and what LGBTIQ students felt needed to be done to enhance or create a more inclusive/supportive environment for future LGBTIQ Unitec students in New Zealand. This research project is fully supported by Unitec’s equity and diversity officer (See Appendix C).
The research results are used to provide a description of how students experience the Unitec campus in regard to the climate for LGBTIQ students; as well as a set of recommendations for empowerment of LGBTIQ students; and recommendations from LGBTIQ students on areas to improve the Unitec campus so all Unitec students can appreciate and celebrate sexual diversity in New Zealand society.

**Population and Sample**

This study took place at Unitec Institute of Technology campus in Auckland, New Zealand and was open to all students who were enrolled/registered at the campus in August 2012. The students were invited via email to participate in an anonymous survey questionnaire exploring the Unitec Campus environment for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex or Questioning (LGBTIQ) students. The survey, while targeted towards LGBTIQ students at Unitec, was also open to heterosexual students who could share their opinion of what they thought the Unitec campus environment was like for LGBTIQ students. The survey was emailed to a total of 11,446 students. While there are currently 23,879 students enrolled at Unitec only 11,446 have a current student email account.

**Problem Statement**

International studies have demonstrated that University or Higher Education campus environments for LGBT students are often “chilly” and less than satisfactory in regards to the areas of acceptance, inclusion and safety (Rankin, 2003; Baker, 2008). Within New Zealand, several studies have been completed on the experiences of LGBTIQ youth at high school (Otago University Students Association (OUSA), 2003; Riches, 2011; Rossen, Lucassen, Denny, & Robinson, 2009; Yep, 2003). These identified that LGBTIQ youth experienced higher levels of alcohol use, drug use and mental health issues. The researchers reported incidences of bullying, victimisation, harassment and assaults, with levels of suicide and self-harm well above and beyond those of their heterosexual peers (Rossen et al., 2009). Very little research exists on the experiences of LGBTIQ students in higher education in New Zealand. However; Rankin (2003) conducted a national study of American Universities in conjunction with the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. With its national scope, the study quickly became the benchmark for assessing campus climate perceptions, both nationally and internationally. Rankin’s findings identified that nearly 30% of LGBT students had been harassed in the previous year and 60% believed that LGBT students would be targets of harassment (Rankin, 2003).

**Significance of the study**

Campus environment or climate is one of the most talked about issues on many campuses when it comes to studies involving diverse populations (Shenkle, Synder & Baer, 1998). While several minority groups have reported less than ideal campus climates, there are unique challenges for
LGBTIQ students. Often students may be members of dual minority groups such as sexual orientation and race or disability. While race and disability may be clearly visible for others to see, sexual identity or orientation is invisible. Rasmussen (cited in Baker, 2008) identified the choices that people who belong to two minority groups can make when deciding whether or not to go public or be out. Akanke, a participant in the Rasmussen study spoke about her experience of being a student who was both gay and black. She explained “Being closeted is not a choice I wish to make. Nevertheless, because of the pervasiveness of racism, it is one that I chose to make. Being black, however, is not a choice” (Rasmussen, cited in Baker, 2008, p. 19).

There do not appear to have been any quantitative studies within New Zealand that have explored the experience of LGBTIQ students on a whole campus or higher education institute. There have been national and regional studies of LGBTIQ secondary school youth (OUSA, 2003; Riches, 2011; Rossen et al., 2009), as well as several small qualitative studies and one study that explored the experience of LGBTIQ students in a particular Faculty (Carpenter & Lee, 2010). The current understanding of the experiences of LGBTIQ students in higher education within the New Zealand context in today’s society is extremely limited. This study was designed to contribute to and enhance that understanding.

**Research Questions**

1. What are the perceptions amongst students of the Unitec campus environment for LGBTIQ students?
2. How does the perception of the Unitec campus climate for LGBTIQ students differ between heterosexual students and LGBTIQ students?

**Limitations**

While Rankin’s (2003) international survey questionnaire can be replicated anywhere in the world, what cannot be replicated is the variety of factors that lead to an individual student’s perceptions of campus climate (Baker, 2008). These factors may be unique to each individual and unique to the Unitec campus climate. The unique New Zealand environment, the current student population, and the timing of the research all impact on current students’ perceptions. Additionally, factors such as local politics, a multicultural student population and current national campaigns can change or alter people’s perceptions of campus climate. Of note, is that the timing of this survey in a New Zealand tertiary education environment coincided with a highly publicised “legalise love” same sex marriage debate, which saw a Bill for changes to the New Zealand marriage legislation to include same sex marriages pass its first reading in parliament (Shuttleworth, 2012). This debate led to an increase in activist levels from same sex marriage supporters as well as staunch debate from religious and anti-gay marriage groups. A “Save the sanctity of New Zealand marriage” campaign was active at the same time as the “legalise love” campaign (Shuttleworth, 2012).
led to a multitude of conflicting information being publicised which could have impacted on Unitec students’ perceptions regarding LGBTIQ people both in society and on campus.

Summary

This chapter has provided a brief introduction to the nature and identified need for the research incorporating a discussion of the population and sample, discussion of the significance of the research, identification of the actual research questions placed in a context of the overview of New Zealand legislation, the current New Zealand environment as well as the current New Zealand tertiary education requirements. The next chapter provides review of the literature, incorporating discussion on the significance of the campus environment to successful learning, a review of international research on campus climate for LGBT students, the impact of secondary school environments for LGBT students and a discussion on both the New Zealand context and the Unitec context. The third chapter describes the research process in depth and describes the methods utilised to answer the research questions. The fourth chapter focuses on data analysis and statistical results. The fifth chapter involves a discussion of the findings and chapter six looks at recommendations for the future. Finally, chapter seven summarises and provides a conclusion.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter outlines and discusses research studies related to LGBTIQ people in society as well as tertiary education. Initially, the historical context of LGBTIQ people in society is explored. Then research related to the overall importance of the education environment –, specifically, campus climate environments in tertiary education – and students’ learning, motivation and success, is discussed.

Specific discussion is focused on research that explores the campus climate for LGBTIQ students and is organised by the country of origin of the studies: United States, United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand research. Research findings are outlined and explored and their relevance or implications for this study discussed. This discussion incorporates research on the campus climate in relation to LGBTIQ students, their development of sexual identity and its significance to academic achievement. Australia and New Zealand share commonalities within their secondary and tertiary education environment and as such research from both will be explored in depth.

Previous international research on campus climate has identified a high proportion of LGBTIQ students under the age of 22 years (Baker, 2008; Ellis, 2009; Noack, 2004; Rankin, 2003; Rankin, Weber, Blumenfeld, & Fraser, 2010). Discussion from Australia and New Zealand will therefore incorporate research into the experiences of LGBTIQ youth at secondary school. For the under 22-year-old tertiary student, secondary school will most likely have been their most recent experience of an education setting prior to their commencement of tertiary education. The secondary school environment may therefore be one of the most significant factors in setting up the expectations or perceptions of most LGBTIQ tertiary students.

The current socio-political environment in New Zealand will also be incorporated and explored. As identified by Baker (2008), the current socio-political arena and current issues impact greatly on students’ perception of LGBTIQ issues and experiences and therefore perceptions of campus climate. The chapter will conclude with a description and discussion of the unique Unitec campus climate to place Unitec's experiences in context in relation to other international research and findings.

Historical Context

Prior to the nineteenth century, some LGBT people were persecuted by the church or punished by the criminal justice system for their unacceptable behaviours. During the nineteenth century, the medical model was developed, and homosexuality, or same sex attraction, first became associated with mental illness (Eliason, 1996; Mayer et al., 2008). The studies of Kinsey and his colleagues were the first to identify that same sex attraction and relationships were a relatively

While social evolution has increased the visibility of previously marginalised groups who historically remained hidden or invisible, progress is limited, with many marginalised groups still facing stigma and discrimination today (Baker, 2008). Research to date clearly identifies that LGBTQ people often face discrimination, stigmatisation, harassment, physical abuse and poorer health outcomes such as increased depression, increased rates of suicide, victimisation, drug and alcohol abuse, eating disorders and lower self-esteem (Carpenter & Lee, 2010; Ellis, 2009; Gottschalk, 2007; Noack, 2004; Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2010; Riches, 2011; Rossen et al., 2009)

Campus climate and the significance of the learning environment

Campus climate has been described by Bauer (1998) as “the current perceptions, attitudes and expectations that define the institution and it members” (p. 2). A positive perception of the learning environment in the classroom has been reported to be a very strong indicator of successful students and successful learning. If students are to be challenged both personally and academically, then tertiary institutes must find ways to develop and maintain learning environments that foster safety and challenge, redefine and affirm students’ identity and sense of community with others (Baker, 2008).

Tertiary students need to feel safe from harm and to feel emotionally respected by their peers and academic staff in order to interact fully and securely and engage within the tertiary learning environment. The significance of a positive perception of the campus environment has been demonstrated to be strongly linked to student learning, particularly in regard to social aspects and relationships with others. When students do not experience a safe, inclusive and supportive environment, their ability to learn or experience positive gains is likely to be compromised (Finn & McNeil, 1987). Finn and McNeil advise that physical safety within any campus environment is essential for LGBT students. They identify that LGBT people as a whole group are far more likely to be targeted for hate crimes than any other minority group and report that the environment students experience outside of the campus sets up the assumption that the campus climate will be the same. This means that any abuse, derogatory remark, anti-gay jokes, anti-gay graffiti, hate crimes or indeed experience of physical assault or police warnings about personal safety is likely
to have an impact on a student’s expectations of safety of the Unitec campus environment. Unless institutions takes steps to ensure the campus environment is more accepting than general society, students may assume it is not and their ability to learn and engage in tertiary education and learning may be compromised.

Student participation in a classroom, and indeed a campus, which they consider to be a safe environment increases the range and depth of the topics discussed and taught (Holly & Steiner, 2005). Literature identifies that the best way to get students to explore, challenge belief systems, and engage in self-awareness and critical reflection is via intrinsic motivation (Brockbank & McGill, 1998; Ramsden, 1988). Intrinsic motivation leads students to experience true empathy and engage with other’s experiences of the world. This style of motivation leads to students actively engaging in relating concepts to everyday experiences and incorporates a participatory approach to learning that is often described as deep learning (Brockbank & McGill; Ramsden). Mezirow (1997) believes that facilitating understanding is a critical goal of adult learning, while Edward Taylor (cited in Tibbets, 2005) identifies that a critical factor for this type of transformative learning is a learning environment and campus that promotes safety, openness and trust.

As traditional-age tertiary students are at a critical phase in the development of their sexual identity (Levine & Evans, 1991), the tertiary education years are generally critical in the development of student identity and this is particularly important for students developing a lesbian, gay, bisexual or transsexual identity (Levine & Evans). Negative perceptions of the learning environment, or negative perceptions of campus climate, impact on all students’ abilities to learn effectively. However, repercussions are specifically significant for students who identify as LGBTIQ.

Worldwide research on LGBTIQ youth suggests that high school is considered one of the most dangerous places to be, with bullying and assault and cyber and text bullying leading to high rates of suicide, self-harm and alcohol abuse (Hillier et al., 1998; Hillier, Turner, & Mitchell, 2005; Rossen et al., 2009). LGBTIQ youth have been linked to higher rates of truancy and often leave secondary school early. However, many LGBTIQ youth, who may have been severely bullied in secondary school, identify that they look forward to tertiary education and view the campus as perhaps the first opportunity to develop an adult identity and be themselves (Valentine, Wood & Plummer 2009).

Rankin (2003) states that campus environments that are supportive of minority groups assist in the development of identity and Cass (1979) confirms that campus environments have a marked impact in the development of homosexual identity. Results from research that Cheng (2004) undertook, exploring the significance of a positive campus environment indicated that, in order “for students to feel a sense of community they needed to feel valued as unique individuals as well as to feel accepted as a valued part of the community” (p. 27). The biggest negative experience that
impacted on a student’s sense of community with their institution was identified by Cheng as a sense of loneliness within the institution.

The changes and increase in diversity in student population in New Zealand has had an impact on campus climates of tertiary institutions (Ministry of Education, 2006). Major demographic shifts, increased international student enrolments and an increasingly diverse culture in range of ages, ethnicity and socio-economic backgrounds have impacted on the academic and developmental needs of a student population that differs markedly from the traditional view. Gone are the days where tertiary institutions were made up predominantly young, white, middle to upper class New Zealanders.

This diverse population comes with a wide variety of cultural, religious and societal views regarding LGBTIQ identity. Many may have been raised within cultural or religious environments that still believe homosexuality either does not exist or is illegal and is punishable by imprisonment, death or even stoning (Kasem, n.d.). The historical link between homosexuality and mental health is still a pervasive belief in many countries around the world, while countries that do have LGBTIQ rights can still experience LGBTIQ hate crimes and homicides. Many religions still link homosexuality with bestiality (“Homosexuality and the Church”, n.d.). Many Unitec students come from such countries and follow such religions.

The majority of students have been raised within a heterosexist environment, with a heterosexist culture and heterosexual religious norms (Carpenter & Lee, 2010). Rankin (2003) describes the term heterosexism as “the assumption of the inherent superiority of heterosexuality, an obliviousness of the lives and experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and the presumption that all people are or should be heterosexual” (p. 6).

The impact of often subtle or obtuse heterosexism has been explored on many campuses worldwide (Baker, 2008; Ellis, 2009; Hylton, 2005; Noack, 2004; Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2010). Most studies identify that heterosexism contributes to a campus environment that is unwelcoming, challenging and even hostile for LGBTIQ students (Baker, 2008; Ellis, 2009; Hylton, 2005; Noack, 2004; Rankin, 2003; Rankin et al., 2010).

**Campus climate in the United States of America**

Most international studies appear to underscore LGBT individuals as the least accepted group when compared with other underserved populations and therefore the most likely to experience a negative campus climate (Carpenter & Lee, 2010). It has been well documented that LGBT students in the US face an unsafe campus climate at US universities (Rankin, 2003). Hurtado, Carter and Kardia (1998) reported fears for physical safety, frequent disparaging remarks, a high degree of false information and experiences of stereotyping as well as anti-gay graffiti and tagging. They also noted a lack of visibility of gay role models at universities and conflicts in class.
relating to sexual orientation or responses to it when a fellow student identifies as LGBT in class. Hurtado, Carter and Kardia advised that students reported that they often felt a need to censor themselves in academic activities or in the classroom in order to feel safe from repercussions. Hurtado, Carter and Kardia’s study identified a lack of integration of sexual orientation in the curriculum and either a lack of institutional policies addressing issues of sexual orientation or a lack of knowledge of such institutional policies existing.

Rankin’s (2003) report on the campus climate for LGBT tertiary students is arguably the most well-known study in the United States. The study was funded by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF). It is Rankin’s (2003) survey questionnaire that was used as a basis for this research. In total, 30 tertiary institutes were invited to take part in Rankin’s survey questionnaire with 14 institutions actually completing the research. Four of these institutions identified as private, with the remaining 10 being public institutions. Of note is that, unlike Unitec, all 14 institutions already had visible LGBT student centres on campus. In total, the research comprised 1669 completed surveys.

Rankins’ (2003) research utilised purposeful sampling and snowball sampling to access LGBT respondents. All 1669 respondents identified as LGBT and included students, faculty staff and administrators. The survey comprised 35 items and an area for additional commentary. The aim of the research was to get respondents to provide information about their personal experiences of the campus environment, their perception of the campus environment for LGBT people and their perceptions of the institution’s policies, academic initiatives and institutional actions regarding LGBT issues.

At the completion of the study, Rankin completed a factor analysis of responses. Three themes emerged from the data 1) lived oppressive experiences of LGBT people on campus, 2) perceptions of anti-gay oppression on campus and 3) institutional actions. Her findings indicated that one-third of LGBT tertiary students had experienced harassment in the last year and that derogatory remarks from fellow students were the most common with 79% of derogatory remarks coming from students. Twenty per cent of all respondents feared for their physical safety on campus due to their sexual orientation and 51% chose to conceal their orientation/gender identity in order to avoid intimidation.

Despite all institutions having an active student LGBT centre, 43% of students still rated the overall campus environment as homophobic and 71% believed that transgender people were likely to be harassed on campus. Forty-one percent of respondents stated that they believed their university was not adequately addressing sexual orientation issues and respondents were divided or uncertain as to whether their institution had visible leadership regarding sexual orientation or gender identity. Forty-three percent identified feeling that the curriculum did not adequately represent the contributions of LGBT people.
These institutions were rated as some of the most gay-friendly campuses in the country so the findings themselves indicate a significant understatement of the problem (Rankin, 2003). The institutions were rated as gay-friendly as nearly all provided LGBT specific support and services. Baker (2008) identified, the Rankin study was part of a long-term initiative by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force to gather data on campus climate that commenced in 1998. The Rankin study was one of the largest and most comprehensive studies of the United States of its time and became a benchmark for campus climate assessments (Noack, 2004).

Noack (2004) explored the campus climate for LGBT students at Texas A&M University as perceived by faculty and staff. His research aim was to identify and describe the campus climate and explore the differences based on the respondent's position at the university and the amount of interaction they had with members of the LGBT community. The research surveyed over 1000 staff, both administrators and faculty. His findings indicated that when compared with the Rankin (2003) study, the Texas environment was even more negative for LGBT students. In addition, he found that a significant statistical relationship existed between race and perception of campus climate with Asians reporting hearing fewer remarks and more likely to view the university as an accepting community for the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender population than any other racial/ethnic group. African Americans were more likely than Caucasians to view the campus environment as negative toward the sexual orientation minority, but they were also more likely to disapprove of homosexual actions. Noack's findings also noted that more positive attitudes and behaviours existed in relation to an increased frequency of contact with members of the LGBT community.

Baker (2008) completed a study which incorporated an assessment of the impact of homosexual identity development on the perceptions of campus climate for LGBTQ students at the University of South Florida. Of the 2345 students who responded, 228 identified as LGBT or Q (questioning). The research noted that significant differences existed between the perceptions of campus climate between heterosexual students and LGBTQ students. Students perceived that gay men and transgender students would be more likely to experience harassment at higher levels. Additionally, it identified that the level of homosexual identity development (the level of outness or comfort with sexual identity) had a significant relationship to the perceptions of campus climate. The findings identified that as LGBTQ student identity attainment increased so did the students perception of harassment on campus.

Rankin, et al. (2010) State of Higher Education for LGBT People report supported Rankin's earlier study (2003), finding that GLBT students often face a fairly chilly campus environment in regards to their sexual orientation. The report included 5149 completed surveys, representing people from all 50 states in America. The report indicates that LGBT students, as well as faculty staff, are more likely than others to leave their university because of either experiencing or fearing physical and
emotional harassment, discrimination and violence. Multiple minority identities lead to multiple forms of oppression, with LGBT students saying they avoided disclosing their identity due to intimidation and fear of negative consequences and they tended to avoid LGBT areas on campus due to a perceived increased risk to their personal safety.

Overall, these studies indicate that the campus environment within the US for LGBT students is less than satisfactory. Rankin, et al. (2010) acknowledge that while much has been written about the campus climate assessment findings little has been written about measures of the impact of interventions which may improve the perceptions of campus climate.

**Campus climate in the United Kingdom**

There have been two extensive studies in the United Kingdom (UK) exploring the experiences of LGBT students in higher education. In 2006, Sonja Ellis (2009) conducted a survey of 291 self-identified LGBT students from 42 universities across the UK. Ellis advises that in the UK, Higher Education incorporates traditional universities and modern universities, as well as university colleges, which teach degree programmes but are not actually recognised as universities. This indicates that the studies in the UK may be more comparable to the Unitec environment than studies from the US. Unitec holds a unique place within the New Zealand tertiary environment, identifying itself as a dual-sector institution, combining the aspects of technical institutes as well as universities (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2012).

Ellis (2009) based her research on surveys that had been utilised in pre-existing studies. Her questionnaire consisted of 25 questions including 5-point Likert scales, forced yes or no questions and open-ended responses. As per Rankin’s (2003) research and Rankin, et al.’s (2010) research, the survey was sent out to all the universities and administered online with a request for participants. The sampling method utilised was snowballing and as such only incorporated those students who self-identified as LGBT.

One of the largest concerns of utilising this method is that it tends to attract only the strongest, most self-confident, highly opinionated participants, or participants who have strong feelings in regard to the issues being investigated. As with most international LGBT studies, it did not include those who are perhaps the most marginalised of an already marginalised group – those students who are not yet out to anyone on campus or those students still questioning their sexuality. Ellis (2009) also identified that the sample predominantly comprised “white” European participants (90.7%).

Her results demonstrated that 23.4% of LGBT students indicated they had been the victim of homophobic harassment or discrimination since being at university. The most common form of harassment was reported as derogatory remarks, with 77.9% of LGBT students who reported harassment having been on the receiving end of derogatory comments and 8.8% reporting actual
assault or injury. Ellis’ (2009) results reported incidents of homophobic harassment that appear to be lower than those reported in the United States. Rankin’s (2003) research in the US reported at least one-third of LGBT students had been on the receiving end of harassment. In discussion of her results, Ellis acknowledges that the most specific incidents of homophobic harassment/discrimination or bullying occurred in student accommodation. This accommodation included resident halls and university assigned flats. The incidents reported as occurring in accommodation tended to be of a more severe and more enduring form of harassment and bullying. This may indicate why the UK research reports substantially lower harassment/discrimination than United States research. The United States university environment incorporates a much higher usage of student accommodation at university with a great number of resident halls and fraternity type accommodation. This may involve a more vulnerable LGBT student who is living away from supportive family and friends. The United Kingdom research did acknowledge that for those students who were not out to family and friends, student accommodation, despite the risk of more severe and enduring intimidation, was still viewed positively by students as it was often their first opportunity to identify and “come out” as LGBT.

Ellis (2009) acknowledges that not all incidents of hostility towards LGBT students were necessarily direct or overt in nature, with many respondents identifying homophobia as resistance to increasing the visibility or raising the awareness of LGBT issues or concerns. Respondents in her survey reported that they were frequently on the receiving end of anti-gay sentiments, such as negative remarks, stereotyping or jokes which put LGBT people down with 77.9% of the reported harassment being identified as derogatory remarks. The impact of this subtle form of homophobia often increases the likelihood that LGBT students will choose not to disclose their sexual identity and will therefore remain hidden, invisible to others and by definition safe from potential harassment.

Despite participants in Ellis’ (2009) study reporting evidence of harassment on campus, 54.7% of LGBT participants believed that anti-gay attitudes existed to a “little” or “very little” extent and 79.4% of LGBT participants thought that an LGBT person was unlikely or very unlikely to be harassed on campus. In relation to campus climate, most LGBT students in Ellis’ study reported that they had not feared for their safety but approximately half had chosen to deliberately conceal their sexual orientation in order to avoid intimidation. These findings suggest that while the actual incidence of homophobia on campus was relatively low, it occurred frequently enough, either within society or on campus, to have created a perceived fear so that LGBT students made the conscious decision to conceal their identity/orientation in order to avoid potential harassment/discrimination or intimidation.

In 2009, Valentine, et al. on behalf of the Equity Challenge Unit, completed research exploring the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender staff and students in higher education in
the United Kingdom. As with other international research of the time, the sampling method targeted only those students and staff who were already confident enough to self-identify as LGBT. The online survey resulted in 4205 completed and usable responses which constituted 2704 LGBT students, 781 LGBT support staff and 720 LGBT academics. The survey itself was followed up with qualitative data from 12 focus groups and 18 interviews. The key findings identified that the move to higher education was a significant and important step for LGBT students who felt they were able to be themselves and begin to develop an adult identity away from family and the constraints of high school (Valentine et al., 2009).

A majority of students in Valentine et al.’s (2009) survey, (90.2%), were out to friends at university but almost two thirds were not out to tutors or lecturers. LGBT students reported levels of negative treatment related to sexual orientation, with 49.5% reportedly from fellow students and 10.4% from tutors or lecturers. This research also reported how negative treatment led to a loss of confidence, stress and self-exclusion from some aspects and spaces on campus. The findings again supported those of (Rankin, 2003) from the United States and Ellis (2009), which stated that severe homophobic abuse and students’ self-exclusion were the most severe in student halls of residence or student housing.

Of concern, was that Ellis’ (2009) research demonstrated that 20% of LGB students and 28.5% of transgender students had taken time out of their courses. The research results demonstrated that while higher education institutions can and do at times provide a very positive place for many LGBT students. As identified by Ellis there is an unequivocal need for institutions to fully engage with LGBT equality and review how they provide support for and addresses discrimination.

**Australian students and education**

There have been three Australian surveys entitled “Writing themselves in”, “Writing themselves in again” and “Writing themselves in 3” (Hillier et al., 1998; Hillier, et al., 2005; Hillier et al., 2010), which explored the health and wellbeing of same-sex attracted Australian youth. All three surveys utilised an online questionnaire to collect the data, which incorporated both closed and open-ended questions. Participants, who were required to self-identify, were actively recruited via a range of media.

In Hillier et al.’s 2010 research, 3134 same-sex attracted and gender-questioning (SSAGQ) young people participated. This was almost double that of the 2005 research and four times that of the 1998 research. Participants were aged between 14 and 21 years with the average age of participants being 17. Participants came from all states and territories of Australia – remote (2%), rural (18%) and urban (67%) – and from a range of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. There were more young women (57%) than young men (41%) and a smaller group (3%) who identified as gender-questioning. Part of the survey explored levels of verbal and
physical abuse experienced, both in the community and at school. In 2010, 61% of the participants reported verbal abuse due to sexual orientation or gender identity, 18% reported physical abuse and 26% reported other forms of homophobia. Young men and gender questioning participants reported more abuse than those who identified as young women. The most common place that abuse was experienced was the school environment, with 80% of participants who reported abuse naming school as the place where it occurred. Hillier et al, noted that the results point to a continuing trend towards increased levels of homophobic violence in schools – rates of 69% were reported in 1998 and 74% in 2004. Same-sex attracted and gender-questioning youth continue to report school as the most dangerous place to be, with Hillier et al, suggesting that one reason for this apparent increase may be that more same-sex attracted and gender questioning young people are self-identifying, out and visible. More than half of the participants reported that homophobic abuse negatively impacted on aspects of their schooling. The survey reported strong links between homophobic abuse and feeling unsafe, self-harm, suicide and excessive drug use but also identified the degree to which support for young people had improved, despite the increases in homophobic abuse. A significant finding was that young people who reported that their school had an LGBT supportive environment were less likely to harm themselves or attempt suicide. Hillier et al suggest this demonstrates the importance of putting policy into practice and developing visible supports within education settings.

**New Zealand context**

New Zealand has always prided itself on being a leader in human rights legislation. In 1893, it was the first country in the world to grant all adult women the right to vote; the 1993 Human Rights Act (1993) made discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation illegal; New Zealand was the first country in the world to have a transsexual mayor who then went on to become the world's first transsexual MP (“LGBT rights in New Zealand”, 2012) and, in 2004, New Zealand introduced The Civil Union Act (2004) allowing same-sex as well as opposite-sex couples to celebrate a “civil union”. Same-sex marriage however remains illegal in New Zealand.

LGBTQ people are now increasingly, and more positively, portrayed in prime-time media in television programmes such as “Shortland Street” (Bennett, 1992) “Coronation Street” (Granada, 1960-), “Grey’s Anatomy” (The Mark Gordon Company, 2005-2006) and “The L Word” (MGM, 2004-). There has recently been a “Legalise Love” campaign in New Zealand, which is advocating for same-sex marriage and adoption rights. Initially, this campaign was not viewed as a priority by the current New Zealand Government (“LGBT rights in New Zealand”, 2012). The campaign did however result in a bill sponsored by a member of parliament (MP) Louisa Wall, to make changes to the New Zealand Marriages Act to make it legal for couples of the same sex to marry. The Bill had its first reading in parliament on August 29, 2012 and passed with a majority vote of 80 for and 40 against. The Bill attracted passionate debate from a multitude of both pro- and anti-gay
campaigners. It is reported that a petition from religious opponents containing the signature of 50,000 people opposed to marriage equality was also delivered to parliament that week.

As an example of how knowledge and education and awareness can change people’s opinion and perception, the National party MP Paul Hutchison changed his mind from opposing the bill to supporting the bill after discussion and debate in parliament. He was reported by the media to state:

I cannot construct a strong enough intellectual, moral, health or even spiritual argument against it”. He stated he was deeply concerned that gay youth had a suicide rate five to eight times that of heterosexual youth “…in a country that already has an appalling high suicide rate”. He stated that if for nothing other than “…health perspective, we should be doing everything we possibly can to create an environment in New Zealand where everyone feels they are included. (Shuttleworth, 2012)

In another media debate, Prime Minister John Key attracted a raft of negative media when in November 2012 he stated “today I am wearing a gay red shirt”. LGBTIQ New Zealanders took offence at the use of the word gay in a derogatory manner, especially given the political struggles fought by the gay community for “Gay Pride” and therefore the use of the word gay as a celebration of their identity. Historically, the term gay meant happy, bright, and joyful. It then became used by the homosexual community to refer to a male homosexual. Gradually it came to include other non-heterosexual identities and later became a more public word, identified positively with “Gay Pride”.

In recent years, the word gay has taken on new meanings and its use as a put-down has become endemic, particularly amongst youth. Effectively, the word gay, which LGBTIQ people used to identify themselves with, with pride, is also now insulting language, used worldwide in bullying and harassment, particularly amongst youth. Mr Key, when challenged, stated he did not mean it as an insult and that to him the word meant “weird”. He did not appear to understand that he had just publically entered into subtle homophobia and subtle discrimination, identifying that his understanding of the LGBTIQ identity was “weird”. LGBTIQ people would argue that this is a classic example of subtle homophobia that continues to perpetuate the norm of heterosexuality and the “weirdness” of non-heterosexual identities (Bennie, 2012).

Although New Zealand society has changed considerably in the last 20 to 30 years, discrimination and stigmatisation still exist. In January 2011, two lesbian women living in a small community in the north of New Zealand were victims of a gay hate crime. Despite employing local people, their home and business was subjected to repeated graffiti of an anti-gay nature and eventually their business was destroyed by arson. The women left their home and business and moved to another place despite having lived peacefully in the small town for many years (“Lesbian couple targeted
in hate crime arson,” 2011). Rosslyn Noonan, New Zealand’s Chief Human Rights Commissioner stated at the time that the crime indicated that New Zealand still had a very long way to go in regards to equality and gay rights (“New Zealand has work to do on gay rights”, 2011).

**New Zealand LGBT students and education**

A University of Otago study (OUSA, 2003) entitled "How safe?" found that only 5% of students and 7% of staff, from over 100 secondary schools, believed gay, lesbian or bisexual students felt safe in their school. The study, involving 150 students and 8 staff, was largely qualitative and identified themes of bullying and safety, with two-thirds of students having experienced or witnessed verbal abuse and one in four physical abuse or threats directed at same-sex attracted students (OUSA, 2003). The findings of the OUSA study have been echoed in international data (Hopwood & Connors, 2002; Mishna, Newman, Daley & Solomon, 2009).

A recent report into safety in New Zealand secondary schools, by Dr Carroll-Lind on behalf of the Office of the Children’s Commissioner (2009), identified disturbing evidence of the experiences of LGBT youth in New Zealand. Most students stated that incidents of bullying are so frequent that they no longer report them as “no-one listens anymore” (Banks, 2010). These revelations followed a spate of extremely high profile and highly publicised suicides in the United States of young LGBT youth as a result of bullying due to sexual orientation (Banks).

A more recent report, entitled “How do we make it better? Mapping the steps towards a more supportive coming out environment for Queer youth in Aotearoa New Zealand” (Riches, 2011), confirmed previous reports identifying issues of bullying, isolation, invisibility of LGBTQ (Q, in Riches’ study standing for Queer, Questioning, Intersex and every other sexuality not otherwise stated) students, a lack of knowledge amongst professionals who work with youth, a lack of public awareness about LGBTQ issues, minimal policies for transgender issues and a level of complacency towards LGBTQ activism and human rights (Riches). This report identified two major overarching themes: heteronormativity and the discourse of silence.

Two specific New Zealand surveys of the health and wellbeing of New Zealand secondary school students have incorporated analysis of findings for same-sex attracted youth. Youth’07 was the second national survey and followed on from the first which was conducted in 2000 (Adolescent Health Research Group, 2003; 2008). Youth’07 involved a survey of 12,549 secondary school students under the age of 18, same sex attracted data were analysed and reported by Rossen, et al. (2009). The Youth’07 survey identified that rates of alcohol and drug use, sexually transmitted diseases and mental ill health were all elevated among same-sex attracted youth. Half of the same-sex attracted students surveyed had deliberately self-harmed in the previous 12 months and a third had seriously contemplated suicide. Twice as many same-sex attracted youth, as opposed to opposite-sex attracted had run away from home overnight. A third had been bullied and one in
five was afraid that someone would hurt or bother them at school. Half of the same-sex attracted youth had been hit or physically harmed by another person in the previous twelve months. Of significance, is that 60% of same-sex attracted youth had not come out to others. Of the students who had come out, three-quarters felt they could not talk to their family about their sexuality. International data echoes these findings, with Wells (2009) in a Canadian study, Graybill, Varjas, Meyers and Watson (2009) in their American study, and Thompson and Johnston (2003) in their review of empirical literature, all identifying a reluctance of LGBT people to discuss their sexuality with family.

The New Zealand Youth’07 survey does need to be read with some caution in relation to same-sex attracted youth as the survey only questioned youth who attended school. There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that same-sex attracted youth, as with other marginalised groups, are over-represented in rates of truancy, and are much more likely than their heterosexual peers to leave school at an early age (National LGBT Health Alliance, 2009). An additional concern is that youth could have purposefully not answered questions honestly or may have intentionally answered incorrectly to skew results.

Trewartha (2008), in her qualitative research, found that, while many New Zealand tertiary education students felt accepted and enjoyed the university environment, many also spoke of the overarching heterosexism, homophobia and heteronormativity that undermined queer students. Her study involved 10 interviews with LGBT students from a variety of tertiary institutions and therefore is not generalisable to a particular tertiary environment.

Carpenter and Lee (2010) examined course content and curriculum delivery as well as student and staff attitudes and beliefs in a faculty of education at a New Zealand university. Their findings showed that the invisibility of LGBT people lead to a curriculum that was unsupportive and not inclusive of the diversity of LGBT staff and students. This study, while larger than Trewartha’s (159 survey responses and 5 in-depth interviews), is also arguably non-generalisable to the larger population of LGBT students as it could simply be a reflection of one particular department or faculty.

The Unitec Environment

Unitec holds a unique position within the tertiary education sector in New Zealand; positioned between the university sector and the polytechnic sector it is New Zealand’s only dual sector institution. While it does not have university status it offers programmes extending from certificates and diplomas through to degrees and post graduate studies such as Masters and Doctorates. These programmes offer a wide range of educational, professional and vocational qualifications, which produce work-ready graduates (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2012). Unitec markets itself as a “credible” provider of vocational and applied professional education and
practice orientated research (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2012). In 2012, Unitec had 23,879 students which equated to 10,504 equivalent full-time students (EFTS) participating in 165 different programmes of study. With three separate campuses in Mt Albert, Albany and Waitakere, Unitec is recognised by employers and the community for its performance in clinical; industry and research projects (Unitec, 2010).

Currently, Unitec has no services specific to LGBTIQ students and no such services are highlighted in any Unitec policies, although it could be argued that they are covered under the umbrella of “diversity” in Unitec publications. While Unitec does currently provide specific support for Maori, Pacific Island and International students, as well as those living with impairment and disability, it is one of a small minority of tertiary institutions in New Zealand that does not provide an LGBT campus support group (Burford, 2012).

In 2011, a Queer staff support group developed. This was driven by staff initiative after identifying a need rather than any corporate initiative. The group has been actively supported and attended by Unitec’s Equity and Diversity Officer. In 2012, Unitec made a stand for equity, diversity and inclusion on campus by introducing the Ally network programme (“Ally network”, n.d) This initiative was introduced and driven by the Queer staff support group but is now being supported by management as part of the drive for inclusive excellence. The Ally network is made up of gay and heterosexual staff and students who want to support the building of an inclusive learning environment for all students. Unitec is the first New Zealand tertiary institute to adopt the programme, which is now in 17 Australian universities. Twenty-nine staff and students are members of the Ally programme and identify themselves with an Ally door sign, advocate and raise awareness for diverse sexualities and genders and provide a safe place for staff and students to seek assistance and support.

There is reportedly a small group of LGBTIQ students who meet occasionally (C. Peters, personal communication, July, 13, 2011). This group was initiated largely by one motivated student and remains mostly unknown to the overall campus population. The Unitec Students’ Union (USU) does not currently offer any LGBTIQ services or promotions. There is no LGBTIQ presence at campus orientation or any information provided specifically to LGBTIQ students. In 2011, USU declined to organise any LGBTIQ events or promotions when requested by the Queer staff group (C. Peters, personal communication, August 15, 2011).

**Summary**

A review of the literature has provided a foundation for better understanding of the significance of the campus environment and the experiences of LGBTIQ students of the campus environment. According to the literature, a positive campus climate is a strong indicator of successful students and successful learning. Institutions who wish to enhance student success must find ways to
develop learning environments that affirm student identities and sense of community (Baker, 2008). The tertiary years in particular have been shown to play a critical role in the development of student identity, especially the development of an LGBTIQ identity. International research has demonstrated that LGBTIQ tertiary students are an underrepresented minority group that report challenging secondary school environments, with secondary school being described as the most dangerous place to be. International research on tertiary education environments confirms that LGBTIQ tertiary students are facing ‘chilly’ environments where they report fears for their safety, high levels of harassment particularly derogatory remarks. Many report physical abuse and a reluctance to ‘come out’ or openly identify as LGBTIQ. They report experiencing a lack of visibility and experiences of conflict in the classrooms related to their sexual identity. Most LGBTIQ students identify a campus environment which they perceive to be homophobic with a lack of visible leadership, policies and support for LGBTIQ students and LGBTIQ issues. Most studies identify a heteronormative environment that does not feel inclusive of LGBTIQ. New Zealand studies support this overseas trend identifying overarching heterosexism, homophobia and heteronormativity. Unitec, while recently introducing the Ally network, does not appear to have any LGBTIQ specific policies, services or presences within the organisation or within their student union.
Chapter Three: Methodology and the Research Process

Introduction

This chapter outlines the research process: the questions that drove the research, an outline of the methodology, including variables, the questionnaire/survey instrument as well as population and sample. Data collection and analysis methods will be discussed and analysed as well as the ethical considerations that informed the process. The research was approved by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee with approval number UREC 2012-1063 (See Appendix E).

Research Questions

1. What are the perceptions amongst students of the Unitec campus environment for LGBTIQ students?
2. How does the perception of the Unitec campus climate for LGBTIQ students differ between heterosexual students and LGBTIQ students?

Research Design

This study was based on previous international research on campus climate for LGBT students undertaken by Rankin (2003) in the United States. This current study followed a descriptive methodology in line with Rankin’s (2003) research. Creswell (2005) notes that a descriptive method of research is utilised to gather information about the present or current situation and its main focus is describing the nature and degree of a situation in detail as it exists at the time of the study. It is essentially a ‘snap shot’ in time and provides an accurate picture or profile of the people, events or situation. Shenkle, et al. (1998) acknowledge that decisions regarding which method to use for measures of campus climate will depend on personal philosophical beliefs but are also related to available time and financial restraints. Descriptive research is valuable in relation not only to the time available but is also practical in terms of finances.

Kirkpatrick (1998) advises that if an institution or programme is to be effective it must meet the needs of the students. In order to meet these needs, the needs themselves must first be identified. A descriptive method of research can use quantitative or qualitative data or both. Traditionalists may argue that the underlying paradigms of qualitative and quantitative data are so far apart that the two processes are fundamentally incompatible (Polit & Hungler, 1997). Merton and Kendall (1946) were perhaps the front runners in the debate for mixed data expressing that “Social scientists have come to abandon the spurious choice between qualitative and quantitative data: they are concerned rather with the combination of both which makes use of the most valuable features of each” (Merton & Kendal, cited in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 48).

Salant and Dillman (1994) state “If your goal is to find out what percentage of some population has a particular attribute or opinion and the information is not available from a secondary source,
then survey research is the only appropriate method” (p. 9). They advise that survey questionnaire research will provide information, behaviour, opinions or attitudes for a particular population. One form of survey research they identify is a needs assessment survey.

Brown and Gortmaker (2009) identify that campus climate assessment research can act as a catalyst for positive institutional change but only if the correct methodologies are used. They identify that this type of research is best “sold” to campus managers as the first step to enhancing the campus for LGBT students and note that identifying the research as a “needs assessment” project often increases the likelihood of institutional support for enhancing the positive experiences of LGBT students, as well as institutional support for potential recommendations. They report that highly sensitive personal questions (such as those related to sex and sexuality) revealed the highest number of responses when an anonymous survey questionnaire was utilised.

The focus of any needs assessment research is on the identification of the current situation and any gaps or discrepancies between that and the desired situation. Babbie (2007) suggests that survey questionnaire research is perhaps the best method available to social scientists who are interested in collecting original data first hand from participants, especially where the population may be too large to observe directly, or the population may be hidden, difficult to access or vulnerable. LGBT people are identified as a particularly vulnerable group, with non-heterosexual identities reportedly remaining a largely stigmatised group in today’s society (Valentine, Butler & Skelton, 2001). Babbie (2007) recommends descriptive research utilising survey questionnaire research as appropriate to measure attitudes and orientation within a population.

This current study aimed to explore and better understand the experiences of current LBGTIQ students on the Unitec Campus in 2012, from both a statistical as well as experiential perspective (Gottschalk & Newton, 2003). The research utilised a descriptive research methodology using a survey questionnaire which incorporated quantitative (closed) and qualitative (open-ended) questions. The study aimed to examine whether LBGTIQ students at Unitec in 2012 perceived themselves to be a stigmatised or discriminated against minority group. The survey questionnaire incorporated demographics to identify those who may represent as doubly marginalised, such as LBGTIQ with disabilities, LGB Maori (Takataapui), Transgender/Transexual Maori (Whakawahine) and Transgender/Transexual Pacific Islanders (Fa’afafine). This current study was independent; it was not commissioned by Unitec, nor was it funded by Unitec. The current study was written solely by myself and submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of Master of Health Sciences at Unitec New Zealand 2012.

**Sampling and Population**

The population being studied was the entire student population enrolled at Unitec in August 2012 who had an active student email account. This included both full-time and part-time students in the
full range of Unitec programmes, from foundation studies and certificates through to degrees and post graduate courses. The students were invited via an email to their student email account to participate in an anonymous survey questionnaire exploring the Unitec Campus environment for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex or Questioning (LGBTIQ) students.

Cohen et al. (2007) identify sensitive research as research that may have possible consequences for the participants, such as being outed, any intrusion into their private lives or deeply personal experiences, such as sexual behaviour and orientation, and includes any research that may lead to the potential threat of stigmatisation, discrimination or fear of scrutiny, exposure or judgement. Lee (cited in Cohen et al.) notes that there can be some major difficulties in access and sampling in sensitive research. Because the population is largely invisible it can be difficult to estimate the size of the invisible group. The vulnerable sample may also refuse to self-identify or they may refuse access as they may be afraid of scrutiny, exposure, stigma, incrimination or loss of community support.

One of the strategies that Lee (cited in Cohen et al., 2007) identifies for sampling vulnerable or invisible groups is ‘screening’, where the researcher targets a broad location and canvasses in that region for the selected target group. The current research survey questionnaire enabled such screening. The survey questionnaire was offered through an online survey using Survey Monkey™ to all 11,446 students who had a current student email address, with the opportunity for LGBTIQ students, whether out to anyone or not, to self-identify and complete the survey anonymously.

As reporting sexual orientation is not part of the New Zealand census there are currently no statistics in New Zealand to identify what percentage of the population identifies as LGBTIQ. In the Youth’07 survey, only 4% identified as same sex attracted. It is acknowledged that this is likely to be an underestimate of the real population sample (Rossen et al., 2009). Thus, as no formal data exists, the number of LGBTIQ students at any given university or tertiary institute in New Zealand can only be estimated. When utilising Youth’07 data, however, it can be hypothesised that given Unitec’s student body of approximately 23,000 it might be expected that 4% (980) are likely to identify as LGBTIQ. A 50% response rate from all LGBTIQ students should, thus generate approximately 460 completed questionnaires.

Of the 23,879 students enrolled at Unitec in August 2012, 11,447 had a current and active student email address and were therefore in the target population group. Four % of that total sample would be 457 students.

Baruch and Holtom (2008), after reviewing response rates which covered 400,000 individuals, noted that the average response rate for studies utilising data collected from individuals was 52.7%. They also advise that the content of the study (and therefore personal motivation to
It was hypothesised that LGBTIQ people may have had strong self-motivation to contribute to the research.

**Data Collection Procedures**

**The Survey Questionnaire**

Polit and Hungler (1997) identify that the most common forms of data collection, amongst nurses and social workers in particular, are interviews and questionnaires. The data collection method for the current research was set-up as a survey questionnaire, incorporating both quantitative (closed questions) and qualitative (open questions) data collection methods based on replicating Rankin's (2003) study. The current research utilised Survey Monkey™, which was offered via a link sent to all student emails. Each student received only one link to avoid any one student answering multiple times. This allowed all students who wished to participate to safely complete the survey without fear of being labelled or outed. The research was advertised via posters on all three campuses (Appendix D).

The survey questionnaire was based on Rankin’s (2003) international survey questionnaire and was modified slightly to reflect the New Zealand context and the Unitec campus. Susan Rankin gave her full permission and approval for the use of the survey tool (S. Rankin, personal communication, September, 15, 2011) (Appendix B). Rankin’s (2003) initial survey questions were developed largely from her previous work and additionally informed by a meta-analysis of LGBT climate studies. Rankin’s (2003) questionnaire was the basis for Rankin et al.’s (2010) State of Higher Education survey. The original survey questionnaire was reviewed and approved by the Pennsylvania State University Office of Research Protections and the Iowa State University Office of Responsible Research. The survey questionnaire was selected for the current research as it had been used in a national study in the US which reportedly led to it becoming an effective benchmark for all universities in the US (Baker, 2008; Noack, 2004; Rankin et al., 2010). Noack (2004) utilised the survey questionnaire in a similar study at Texas A&M University, and Baker (2008) utilised it to examine the link between campus climate assessment and sexual identity development.

The survey questionnaire consisted of five parts and included both closed questions and one open question. Part one focused on the participants’ experiences of campus. There were eight questions in this section. All participants answered the first five; those participants who answered yes to question 1.5 went on to answer 3 secondary questions. The first five questions consisted of yes/no forced questions. The following three secondary questions dealt with particular experiences of harassment on campus where participants were asked to choose amongst a number of options and were asked to mark all that apply. This section was consistent with the
original Rankin (2003) survey. Changes were inclusion of the word Unitec instead of college or university and removal of question 1.4 from the original as it related only to staff.

Part two of the survey focused on participants’ feelings, attitudes and actions related to diversity issues on campus. The questions in this section were Likert scale questions. Participants were asked to respond on a 5 point scale from very unlikely, unlikely, uncertain, likely and very likely. The only change from Rankin’s (2003) original survey was incorporation of New Zealand Māori terminology regarding sexual orientation, which was then used throughout. Part three explored participants’ experiences of Unitec’s’ responses in relation to diversity issues. There were eight questions in total in this section. Question 1-7 were Likert scale questions asking participants to respond on a scale of strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree and strongly disagree. The final question in this section was a sliding rating scale question asking participants to rate their perception of the Unitec campus from 1-5 on a variety of items; one being the most positive, friendliest, non-homophobic, non-sexist to five being the least positive, very unfriendly, very homophobic or very sexist. Again the only change from the original survey was the replacement of college/university to the word Unitec.

Part four of the survey focused on demographics. This section consisted of 9 questions. Question topics included, gender, age, race/ethnicity, sexual identity, study status, disability, citizenship status and faculty name. Race/ethnicity and citizen status were modified from the original survey to reflect the New Zealand environment. Question 4.4 from the original survey was removed as it related only to staff and a new question related to faculty within which the participant was studying incorporated. The final question in this section asked participants to identify on a scale consisting of options related to levels of ‘outness’ where they would place themselves.

Part five of the survey was an open question seeking participants’ stories, feedback and suggestions to improve the Unitec campus climate for LGBTIQ people. This open-ended qualitative question guided participants to identify current support and positive experiences of the Unitec campus. Responses to the open-ended question allowed the researcher to gain more useful and comprehensive information than was given on the closed question response. The open-ended question allowed a more comprehensive understanding of the participant’s perception of their experiences. This has enabled me to use the participants’ words, rather than my own, which assisted not only in reducing researcher bias but also in allowing the participants’ voices to be heard (Gottschalk & Newton, 2003; Polit & Hungler, 1997).

Rankin and Associates (2002) have provided reliability and validity information for the survey questionnaire (Noack, 2004). The original survey instrument was based on the work of Rankin (1994) and a meta-analysis of climate studies for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons (Rankin, 1998). The original survey instrument was reviewed by numerous individuals with experience in diversity issues and research methodology. Rankin herself conducted a pilot study.
at her home institution, The Pennsylvania State University. In examining the internal consistency of the original survey responses for reliability, correlation coefficients between $r = .45$ and $r = .60$ were found (Noack). These correlations were based on responses to the rating of the campus climate and likelihood of harassment. Rankin and Associates (cited by Noack) explained how stability of the instrument, content validity, and construct validity were all achieved throughout the development of the questionnaire.

The modified Unitec survey questionnaire was reviewed and approved by a representative of Unitec’s Queer Staff Support Group. The survey questionnaire was also sent to Maori, Pacific Island, International student representatives and transgendered staff for review, feedback and approval. A Unitec staff member assisted in the development and proofreading of the survey questionnaire for loading on Survey Monkey™ (Survey Monkey™ is an online survey site that simplifies the survey process considerably). The survey introduction e-mail with the link to the survey was released through student email on August the 11th 2012 (Appendix G). The survey questionnaire was available for a period of two and a half weeks. A copy of the survey questionnaire is located in Appendix A.

**Data Management**

As data were received on the Survey Monkey™ site, I downloaded hard copies of the qualitative open-ended question in an attempt to identify early patterns or ‘knots’ of experiences to locate commonalities of experiences or themes. This process of reading, re-reading and coding the qualitative data continued until the survey was closed. At that time I was able to identify frequency of commonalities and commence with quantitative data analysis.

**Data Analysis Procedures**

In keeping with the original Rankin (2003) study, a descriptive statistical analysis was completed identifying frequencies and central tendencies such as mean, mode and median. It also included a comprehensive factor analysis. Factor analysis has the ability to manage a multitude of complex variables, compensate for random error and invalidity, and identify complex interrelationships into major and distinct factors. Survey Monkey™ includes Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17, automatically providing descriptive statistical analysis and factor analysis in regards to the quantitative closed question portion of the survey questionnaire. A Unitec staff member with experience in statistical analysis contributed to the interpretation of the statistical results, running additional statistical analysis to locate discrete correlations.

Survey Monkey™ organised data from the qualitative open-ended question utilising text analysis which highlights distinguishing words rather than just common comments. This organisational text analysis picked key words and phrases to divide open-ended question data into separate groups.
This organisational text analysis by Survey Monkey™ assisted me in the initial stages of thematic analysis by identifying key words which aided me data management and organisation from which themes were be drawn.

Thematic analysis attempts to uncover something meaningful or “thematic” in various human experiential accounts of everyday life (van Manen, 1990). Van Manen (p. 90) describes themes not as generalisations or objects but rather “like knots in the webs of our experiences around which certain lived experiences are spun and thus lived through as meaningful wholes”. All open-ended question responses were read and reread to enable the researcher to locate commonalities of experiences. With this understanding, the data were categorised and themes or “knots” identified. I repeatedly immersed myself in the data, reading, re-reading, coding and cross coding the data to rigorously search for patterns and locate commonalities of experiences (Nueman, cited in Carpenter & Lee, 2010).

**Ethical Considerations**

The Unitec Research Ethics Committee approved the study (Appendix E). Confidentiality and anonymity were identified in the planning of the research as major concerns. It was identified that this may be of particular concern in small environments where the perception is everyone knows everything about each other (Gottschalk, 2007). The LGBTIQ sample group or population for the research were identified as a vulnerable minority group and the research was therefore identified as sensitive research.

To ask LGBTIQ students to openly identify themselves in education settings, is potentially putting them at risk of bullying, discrimination and social exclusion (Valentine et al., 2001). This was the main reason for using an online anonymous survey questionnaire.

In additional to ethical approval organisational approval was required. This was provided by the executive Dean, Academic Development of Unitec Institute of Technology (see Appendix F). Organisational approval gave me approval to complete research within the organisation and provided approval for access to Unitec students through organisational email systems. The introduction email (see Appendix G) provided information for potential participants related to the survey questionnaire. It identified that completion of the survey was deemed as informed consent as well as providing contact for those students who may have become upset or required follow up.

In planning this research, a number of strategies were put in place to protect Unitec LGBTIQ students who volunteered to participate. The survey questionnaire was designed to be completed online, anonymously, in privacy and at the convenience of the participant. No student could be identified by myself within the process or traced or linked in any way to Survey Monkey™. As with all research, but particularly in sensitive research, there was potential for participants to become distressed. Support contact numbers were provided in the participant information sheet (included
in initial introduction email) for any students who may have required follow up. The information sheet and introduction email identified that completion of the survey was deemed informed consent and identified and answered commonly asked questions regarding the process and the research (see Appendix G). All data is stored securely in password-protected files and all hard copy and soft copy data will be stored securely for five years in a locked filing cabinet as per Unitec policies. Data will be securely destroyed after that.

**Threats to Reliability, Validity, and Generalisability**

The research process was structured around solid ethical practices to ensure safety and confidentiality of the participants whilst attempting to minimise threats to reliability and validity. The survey questionnaire was previously used in both US local and national research studies and has been found to be reliable and valid. As identified earlier, the questions had rigorous expert evaluation. The dependence on self-disclosure of sexual orientation/gender identity is one threat to the validity of the data. All measures were taken to ensure participants remained anonymous and their confidentiality was maintained. Each student received only one survey questionnaire link which once utilised was invalid on second attempts to avoid or reduce the likelihood of multiple responses.

In terms of generalisability, it was important to seek and encourage participation of LGBTIQ students to gain as great a cohort as possible. This was achieved by the email link going to all Unitec students, utilising a screening process rather than snowballing or purposeful sampling. An adequate sample was achieved through this method. This ensures the results are as generalisable as possible to the population/institution.

There is no comparable research in New Zealand, which reduces measures to assess generalisability. It is hoped that this current research may, be used as a benchmark for further institutional research both locally and nationally.

**Summary**

This research was based on previous research completed on campus climates for LGBT students by Rankin (2003) in the US. The study followed a descriptive methodology. The use of a survey questionnaire was consistent with the original research which was identified as the best way to provide information, behaviour, opinions and attitudes of a particular population. Data collected were both qualitative, open-ended question and quantitative, closed questions. The survey instrument was found to be valid and reliable when utilised in the original study and has been utilised by a variety of researchers since. The sample was the entire population of students enrolled in Unitec in August 2012 who had a current email address. The research was identified as sensitive research and therefore incorporated specific ethical considerations to protect vulnerable participants. Analysis of quantitative data involved descriptive statistical analysis and
factor analysis. Thematic analysis was utilised for the qualitative open-ended question with themes emerging from the data. Results are presented in Chapter Four with a discussion of the results in Chapter Five. Chapter Six will discuss a set of recommendations emerging from the data with conclusions in Chapter Seven.
Chapter Four: Results

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the campus climate survey. Initially, I examine the demographics of the participants, then the experiences of LGBTIQ as described by the participants, their perception of safety, and anti-gay (LGBTIQ) experiences on campus. Heterosexual data findings will then be presented and, lastly, both heterosexual and LGBTIQ data regarding institutional actions, and initiatives related to LGBTIQ issues and concerns. This discussion on institutional actions and responses will incorporate a comparison of perceptions of campus climate between heterosexual students’ and LGBTIQ students’ ratings of campus climate on a variety of items. Lastly, I will discuss emails I received from Unitec students in response to the initial e-mail link.

Data were obtained from an online survey questionnaire link which was emailed to 11,446 Unitec students. Findings highlight the differences between perceptions and experiences based on sexual orientation/gender identity (Heterosexual, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Questioning). Heteronormativity was identified as an overarching concept to all four themes that emerged from the data. These themes are Theme One: Non-Disclosure and Perception of fear by Unitec LGBTIQ students, Theme Two: Invisibility and the desire for community for Unitec LGBTIQ students, Theme Three: Sexuality – A non-issue for Unitec heterosexual students and Theme Four: Student uncertainty regarding institutional responses and Unitec policies. Themes One and Two relate to LGBTIQ data and Theme Three to heterosexual data. Theme Four relates to institutional policies and actions. The results of the survey will be presented as they relate to sexual identity and themes. Of note, is that the statistical data analysis did not identify any statistically significant difference between faculties, racial/ethnic identity or degree of disclosure (such as out or closeted).

Themes

Four themes were revealed from a factor analysis of the quantitative data and thematic analysis of the qualitative data. The four themes were:

LGBTIQ Data

1) Theme One: Non-disclosure and Perception of fear by Unitec LGBTIQ students
2) Theme Two: Invisibility and the desire for community for Unitec LGBTIQ students

Heterosexual Data

3) Theme Three: Sexuality - A non-Issue for Unitec heterosexual students

Institutional Data
4) Theme Four: Student uncertainty regarding Institutional Responses and Unitec Policies

Overarching all of the themes identified was the concept of heteronormativity. Heteronormativity refers to the assumption that everyone is heterosexual (Carpenter & Lee, 2010).

**Demographic Information of Participants**

Four hundred and eighty three students commenced the online survey. One hundred and twenty eight students did not complete the survey and were therefore eliminated from the study. There was a total number of useable and completed responses from 355 students. The completed survey represented the following: 195 heterosexual students and 148 Lesbian, Gay Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Questioning students, made up of, 30 self-identified Lesbian students, 30 self-identified Gay students, 57 self-identified Bisexual students, 3 self-identified Transgender students, 28 self-identified Questioning students and 1 self-identified Intersex student. Twelve students did not answer the gender or orientation question. One student identified as Intersex gender identity with a Bisexual orientation. The total completed responses incorporated, 239 women, 108 men, 294 full-time students, 61 part-time students, 23 students with disabilities, 227 European students, 195 Maori, Pacific Island, Asian or other students, 240 New Zealand citizens, 16 International students and 119 partially or fully closeted students (i.e. Not out to anyone, just out to close friends or out to friends and family).

**Demographics by Gender**

A large portion (n=239) of the responses came from female students who constituted 68% of the total responses, with only 108 responses from male students constituting 30.8% (Figure 1). Three students who responded identified themselves as transgendered and one student identified as intersex.

The larger response from female students may be indicative of the stigma related to being male and homosexual, with research suggesting that males are often more homophobic and less inclined to discuss issues of sexuality (Evans & Wall, 2000). Four students chose not to answer this question.

**Demographics by Sexual Orientation**

Of the total completed responses, 43.1% (n=148 students) identified as LGBTIQ (Figure 2). One hundred and ninety five students, constituting 56.9%, identified as heterosexual. Twelve students chose not to respond to the question regarding sexual orientation.
Demographics by Age

The majority of participants were aged 22 years and under (Figure 3). Of the total sample of 355,
82.8% (n=294) were full time-students and 17.2% (n=61) part-time students. Twenty-three students (6.5%) identified experiencing a disability that substantially limits major life activity (such as seeing, hearing, learning, mobility).

Figure 3: Demographics by Age

Number of Students

Age

Figure 4: Demographics by Race/Ethnicity

Number of Students

Racial/ethnic group

Figure 4: Demographics by Race/Ethnicity

Demographics by Race/Ethnicity

European was the largest racial/ethnic group with 227 students (Figure 4) identifying as European,
a total of 64.1%. The second largest racial/ethnic group was identified as Pacific Island with 65 students, comprising 18.4%, followed by Maori, 51 students, 14.4%, Other 13% and Asian at 9.3%. These results demonstrate a broad range of racial/ethnic mix.

**Demographics by Faculty/Department**

The largest number of respondents came from the Faculty of Social and Health Sciences (FHS), with 44.7% (n=147) respondents (Figure 5). The large response from this faculty may be as a result of the fact that it provides programmes in the humanities arena. It could be argued, thus, that Social and Health Sciences students are generally more likely to be motivated towards the acceptance of difference. Many of the courses involved in this faculty include educating around diversity and acceptance.

![Pie chart showing demographics by Faculty](image)

**Figure 5: Demographics by Faculty**

This may mean that both heterosexual and LGBTIQ students in this faculty are more comfortable with differences in sexual identity and perhaps more motivated towards contributing to change. Research has demonstrated that many LGBTIQ people who have themselves been marginalised are often attracted to careers within the humanities field in the nature of wanting to help others (Evans & Wall, 2000). The second highest response rate was from the Faculty of Creative Industries and Business (FCIB). Creative Industries in particular may, it could be argued, attract
more “free thinkers” and students from a diverse range of society. Of note, is that the smallest number of respondents came from the Faculty of Technology and Built environment (FTBE). As the courses offered in this faculty are generally more traditional, it could be argued that this faculty could be more heteronormative than the others and thereby attract either less LGBTIQ students, or students who are less likely to respond to the survey due to more traditionalist belief systems. If this hypothesis is correct, it could indicate that the majority of the data for the research has come from the least heteronormative students at Unitec. Therefore, a more positive picture of LGBTIQ experiences than those occurring in the most heteronormative areas of Unitec may have been exposed. This however remains little more than a hypothesis which would require further investigation and research in order to confirm its validity.

**LGBTIQ Data**

Two themes were identified from the factor analysis of the quantitative data and the content analysis of the qualitative data for LGBTIQ students.

**Theme One: Non-Disclosure and perception of fear**

It appears that students’ perception of potential harassment, being treated differently or being judged leads them to make a decision whether or not to disclose their sexual orientation/gender identity (Table 1). One student who has been studying at Unitec for two and a half years discussed her reasons for concealing her sexual orientation to most people on campus stating:

*I have made a lot of friends with students and lecturers in the two and a half years I have been studying at Unitec but have only disclosed my sexual orientation to two close friends. The reason behind this choice is an underlying fear of being treated differently or judged so I prefer to not say anything.* (Bisexual female, 33-42, FSHS)

**Table 1**

**LGBTIQ who concealed their sexual orientation/gender identity in order to avoid intimidation (within the last year)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>(n)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>(n)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBTIQ</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>61.2%</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bisexual students were the most likely to conceal their orientation to avoid intimidation with 43.9% (n=25) making the decision not to disclose their identity (Figure 6). The second group most likely to conceal and therefore not disclose their identity was lesbian students with 43.3% (n=13) choosing to remain silent regarding their orientation. Twelve gay students (41.4%) and 25% (n=7) questioning students also chose to remain quiet. Of note, is that none of the transgender students on campus had felt a need in the last year to conceal their identity for fear of intimidation. In a similar question, 45.2% (n=67) LGBTIQ students identified that they were ‘uncertain’, ‘likely’ or ‘very likely’ to conceal their sexual identity on campus in order to avoid actual discrimination. Of note again, is that of the three transgender students who responded, one stated that they were ‘very unlikely’ to conceal their orientation/gender identity and two stated that they were ‘unlikely’ to conceal their orientation/gender identity.

Students identified a variety of reasons for concealing their sexual identity/orientation:

_I feel I cannot be open with peers due to feelings of discrimination and taunting. This has also happened when someone in my class liked me as well._ (Bisexual female, 22 and under, FSHS)
I generally just let people assume I'm straight to avoid any uncomfortable situations - on their part or mine. (Bisexual female, 22 and under, FCIB)

Table 2

LGBTIQ students' levels of outness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of Outness</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>(n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Closeted: Not out to anyone</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out to a few close friends</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out to a few friends/family</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out to friends and family</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out to all professionally and personally</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 148 LGBTIQ students who completed the survey, only 27% (n=41) are out fully on the Unitec campus (Table 2). Of the students who responded as not applicable, 10 were questioning students, one transgender and three bisexual (Figure 7). Because of the nature of their sexual orientation, these 14 students may have considered that they did not need to be out. This means that 73% (n=107) LGBTIQ students are not out professionally or personally on the Unitec campus and continue to remain somewhat, if not fully, closeted.

The decision to remain somewhat closeted or to conceal sexual orientation was usually related to fear of repercussions, stigma, harassment, violence and discomfort, but also because students do not want to be accused of being ‘in your face’.

The following student provides an example of fear related to potential security and a reluctance to discuss his sexual orientation for fear of “flaunting it”, stating:

I'm not the kind of person who declares my sexual identity to everybody. But if anyone asks, I don't lie. Also, I wouldn't know anyone else who is gay/les/trans because nobody really shows their colours, just like me. I'm not saying whether Unitec is gay friendly or not, but not everybody wants to tell everyone that they are. Some for security reasons, but mostly because nobody wants it thrown in their face like a Mormon on a bicycle on a Saturday morning you know? (Gay male, 23-32, FCIB)
This not wanting or being unwilling to discuss his sexual orientation leads the student to stay silent and in doing so contributes further to isolation, marginalisation and disempowerment. The following are the reported occurrences of harassment on campus in the last 12 months (Table 3).

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experienced Harassment</th>
<th>Yes %</th>
<th>Yes (n)</th>
<th>No %</th>
<th>No (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LGBTIQ</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>89.9%</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>99.5%</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesbian students were the most likely to report harassment at 16.7% (n=5) (Figure 8) followed by bisexual students 10.5% (n=6). Gay males reported rates at 10.3% (n=3) and 3.6% (n=1) questioning students reported harassment. Of note from these findings, is that all three transgender students who responded identified that they had not experienced any forms of harassment on the Unitec campus in the last 12 months due to their sexual orientation/gender identity.

The following student identifies the dilemma of subtle forms of harassment and discrimination and the impact that can have on the decision to conceal sexual orientation/gender identity and the reasons for remaining at least somewhat closeted on Unitec campus:

*I have also felt it hard to come out to all of my class mates as there are a lot of students who on many occasion make jokes which are harmless but in repetition can get to a point of frustration and exclusion.* (Gay male, 22 and under, FTBE)

This student identified that it is often easier not to challenge this and explains why many LGBTIQ students find silence is the best solution:

*...but in saying so it is expected but then impacts in that I don't want to be the red flag that stops fun and jokes because I'm around leading to further exclusion ... a very complicated game... what can you do!!!!* (Gay male, 22 and under, FTBE)

Many students identified with 'non-disclosure by silence' and a number identified that they had a 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' approach, choosing to remain silent unless asked directly if they were LGBTIQ:

*I am not closeted but nor do I feel the need to announce my sexuality to all and sundry. If anyone asked I would answer truthfully.* (Lesbian, 53 plus, FSHS)

*I do identify as gay yet I do not feel it is necessary to have to come out to each and every person so I do not disclose my sexuality unless someone asks or it come up in conversation that I have a same sex partner or that I am gay.* (Gay male, 23-32, FCIB)

The following student states that what other people say has no effect on him and yet he identifies that it is difficult for him to disclose his sexual orientation:

*I'm a new student here at Unitec and I have problems telling people that I am gay, I don't go and tell the world and act like a queen. I'm gay, and I am who I am, but if you ask I'll tell, I am who I am and I really don't care about what people think about me, cause they are not the one that I'm rooting or sleeping with, so what people say has no effect on me.* (Gay male, 23-32, FCIB)
Other students identify quite simply that they have never been asked and therefore remain silent.

*I've never had people ask me of my sexual orientation; maybe because my mannerisms are not any different to a heterosexual man. Unless asked by a student, then I will let him/her know.* (Gay male, 23-32, FCIB)

*Not everyone knows, but if someone was to ask me I would tell them straight-up.* (Bisexual female, 22 and under, FSHS)

*I am studying [degree course] as of yet not one person has asked another person their sexual preference.* (Bisexual female, 22 and under, FSHS)

Of the students who reported harassment (Table 4), derogatory remarks were the most common at 66.7% (n=12) with lesbian students being the most likely to report experiences of this (Figure 9). Direct or indirect harassment came in second at 27.8% with (n=5) students reporting this, with gay men being the most likely (n=2) to experience it (Figure 9). Coming in third equal was pressure to be silent about your sexual orientation/gender identity at 16.7% (n=3) with gay men reporting the highest percentage of this (n=1) (Figure 9).
Table 4

*Forms of harassment experienced by those LGBTIQ students who reported having experienced harassment in the last year*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms of Harassment</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>(n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Derogatory remarks</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats to expose your sexual orientation/gender identity</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure to be silent about your sexual orientation/gender</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct or indirect verbal harassment or threats</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denial of services</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written comments (e.g. anti LGBTIQ flyers, publications etc.)</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti LGBTIQ graffiti</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats of physical violence</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual assault or injury</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Third equal was threats of physical violence at 16.7% (n=3) with one lesbian reporting this and two bisexual students (Figure 9). Actual physical assault also came in third equal with 16.7% (n=3) reported incidences of assault with two bisexual and one gay male reporting this in the last 12 months. In regards to threats of physical harm or actual assaults none were discussed in the open-ended section of the survey questionnaire so it is not possible to provide any further details of the extent or nature of the threats or actual assaults.

There were three reports of threats to expose someone’s sexual orientation/gender identity and two reports of antigay written comments such as publications, flyers etc. One student reported anti-gay graffiti and one student reported one incidence of harassment not otherwise identified. No students reported experiencing denial of services. The following student had not experienced harassment themselves but spoke of being annoyed by the derogatory use of the word ‘gay’:

*Generally all good, I’m 37 and not easily intimidated. Find it pretty annoying how the younger generation use the word gay to describe anything they think is a bit rubbish or crap though, not good, would be great if that one was phased out of use. I wouldn't describe myself as politically correct, I can take the piss out of being gay but it can't be that great being younger with people using the word in that way. (Lesbian, 33-42, FSHS)*

LGBTIQ students identified the places where this harassment took place; 31% (n=5) students were harassed in the class room; 25% (n=4) were harassed in a public space on campus; 25%
(n=4) were harassed walking on campus; and 19% (n=3) were harassed at a campus event. Seven students who were harassed identified none of the above areas.

A majority of harassment experienced 56.3% (n=9) came from other students. However, there was one instance from a staff member and another 6.3% (n=1) from an administrator. The balance was from perpetrators not known to the students. The one student who identified harassment from a tutor in this question said:

   I have experienced homophobic remarks from tutors who very likely do not know about my sexual preferences but that is not really the issue, they shouldn’t be expressing those views professionally regardless of their personal feelings or opinions. (Lesbian, 53 and over, FSHS)

Several students however gave examples, when answering the open-ended question in the survey, of being on the receiving end of derogatory comments from lecturers in the classroom. This indicates that often students do not identify the anti-gay statements that they hear as harassment. It also indicates that the harassment in regards to derogatory remarks from staff in the survey questionnaire is an underestimate.

   I have had one lecturer who has made at least one joke in a lecture which solicited a laugh from the class, the same lecturer also made a comment on a different occasion about gay men, saying “that’s just wrong”. Although it was a joke in general, not targeted at any one, I guess it made me uncomfortable as I didn’t find it particularly funny but was forced to laugh in case not doing so could reveal my sexual orientation…I did not report the incident because I felt I might be reading too much into it…and besides he is a good lecturer and I didn’t want to cause him any professional trouble. (Gay male, 22 and under, FTBE)

For these students, the comments from someone who was supposed to be a role model in their elected profession may have contributed to their decision to remain closeted and not “come out”, at least not to the lecturer and, for at least one student, to not “come out” with his entire class.

   I have been confronted by a particular lecturer… who has repetitively made jokes about homosexuality… making it extremely difficult to (1) Respect him enough to actually learn from him and (2) made it difficult for me to approach him. (Gay male, under 22, FTBE)

Many students identified they did not feel harassed or intimidated but identified this only because they “refused to feel this way”.

   I had no difficulties at my course because of my sexuality. This wasn’t because of the way people reacted to my social orientation (because I was aware of people in my study environment that did not agree with my orientation). This was because I refuse to let people treat me any less important because of my sexuality. (Lesbian, 22 and under, FTBE)

   If people don't like me for me then they can go find other closed minded groups because I can't
be fucked dealing with them. (Bisexual male, 22 and under, FTBE)

One student spoke of not participating for fear of belittlement:

Within the [name] Degree, there are a lot of individuals that hold strong beliefs that at times are extremely positive; however at times these strong beliefs can be a hindrance to learning and can sometimes form into personal attacks, in this instance in regards to sexuality. This in turn then limits the want to participate within discussions, for fear of being belittled etc. (Lesbian, 23-32, FSHS).

In this scenario, it may be easier for the student to remain silent, a strategy identified by several students in the survey. To challenge behaviours often leads to further exclusion and isolation. Several students who chose to be out about their sexual orientation/gender identity identified adverse, frustrating or stereotypical reactions from other students:

The assumed ‘norm’ of heterosexual straight prevails within my area of study, with the added discomfort of feeling as if other women in a lot of classes I have been in feel uncomfortable around me, hence avoid me. (Lesbian, 53 plus, FCIB)

When I came out to class mates it was in a conversation when I described my partner as he and people clicked that I was gay. Most people were surprised as in their words I did not conform to the stereotypes or "act" gay. This is one of the biggest annoyances I have that people don't see you as gay unless you fit into a box. This is why I find I do not like to come out all the time as people either do not believe me or they go on a big rant about how they would never have guessed. (Gay male, 23-32, FCIB)

One student identified that actually being out and proud can lead to an increased pressure on the student to help others deal with their feelings about being LGBTIQ:

I am studying in the [name] department at Unitec so it kind of goes without saying that people of all ages, genders, sizes, sexual identities and races are accepted and treated the same as anyone else. So in terms of my well-being within Unitec, everything is great. The only issue that was raised for me from this survey is the presence of gay representation and support down my end of campus. I'm certain there is support for the LGBTIQ community at Unitec but I wouldn't know where to look. It would great to see more of a presence in the [name] department…I know that because of the nature and content of the [name] degree, students are confronted with a lot of questions and doubts about themselves, whether it be spiritual, physical, emotional, sexual, whatever, and is a huge time of change in their lives. Many students over my three years here have approached me for help or advice or just someone to
talk to about how to deal with what they are going through. Long story short I would like to see a bigger support presence...for students who are struggling with their identity. (Gay male, 22 and under, FCIB)

*Figure 9:* Forms of harassment experienced by those LGBTIQ students who reported having experienced harassment within the last year according to sexual orientation

Of note from these findings, is that while all three transgender students who responded identified that they did not feel a need to conceal or hide their orientation/gender identity for fear of intimidation or harassment this may not be representative of the overall experiences of transgender students on the Unitec campus. The findings from the three transgender students differs markedly from Rankin's (2003) study which found transgender students are much more likely to be on the receiving end of harassment and therefore perhaps would have a greater motivation to conceal their sexual orientation/gender identity.
The likelihood of transgender students experiencing harassment on the Unitec campus, despite the findings of this survey, was suggested by one transgender student’s comments in the open-ended question of the survey when they stated:

*I have never experienced any negativity since being here at Waitakere Campus. I understand others, my Fa’aafafine sisters, have and when I do see that happening, I shall be there to defend them. We are all here to learn and sex is the last thing on my mind!!!!!!* (Transgender student, 53 plus, FSHS)

The experience of harassment or the possibility of harassment often leads to the choice of students not to disclose or conceal their sexual orientation/gender. It contributes to students decisions not to be fully out on the Unitec campus climate. Many students appear to find that silence is the best form of non-disclosure.

**Theme Two: Invisibility and the desire for community for Unitec LGBTIQ student**

A majority of the data that revealed the theme of invisibility and desire for community for LGBTIQ students emerged from two portions of the survey. The first being LGBTIQ response to Section Three of the survey, which related to Unitec Campus Response and Institutional actions, policies and responses. This will be discussed under Theme Four “Institutional Actions”. The most revealing data identifying invisibility and the desire for community emerged from LGBTIQ responses to Part Five of the survey, “Your additional comments: Have your say”. Students were guided in their responses by the following statement:

This survey may have raised a large number of issues. If you would like to tell your story of your experiences of Unitec, please use the space below. Include any positive or negative experiences or examples that you would like Unitec to focus on and any suggestions you may have to improve the Unitec campus climate for LGBTIQ people.

Several students spoke of the concept of being the only LGBTIQ person that they knew of:

*Have been studying at Unitec nearly a whole year and haven’t met any other LGBTIQ people.*

(Gay male, 22 and under FCIB)

*I don’t know of anyone who is Gay/Les/Trans.* (Gay male, 23-32, FCIB)

Unequivocally, nearly all LGBTIQ students identified a desire for more openness, visibility and support on the Unitec campus. The most common theme throughout the responses, other than non-disclosure, harassment and visibility, was the distinct desire for connection with other LGBTIQ people and students. The most common form requested was that of a support group.

Several students identified in particular the lack of services from USU identifying that even within this service, which was there to support all students, LGBTIQ support was totally invisible.
They show everything that Unitec has to offer but there is nothing for gays. For example, the USU at orientation, they gave us information about everything we need to know about what they do, and how they're here to help every student, from doctors, to seeing a lawyer, studies, were (sic) to eat, the gym and the list goes on, if (sic) they're here to help all students (sic) they should include the gay and les as well. (Gay male, 23-32, FCIB)

I feel that Unitec does not have a policy of accepting or promoting LGBTIQ people. It would be great if Unitec had a policy like their Maori and Pacific Island policy for LGBTIQ people. Also it would be great if the Unitec Student Union set up a social group for LGBTIQ. (Gay male, 33-42, FCIB)

This level of invisibility, isolation and lack of support groups perpetuates and contributes greatly to choices around non-disclosure and the decision to remain “somewhat closeted”.

I can't recall seeing anything around campus promoting or encouraging people who have a different sexual orientation to the norm so maybe that is why I chose to fly beneath the radar. (Bisexual female, 33-42, FSHS)

The desire for connection expressed within the open-ended response section was significant, with almost all students making reference to the desire for more support, meeting others and suggestions of a group.

I'm third semester and this is the first I have seen in regards to up to date LGBTIQ information or correspondence. It's about time there was some information somewhere. (Lesbian, 22 and under, FTBE)

Not all students will be interested in it, but I think events should be held for students to socialize within the gay community. (Lesbian, 22 and under, FTBE)

Many students identified that they did not know if a support or social group already existed and they just had not heard about it.

No support groups for LGBTIQ people that I am aware of - perhaps a group needs to be formed, Or if there is a group, make it known so LGBTIQ have knowledge of it. (Lesbian, 22 and under, FCIB)

There may be a "rainbow" presence at Unitec but it's not really out there...I have seen some posters. (Lesbian, 53+, FSHS)

One thing I would be interested in would be a group where LGBT students could meet and interact and just chill as a group for lack of a better phrase. I'm not terribly sure if there is anything like this already available...but I haven't been made aware of it. (Gay male, 22 and under, FCIB)
Experience at Unitec has been good, but would like to see more involvement with LGBTIQ people’s social groups, events that involve all of us. (Gay male, 22 and under, FCIB)

I am yet to have any exposure to any LGBT groups or a way for shy people like me to meet in the LGBT Group. (Gay male, 23-32, FCIB)

I am a gay man, have no issues with Unitec with any staff or fellow students, connected with my sexual orientation. Though I am unaware of any G.L.B.T social groups or activities either on or off Campus this doesn’t concern me as an individual, as I am also Cuped [Civil Unioned]. Though it would be nice to know of any such groups for students that may like to connect with others on campus. (Gay male, 33-42, FCIB)

I hope there is a group of gay in Unitec where we can talk and can have something activity to do. (Bisexual intersex student, 23-32, FSHS)

I just started Unitec so I’m not sure if there are any support/social groups for LGBTIQ people, but I am interested in the attending or the formation of such groups. (Bisexual student, 22 and under, FCIB)

I would love to know about support groups for lesbians. (Questioning female, 23-32, FCIB)

I don’t have any experiences to share other than there is no visible information around campus for LGBTIQ people. (Questioning female, 33-42, FCIB)

I would like to see some type of club or support group, something where people can meet to discuss issues and give advice on places in the city that are LGBT friendly. As an International student it would be nice to have this insight from people who live here and are familiar with the scene. (Bisexual female, 23-32, FSHS)

A number of students were so keen for a support group, or to connect with other LGBTIQ people that they gave me contact details and asked if she could get in touch with them to let them know if there was a social or support group already running that they were not aware of.

When I first started at Unitec on orientation week there was a gay group tent that was set up in the hub and I didn't join the group because I wasn’t sure of the bias at Unitec, however now that I am familiar with things I would really like to join it and any other groups if there are any. If this email is read by someone who knows about these groups or knows who I should be in contact with, my email is [email address] and I would love to hear back from you. (Gay male, 22 and under, FTBE)

Sadly I noticed Unitec did not have a group for Gays/ Lesbians unlike AUT [another tertiary institute in Auckland]. (Bisexual female, 22 and under, FSHS)
Several heterosexual students also noted the lack of support for LGBTIQ students or supported the concept of the need for group support services:

*I have not been aware of any issues regarding sexual discrimination or harassment, nor have I been aware of any support systems in place by Unitec.* (Heterosexual female, 22 and under, FSHS)

*Maybe there is a greater need for more counselling with people that are open minded and not as judgemental but allow the person to make their own choice.* (Heterosexual female, 33-43, FSHS)

*I haven't really thought about the LGBTIQ people at Unitec, probably due to it not really applying to me or any of the people I'm surrounded by, as far as I know. I do think there could be a bigger/more obvious presence of support for the LGBTIQ people at Unitec as I haven't seen anything around about it at all and everyone likes to be part of a group of people that may be going through similar experiences.* (Heterosexual female, 22 and under, FCIB)

*I don't see any major LGBTIQ influence within Unitec; however I also don't think that there is a major discriminatory environment. Is there a club?* (Heterosexual female, 23-32, FSHS)

*Perhaps having a common space for people of all orientations to hangout without any judgement or hang ups would be great...somewhere where ever.* (Heterosexual female, 33-42, FCIB)

*As a heterosexual I am not aware of any discrimination however I think more awareness needs to be made if there are issues of discrimination or harassment that are happening on or around campus. Just because it doesn't affect me doesn't mean it's not happening. Furthermore, I think there needs to be more visibility around where to go and setting some and/or promoting more appropriate cultural norms if this is an issue on campus.* (Heterosexual female, 33-42, FSHS)

**Heterosexual Data**

**Theme Three: Sexuality a Non-Issue for Heterosexual Students**

When heterosexual data were compared to LGBTIQ data, the most common theme that emerged, particularly from the open-ended responses was that heterosexual students believed that a non-heterosexual identity was not an issue on the Unitec campus.

Question Five stated:

This survey may have raised a large number of issues. If you would like to tell your story of
your experiences of Unitec please use the space below. Include any positive or negative experiences or examples that you would like Unitec to focus on and any suggestions you may have to improve the Unitec campus climate for LGBTIQ people.

The results indicated that 76% (n=39) of heterosexual students who responded to this question did not believe that there was any discrimination based on sexual identity on the Unitec campus.

I find Unitec to be the most accepting inclusive environment for races, genders and gender orientation. (Female student, 53 and over, FCIB)

Heterosexual students appeared to accept the status quo and a majority assumed LGBTIQ students felt the same way. Many made statements that appeared to assume that because they themselves were accepting of LGBTIQ people, everyone was:

Not being LGBTIQ I am unaware of any issues that occur. I'd like to think as a nation we are tolerant of ALL individuals regardless of their sexuality. Perhaps I am naive? (Heterosexual female, 33-42, FCIB)

I haven’t experienced any circumstances which highlight your concerns although personally I am very accepting of everyone. (Heterosexual female, 23-32, FCIB)

I feel that as a heterosexual, I cannot only assume how supportive Unitec is toward LGBTIQ people. As an individual, I am not discriminatory toward any of these groups, as they are not discriminatory toward me because of my sexual orientation. I can only offer my own feelings toward this survey, being that I do not define individuals by their sexual or gender-based orientation, and neither do any of the peers I have come into contact with. I feel that Unitec is accepting of people from all walks of life. (Heterosexual female, 22 and under, FSHS)

My experience of learning beside LGBTIQ students has been positive. I have felt accepted as a fellow student and believe that they too have felt accepted. (Heterosexual female, 43-53, FSHS)

I haven't experienced, witnessed or heard of any form of discrimination towards anyone. (Heterosexual male, 23-32, FTBE)

…..never seen or heard of any harassment/discrimination of any type at Unitec, though I don't have any impairment and am heterosexual. (Heterosexual female, 22 and under, FSHS)

Nil. It's all good in the hood for me. I don’t know about others. I have not seen or heard about any discrimination towards these diverse backgrounds. (Heterosexual male. 33-42, FSHS)

Many identified that while they had not seen or heard any discrimination, they would step in if they saw it occurring:

I have never experienced discrimination on the topic researched, and would never judge anyone on this. I believe in everyone being who they are and value the experiences and
perspectives they offer. I understand this is not always easy for people and accept life is a personal journey and that we all experience, react and learn in different ways from our experiences. I hope that any of my friends, family, colleagues and employees feel safe to discuss issues and that I will always be open and non-judgmental. I have never seen any harassment or discrimination and would step up to stop it or if necessary contact people to stop it. In my experience Unitec is open and friendly; I want this to be the same throughout New Zealand. (Heterosexual female, 23-32, FCIB)

One heterosexual student identified that they felt choices, beliefs and prejudices were individual and therefore not an institutional responsibility:

It is my belief that attitudes and beliefs are an individual psychological issue not an institutional one. Unitec has a number of well-respected staff members who do not get treated any differently than anyone else on campus so I believe that Unitec is neutral on the subject. (Heterosexual male, 33-42, FSHS)

While others simply identified ... “why is this issue?”

To be honest I have not come across any differences between different sexual identities as I treat everyone equally. I believe every person should be valued equally regardless of sexuality. I find it sad that there is a need to have to be so focussed on identifying which sex group you come from. It is a personal thing and has nothing to do with anyone else. I believe that if a person is comfortable with their sexuality then that’s who they are. Why is there such a need to have to publicise a sexual identity group? Is it a confidence, self-esteem issue with the individual??? (sic) Or with the public???? (sic). (Heterosexual female, 33-42, FSHS)

My course is up in gate [number]. We have a number of gay people and lesbians and everybody’s absolutely fine with it. This is my second year of study and when I started my first year I was told that in our industry it is not uncommon to meet people of different sexual orientation. Regardless of that, I believe that no matter what sexual orientation you are it doesn’t change who you are or your skill. I have never experienced anything bad connected to sexual orientation at Unitec. I don’t believe anybody really cares. We’re not in high school anymore. (Heterosexual female, 22 and under, FCIB)

Several students identified positive experiences.

I find that most homosexual students are treated in exactly the same way as all students. They manage themselves very well, I enjoy contact with them. They are fun, informative, supportive and push ahead. Another observation is that lesbians are more assertive than any other group on campus and are forging ahead in their endeavours around campus. To date, I have heard of no disagreements, maybe a few disgruntles but these you get in any group of students. (Heterosexual female, 53+, FCIB)
As a heterosexual I have noticed zero discrimination or negative attitudes on campus - I note we have an openly gay student in a class this semester and have noticed zero difference in the other students and lecturers attitude and dealings with them. Overall I believe Unitec is doing a good job of managing any issues that may arise. (Heterosexual male, 23-32, FCIB)

The following was however the most common response:

*Have no experience of any discrimination for whatever reason on campus or in communication.*

(Heterosexual male, 53+, FSHS)

Another student acknowledged that while they had not seen or heard of it they believed it was still an issue:

*Personally I have not been in any situation where I feel uncomfortable yet at Unitec, however I still feel that discrimination against people with regards to sexual orientation other than heterosexual is still a fundamental issue wherever you go and Unitec is no exception. I associate myself with people I know and feel I have connection with; thus far my experience at Unitec has been warm.* (Heterosexual male, 33-42, FCIB)

Despite the overwhelming majority (76%) (n=39) of heterosexual students indicating that they believed there was no discrimination at Unitec and only a small number of heterosexual students making blatant homophobic remarks (as identified in the introduction), heterosexual students remained largely uncertain if LGBTIQ students are harassed on campus. While heterosexual students believe gay, lesbian and bisexual students were mostly ‘unlikely’ to be harassed on campus this was closely followed by ‘uncertain’ as evidenced by the following results (Figures 10, 11,12,13 and 14).

*Figure 10: Perception of the extent to which Gay men are likely to be harassed on campus*
Figure 11: Perception of the extent to which Lesbians are likely to be harassed on campus

Figure 12: Perception of the extent to which Bisexual students are likely to be harassed on campus
These findings identify that while heterosexual students are often not seeing or experiencing personal evidence of harassment or discrimination against LGBTIQ students, they are not...
confident that LGBTIQ students are not being harassed on Unitec campus.

Table 5

Differences between heterosexual and LGBTIQ responses to questions in regard to campus experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART ONE: Unitec Campus Experience</th>
<th>Heterosexual students who answered YES</th>
<th>LGBTIQ students who answered YES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Feared for my physical safety because of my sexual orientation</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Concealed my sexual orientation/gender identity to avoid intimidation</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Avoided disclosing my sexual orientation/gender identity to a lecturer, supervisor, administrator or student support person due to fear of negative consequences, harassment or discrimination</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Been denied opportunities due to my sexual orientation/gender identity</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Was a victim of harassment due to my sexual orientation/gender identity</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While not unexpected, the findings identify that LGBTIQ students at Unitec are far more likely to be fearful, more likely to conceal or avoid disclosing their sexual orientation, or to have been denied opportunities due to their sexual orientation/gender identity (Table 5).

Significant findings of concern are that 38.8% (n=57) of LGBTIQ students will conceal their sexual orientation/gender identity and 24.5% (n=36) avoid disclosing their sexual identity/gender orientation.

Seventy three percent (n=107) of LGBTIQ students are not out fully out both professionally and personally on the Unitec campus.

Ten per cent (n=15) of LGBTIQ on Unitec have been a victim of harassment. Analysis of the open-ended question responses indicate under-reporting of examples of harassment in the closed question section of the survey.

Institutional Responses

Theme Four: Student uncertainty regarding Institutional Responses and Unitec Policies

Part Three of the survey questionnaire focused on institutional responses, policies and actions around LGBTIQ issues. Of the many issues on campus that can influence students' perception
and experiences of campus climate, Institutional Responses are significant in setting a standard or role model for what is acceptable behaviour on campus. In identifying what behaviours the institute will tolerate, as well as what behaviours the institute will not accept, the Institution’s policies actions and responses set the guidelines for students’ behaviour.

Institutional responses incorporate the policies that underlie the institution’s responses to LGBTIQ intimidation, bullying, harassment and discrimination. It also incorporates how well the curriculum represents and discusses LGBTIQ issues and thereby educates students with regard to diversity and acceptance of LGBTIQ identities. It identifies whether the management team acknowledge, support and promote an LGBTIQ inclusive environment. One heterosexual student in the survey clearly identified that this is not just an issue at Unitec stating:

*I still feel that discrimination against people with regards to sexual orientation other than heterosexual is still a fundamental issue wherever you go and Unitec is no exception.* (Heterosexual male, 33-42, FCIB)

Another heterosexual student indicated that they felt Unitec should be clearer about expectations.

*I also feel Unitec’s management could do a better job explaining what kinds of statements are unacceptable in a tertiary environment.* (Heterosexual male, 33-42, FCIB)

![Bar chart](image)

**Figure 15: Do you agree that the institution thoroughly addresses campus issues related to sexual orientation/gender identity issues**

Of all students, both heterosexual and LGBTIQ, most students 55.1% (n=194) identified they were uncertain if Unitec thoroughly addressed campus issues around sexual orientation/gender identity (Figure 15). Both LGBTIQ and heterosexual students appeared to lack confidence in Unitec’s ability to thoroughly address issues related to sexual orientation/gender issues. Heterosexual
students were slightly more positive than LGBTIQ students with only 17.1% (n=33) ‘disagreeing’ or ‘strongly disagreeing’ while 27.7% (n=41) of LGBTIQ students either ‘disagreed’ or ‘strongly disagreed’.

*I feel that Unitec does not have a policy of accepting or promoting LGBTIQ people. It would be great if Unitec had a policy like their Maori and Pacific Island policy for LGBTIQ people.* (Gay male, 33-42, FCIB)

*Unitec is heterocentric and avoids discussion about gay people.* (Questioning female, 22 and under, FSHS)

The following student perhaps represented the majority answering as ‘uncertain’ but figured that policies must be in place:

*I assume (and expect) that Unitec would have protocols in place to deal with discrimination/harassment, and that they would be dealt with effectively and quickly.* (Heterosexual female, 23-32, FSHS)

One student identified the issues and frustrations of actually trying to lay a complaint of harassment in regards to sexual orientation/gender identity.

*After reporting in class harassment in year 1 of the [name] programme I made a complaint and was told to phone [name]. We spoke on the phone and they seemed interested but nothing came of it. I have been fully out in year 2 and in general people have been very supportive, this year’s verbal harassment came from strangers who may have been [name of degree] students.* (Lesbian, 33-42, FSHS)

This student’s experience is similar to those reported by other New Zealand researchers who reported that students felt there was no point in complaining as in their words “nothing gets done” (OUSA, 2003; Riches, 2011). This was the only incident identified by the respondents where a student actually made a complaint. She reports “nothing came of” it. Many students, particularly those not out professionally and personally at Unitec, may be reluctant to make complaints because in doing so they are required to “come out”. As identified, it is difficult for students to complain or report unfair treatment when they are dealing with non-disclosure and invisibility. This often leads to limited reporting of incidents or non-reporting. Assumptions cannot be made but it would be interesting to know if the students who sustained physical attacks due to sexual orientation/gender identity ever reported the matter. Non-reporting of incidents can be the danger of invisibility and silence among LGBTIQ students.

Respondents were generally uncertain or disagreed in regards to Unitec having visible leadership regarding sexual orientation/gender identity issues (Figure 16). The most common response was that students were uncertain 52.9% (n=185) with the second highest score this time being that students actually disagreed at 21.7 % (n=76). Again heterosexual students were slightly more
positive with only 22.2% (n=43) either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing while 34.2% (n=50) LGBTIQ students either disagreed or agreed. Student comments included:

*Nothing makes me think Unitec even cares or acknowledges GLBT communities.* (Lesbian, 43-52, FSHS)

*It would be nice to have role models within campus. Lecturers/Teachers etc. So that we know that we are not alone.* (Gay male, 23-32, FSHS)

*I think that there is not much representation or mention of gay or lesbians at Unitec.* (Gay male, 22 and under, FSHS)

**Figure 16:** Do you agree that Unitec has visible leadership from management regarding sexual orientation/gender issues on campus

Heterosexual students also identified that more was needed with one stating:

*I think there needs to be more visibility around where to go and setting some and/or promoting more appropriate cultural norms if this is an issue on campus.* (Heterosexual female, 33-42, FSHS)

Overall, students were largely uncertain if the curriculum represented the contribution of LGBTIQ people with 60.8% (n=214) students identifying as uncertain (Figure 17). Comparison between heterosexual and LGBTIQ responses identified that heterosexual responses were more positive with 22.8% (n=44) ‘agreeing’ or ‘strongly agreeing’ while only 19.6% (n=29) LGBTIQ students
either ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’. Students in the open-ended question appeared in agreement, with both heterosexual and LGBTIQ identifying that it is only through education that equality can be achieved and issues can be resolved.

Unitec, along with most other facets of New Zealand society, needs to realise that having a sexual orientation beyond heterosexuality is not an abnormality and is not unnatural. The only way this can be done is through positive education promotion and support networks. Cheers. (Lesbian, 23-32, FTBE)

Only when the people are educated that all is equal, the future can be equal, and those issues with LGBTIQ people or other racial issues can gradually be resolved. (Heterosexual male, 33-42, FTBE)

Figure 17: Do you agree that the curriculum adequately represents the contribution of LGBTIQ people

One student identified an inadequacy in the classroom.

I have found that during lectures when gay or lesbian people are mentioned it’s just brushed over and not gone into detail. For example, in [name of course] we were talking about families and the lecturer just rushed past it. (Gay male, 22 and under, FSHS)

It is difficult to know definitively why the above situation occurred. Some students in previous comments above identified lecturers who were blatantly homophobic and made this known to the
class. Ellis (2009) however identified that often lecturers themselves may have personally held beliefs which make teaching about non-heterosexual issues difficult. Lecturers, themselves are often heterosexual with a limited understanding of LGBTIQ issues and therefore do not know how to teach from this perspective in the classroom. This may lead lecturers to avoid or brush over the topic (Ellis).

All students, both heterosexual and LGBTIQ, agreed that, generally, the climate of classes they took were accepting of LGBTIQ people (Figure 18). Overall 63.7% (n=225) of students surveyed either agreed or strongly agreed that class climate was accepting (Figure 18). Sixty nine percent (n=134) of heterosexual students either agreed or strongly agreed and 57.6% (n=85) also agreed or strongly agreed. One student acknowledged the heterosexual norm while several others gave positive examples:

*The assumed 'norm' of heterosexual straight prevails within my area of study.*  (Lesbian, 53+, FCIB)

*I have studied with a number of people (both students and lecturers) who have felt very comfortable with their sexuality and are quite open about it. I have noticed no negative behaviour nor had any mentioned to me.*  (Bisexual female, 23-32, FCIB)

*I believe one of our lecturers is gay, and a student in my class did a project on her sexuality and the abuse she’s been through but moved on from, and everyone in the class did not acknowledge it as being an issue. A lot of the artists we study are gay and their sexuality in relation to their art is discussed with no judgment of issue of any kind.*  (Heterosexual female, 22 and under, FCIB)
Overall, the feedback regarding class climate in regards to sexual orientation/gender identity was positive, not only from a statistical perspective but was also evident in positive examples throughout the open-ended question section.

Students were largely divided when asked if Unitec provided visible resources on LGBTIQ issues, with almost an equal number of students ‘agreeing’ and ‘disagreeing’ (Figure 19). The majority however were ‘uncertain’ with 50.7% (n=178) students. Again heterosexual students were more positive with 28% (n=54) answering positively while only 19.6% (n=29) answering positively in their responses.

Student responses varied:

*I love the fact that The Express [free gay newspaper] newspaper is readily available at the Waitakere Campus. I don’t go to the bars or CBD much and love to read the paper.* (Gay male, 43-52, FSHS)

*I can't recall seeing anything around campus promoting or encouraging people who have a different sexual orientation to the norm so maybe that is why I choose to fly beneath the radar.* (Bisexual female, 33-42, FSHS)
Figure 19: Do you agree that Unitec provides visible resources on LGBTIQ issues and concerns

I'm third semester and this is the first I have seen in regards to up to date LGBTIQ information or correspondence [research posters]. It's about time there was some information somewhere. (Lesbian, 22 and under, FTBE)

In total, 80.5% (n=281) of all students, both heterosexual and LGBTIQ were ‘uncertain’ if Unitec had a rapid response to harassment in relation to sexual orientation/gender identity and 79.2% (n=278) were ‘uncertain’ if Unitec had a rapid response to discrimination in regards to sexual orientation/gender identity.

The final question (Table 6) in this section of the survey asked:

Q. 3.8 Please rate Unitec campus climate in general for the following items, where '1' is the most positive (e.g., 1 = most friendly, 1 = non-homophobic, etc.) with 5 being most negative (e.g., 5 = most unfriendly, 5 = most homophobic, etc.).

**Table 6**

**Question 3.8 Rating of Unitec campus in general for the following items**

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<td>Friendly</td>
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<td>Reserved</td>
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<td>Competitive</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Accessible to persons with a disability</td>
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Overall, on every level, heterosexual students gave more positive scores in every section (see following Figures 20 and 21).

Of note, is that the highest number of heterosexual students (n=74) gave Unitec a rating of 1 (most positive) (Figure 20) in regard to non-homophobic/homophobic while (n=53) (Figure 21) of LGBTIQ gave a rating of 3 (neutral).

The highest number of heterosexual students (n=79) gave Unitec a score of 1 (most positive) (Figure 20) in regard to non-sexist to sexist range while (n=42) of LGBTIQ gave a score of 2 (positive) (Figure 21).

The results within this whole section of the survey however reveal that on nearly all scores regarding institutional items, heterosexual students' experience the Unitec campus in a more positive light than their LGBTIQ peers.
Figure 20: Heterosexual student ratings of Unitec

With regard to scores on friendliness, communicative, cooperative, respectful, concerned, racist, sexist, homophobic and accessible to people with a disability LGBTIQ students viewed Unitec in a less favourable light than their heterosexual peers.
As identified earlier, overarching all of the themes was the concept of heteronormativity. Heteronormativity refers to the privilege of heterosexual relationships and identities being the norm. Carpenter and Lee (2010) identify that heteronormativity is, in today’s society, so pervasive that it permeates everyday life and can lead to sexuality issues or non-heterosexual identities being perceived as a non-issue. One student involved with Carpenter and Lee’s study showed...
perfectly how the pervasive norm of heteronormativity can actually be seen as a form of discrimination:

I’m heterosexual and as such part of the dominant group. I have not noticed any overt discrimination or lack of support for these (non-heterosexual) groups; however my feeling is that heterosexuality is still widely accepted as the norm, so by omission from resources and images around campus, I feel these groups are discriminated against (Student survey). (Carpenter & Lee, 2010, p. 108)

A heterosexual Unitec student in the current research also acknowledged this stating:

I still feel that discrimination against people with regards to sexual orientations other than heterosexual is still a fundamental issue wherever you go and Unitec is no exception. (Heterosexual male, 33-42, FCIB)

Overall, the findings suggest that heterosexual students feel sexuality was a non-issue. Not all students however felt that way as evidenced by the following comments recorded in the survey. One Unitec student involved in the research accuses Unitec LGBTIQ students of flaunting their sexuality stating:

I think gays and lesbians should stop being so precious and in your face about their differences. (Heterosexual male, 33-42, FTBE)

This same student went on to say:

They should accept they are abnormal and that most people find their activities abhorrent. Once they deal with that they can go on living their lives as they please, rather than getting upset about normal behaviour of the majority of people and shouting homophobia as if that makes people scared to call a spade a spade. I think if they are prepared to make choices then they had best be prepared to live with the consequences. (Heterosexual male, 32-42, FTBE)

Another wrote:

Gays should hide away and not be shown in public. I’m a homophobe and I’m proud. (Heterosexual male, 22 and under, FTBE)

While another simply wrote:

Yuck! (Heterosexual female, 22 and under, FSHS)

One student in a clear misunderstanding about the nature or reason behind the research but with some evidence of stereotypical beliefs about LGBTIQ wrote the following:

I enjoy my time with Unitec Campus and I have never been approached by any of the above. It is a pity that these things do happen at Campus and if we don’t do anything about it, there
might be a huge problem causing diseases etc. through sexual contact, but, then we look at it the other way, the main reason they are there is to study so they should try and curb their feelings, whatever it is away from Campus, it happens everywhere you go and it needs to be controlled. (Heterosexual female, 53 plus, FCIB)

While these views and opinions were not the majority, the opinion of a few can often have an impact on many. It is these views that may have contributed to the first theme which emerged out of the data: that of non-disclosure.

Advertising posters were placed around all three Unitec campuses alerting students to the up and coming survey. Each poster and questionnaire provided the researchers personal email to allow students to contact me if they had any queries or concerns regarding the research. In August when the link was sent out to all students with an active student email account, I received the following emails:

- I have received the survey which you sent out to students within Unitec...I have to say I am straight....Not sure why people have suggested otherwise.
- Just got your survey...just wanna say I am straight...so I won't be filling it in.

It appeared that several students incorrectly believed that the email link was only sent to students who already identified as LGBTIQ. It appears that these students were somewhat offended by the suggestion that they may be LGBTIQ and felt a need to clarify to the researcher that this was definitely not the case.

Perhaps even more significant is the following email received:

What is this??????????...What do you mean by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex or Questioning? What your Master in Health sciences will help our New Zealand society and your generation after you no longer be living on this planet earth?...We have been all created on Image of God and we must do the Will of God and not our will doing non-sense ???????????????...I wonder what will be the benefit of your Masters to the society and people of New Zealand and even your family and your children … For we must all stand before Christ to be judged…Do not have sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman; that is detestable…Do not have sexual relations with an animal and defile your-self with it. A woman must not present herself to an animal to have sexual relations with it; that is a perversion … Everyone who does any of these detestable things—such persons must be cut off from their people … I am the Lord your God.

While personally I may not agree with the beliefs expressed in the e-mail, as an independent researcher I have to remain committed to preservation of purely descriptive data, in the nature of understanding and describing experience. It is my obligation to put my own personal beliefs about a situation aside and simply present the facts of the description of experience as given to me by
participants, not to bend or change their shape or context. To do so would invalidate the research process. Lastly, the writer of the email presents a valid perception. For many people in our society, and therefore inclusive of Unitec students, the beliefs expressed in the email are still commonly held perceptions and beliefs. They result perhaps from a differing cultural experience or a different religious experience. Regardless of the origins of these beliefs, they are valid for many within our society in regards to LGBTIQ issues and are therefore significant and should be included as yet another student’s description of experience. These email comments were received independently of the survey results but contribute to an understanding of at least some students’ perspective.

**Summary**

The purpose of this study was to address two research questions: What are the perceptions amongst students of the Unitec campus environment? and How does the perception of the Unitec campus climate for LGBTIQ students differ between heterosexual students and LGBTIQ students? In order to answer these questions the researcher utilised an already established and rigorously tested survey questionnaire Rankin’s (2003) “Assessment of campus climate for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students”. The population included all students enrolled with a current student email in August 2012. The survey questionnaire was administered, online via Survey Monkey™, with minor modifications to increase its relevance to both the New Zealand and the Unitec environment.

A total of 355 usable responses were received from 195 heterosexual students and 148 LGBTIQ students: the variance of 12 related to 12 students who did not complete the sexual orientation question. Four themes were identified in the data. Theme One: Non-Disclosure and perception of fear emerged from the LGBTIQ data with, 38.8% (n=57) LGBTIQ students saying they had concealed their sexual orientation/gender identity in the last 12 months to avoid intimidation. Seventy three percent (n=107) of LGBTIQ students were not out professionally and personally on the Unitec campus, i.e. remained either somewhat closeted, ranging from fully closeted, to out to friends and family but not out to all professionally and personally on the Unitec campus. Feedback from students identified that they choose to conceal or not disclose their sexual identity for a variety of reasons, including, fear of intimidation, fear of being treated differently, fear of being accused of being ‘in your face’ and fear of further isolation. Many students identified a personal ‘Don’t Ask; Don’t Tell’ policy. They chose to conceal their identity unless directly asked; finding silence was the best for of non-disclosure. Ten percent of LGBTIQ students were a victim of harassment in the last 12 months due to sexual orientation/gender identity.

Theme Two: Invisibility and the desire for community was also identified from LGBTIQ data. Unequivocally, nearly all LGBTIQ students who responded to the open-ended question identified a desire for more visibility, openness and support on the Unitec campus and many said they did not know any other LGBTIQ students. The most common form of support requested from LGBTIQ
students was for a group. Theme Three: Sexuality a non-issue for heterosexual students was identified from heterosexual data collected from the open-ended question and revealed that 76% of heterosexual students did not believe there was discrimination or issues on campus for LGBTIQ students. Theme Four: Institutional Responses was drawn from both LGBTIQ and heterosexual data and revealed that all students appeared uncertain, or had a lack of faith, regarding the institutional ability to provide adequate responses, leadership, adequately teach or provide resources in regards to LGBTIQ concerns. When heterosexual students’ opinions of the campus climate for LGBTIQ students was compared to LGBTIQ student's’ perceptions and experiences of the Unitec campus, it was found that in every aspect heterosexual students rated the climate more positively than LGBTIQ students.
Chapter Five: Discussion

Introduction

This research reports on the findings of a survey questionnaire that was completed by 355 Unitec students in August 2012. The survey questionnaire was designed to allow both heterosexual and LGBTIQ students to describe their perception of the Unitec campus environment for LGBTIQ students. Of the 355 responses, 195 students identified as heterosexual, 148 as LGBTIQ with 12 students who did not identify their sexual orientation. Four main themes emerged from the results which will be discussed. These were LGBTIQ Data; Theme One: Non-Disclosure and Perception of fear by Unitec LGBTIQ student and Theme Two: Invisibility and the desire for community for Unitec LGBTIQ student. The theme emerging from heterosexual data was Theme Three: Sexuality - A non-Issue for Unitec heterosexual students, while Theme Four related to both heterosexual and LGBTIQ student opinion around the institution and was, ‘Student uncertainty regarding Institutional Responses and Unitec Policies’. Heteronormativity was identified as the overarching concept of all four themes and as such will be incorporated into the discussion.

Each theme will be discussed individually and jointly within the overarching concept of heteronormativity. Incorporated in the discussion will be identified difficulties experienced with the research process, the complexities of analysing response rate and the generalisability of the findings.

This study is the only research within New Zealand to incorporate a survey available to all tertiary students within a campus, with a current student email account. It provides data that allows comparison of the New Zealand tertiary environment with tertiary environments internationally. The use of an internationally approved survey tool (Rankin, 2003), could potentially give the research international recognition. The research allows some limited comparison of data on the experiences of LGBTIQ secondary school students to those of LGBTIQ students in tertiary education. This research could allow Unitec as an organisation to demonstrate a commitment to diversity and equity; and identify itself as the only tertiary institute within New Zealand to have completed a needs assessment of their campus climate for LGBTIQ students.

Theme One: Non-Disclosure and perception of fear

Findings identified that 38.8% (n=57) of LGBTQIQ students at Unitec reported they had concealed their sexual identity in the last twelve months in order to avoid intimidation.

Unitec results represent a more positive climate in regards to concealing sexual identity when compared with international findings. Ellis (2009), reporting on research in the UK, found 54.3% of LGBT students chose to conceal their sexual identity, while in the US Rankin (2003) reported 51% of LGBT concealed their sexual orientation to avoid intimidation.
Rankin et al. (2010) reported 42% avoided disclosure for fear of intimidation and 43.5% avoided disclosure of their sexual orientation due to fear of negative consequences. Feedback from LGBTIQ Unitec students identified that students chose to conceal or not disclose their sexual identity for a variety of reasons which included, fear of intimidation, fear of being treated differently, fear of being accused of being ‘in your face’ and fear of further isolation. Many students identified a personal ‘Don’t Ask; Don’t Tell’ policy. They chose to conceal their identity unless directly asked if they were LGBTIQ, with many finding silence was the best form of non-disclosure.

Almost 7% of Unitec LGBTIQ students reported fearing for their safety on the Unitec campus over the last 12 months due to sexual orientation/gender identity. This is markedly less than that reported overseas. In Rankin’s (2003) US study 19% of students reported fearing for their safety due to sexual orientation/gender identity and in Ellis’ (2009) study in the UK revealed 23.4% of LGBT students reported fearing for their safety due to sexual orientation/gender identity. On the basis of this finding, it can be stated that the Unitec environment is viewed as a safer environment by LGBTIQ students than their international peers in both the UK and US view their tertiary environments.

In terms of actual harassment, 10.1% of LGBTIQ Unitec students reported being a victim of harassment in the last 12 months due to sexual orientation/gender identity. Again these rates of harassment were markedly lower than Rankin’s (2003) US study, which demonstrated 36% of LGBT students had been a victim of harassment and Ellis’ (2009) study reported that 23.4% of LGBT students in her UK study had experienced harassment on their tertiary campus. Of note, is that 16.7% (n=3) of the reported harassment by LGBTIQ students at Unitec in the previous 12 months consisted of physical assault or injury. This is eight times greater than the 2% (n=11) of reported physical assault or injury harassment reported in Rankin’s (2003) study and double the percentage of harassment reported in Ellis’ (2009) study at 8.8%.

Despite levels of fear and reported harassment in this research being considerably lower than international studies, Unitec LGBTIQ students were much less likely than their international counterparts to be out and proud, or out to all, professionally and personally on the Unitec campus. Seventy three percent of LGBTIQ Unitec students were not out professionally and personally on the Unitec campus, so remained either somewhat closeted, ranging from fully closeted, to out to friends and family but not out to all professionally and personally. Twenty seven percent of Unitec LGBTIQ students were fully out on the Unitec campus. Rankin in her 2003 US study reported 56% of students who were not out to all professionally and personally and therefore closeted to some extent. Forty four percent of the LGBT students in her study reported being fully out at University. Rankin (2003) does acknowledge however that the campuses involved in her 2003 study were some of the most gay friendly in the US, with most of the institutions who agreed to participate having an LGBT presence on campus in the form of support.
services or groups. This could be an indicator as to why levels of ‘being fully out to all’ were higher despite higher rates of harassment. Rankin et al. (2010) reported that 75% of their respondents were out to friends and levels of outness varied considerably amongst staff and students in regard to being out to family. No student data were reported from Rankin et al. (2010) in regards to being out to all professionally and personally on campus.

These results and comparisons demonstrate that Unitec students are less likely than their counterparts in the UK or the US to actively choose to conceal their sexuality but are much more likely not to be out to all professionally and personally on campus; despite lower rates of reported harassment and fear. It is possible that LGBTIQ Unitec students may be more fearful of physical assault than their overseas counterparts given that reported incidences of harassment included a much higher percentage of physical assaults and injuries. However, given that the actual cohort of LGBTIQ students who had been physically assaulted or injured on the Unitec campus in the last twelve months due to their sexual orientation constituted three students; further research is required to determine any generalisability to all Unitec LGBTIQ students.

Not one of the three students who reported being physically assaulted or injured due to sexual orientation at Unitec gave details or described the incidences in the open-ended question section so no further understanding can be provided from this piece of research. A smaller more comprehensive, qualitative study on the subject would be advantageous in order to gain an understanding of the nature of the assaults and injuries and the personal experiences for the LGBTIQ students involved.

Of note, is that 42.5% (n =151) of students involved in the Unitec study were aged 22 years and under. This is the age bracket most traditionally linked to tertiary-aged students. The significance of such a large component of students under the age 22 years is that, for these students, their most recent experiences of education would have been secondary school. Data from Youth’07 and Riches (2011) in New Zealand and Hillier et al. (2005) in Australia research indicates that secondary school is considered one of the most dangerous places to be for LGTQIQ youth with reports of severe bullying, harassment, isolation and assaults. The message repeatedly being sent from secondary school teachers to LGBTIQ youth is that they do not respond to LGBTIQ bullying and is some cases teachers were included in examples of discrimination (Hillier et al., 1998; 2005). LGBTIQ youth in New Zealand may look forward to the university or tertiary education environment as their first opportunity to be themselves in an environment far removed from the bullying of high school, a place where they are finally safe to be themselves with a sense of inclusion and community.

However, for those LGBTIQ students under the age of 22, with their most recent example of education being secondary school, experience may have done little more than contribute to
feelings of the unacceptability of their non-heterosexual orientation. If school was a place of fear, isolation, and invisibility and for many humiliation this experience may have contributed to their decision not to be ‘fully out to all professionally and personally’ in the tertiary education environment. It is possible the stigma, intimidation and harassment of secondary school has taught LGBTIQ tertiary students not to stand up and be proud of being LGBTIQ and definitely not to either, challenge homophobia or stand up for their rights to equality, acceptance and inclusion (Riches, 2011). Further research in this area would contribute to our understanding regarding the link between secondary school experiences and their impact on a tertiary student’s decision on whether or not to be fully out professionally and personally on the tertiary campus environment.

Theme Two: Invisibility and desire for community

Unequivocally, nearly all LGBTIQ students who responded to the open-ended question identified a desire for more visibility, openness and support on the Unitec campus. LGBTIQ students also identified that they felt particularly invisible and expressed disappointment at USU; a place they said should be for all students and therefore LGBTIQ inclusive. The most common form of support requested was for a group. This was also supported by several heterosexual students. Several LGBTIQ Unitec students indicated that there may have already been a support group or service on campus but if so they were not aware of it. This identified the need on such a large campus (spread over three sites) for extensive advertising and promotion of any LGBTIQ group, event or support service. Any LGBTIQ activity or resource would have to be a prominent presence on campus to ensure all LGBTIQ students were aware of it.

Many students identified that they did not know any other LGBTIQ students or staff and they felt alone and invisible. This can be of huge concern, especially for those students who are ‘not fully out’ on the Unitec campus but also may not be out to family and friends. This situation can leave students isolated and without any support. Many of the ‘youth’ related surveys discussed in Chapter 2 (Hillier et al., 1998; 2005; 2010; Riches, 2011; Rossen et al., 2009) also identified that many young people, while they may be out to family, are often not supported, either financially and/or emotionally, as family themselves struggle to come to terms with the student’s sexual orientation. This can lead to the situation of LGBTIQ students having nowhere or no-one to turn to for support.

The gravity of this experience can only be realised when we look at statistics for LGBTIQ youth which demonstrate that LGBTIQ students are three times more likely than heterosexual youth to feel unsafe at secondary school; and up to nine out of 10 report physical harassment. LGBTIQ youth are more likely to miss school, underperform academically, drop out and experience higher levels of drug use, suicidal behaviour, and risky sexual behaviour when compared to their heterosexual peers (Hillier et al., 1998; 2005; 2010; Rossen et al., 2009). Research indicates that LGBTIQ youth are being bullied in high school and experiencing high levels of assault, isolation,
victimisation and distress. This is evident in the health statistics for LGBTIQ youth who are experiencing alcohol and drug abuse and episodes of self-harm far in excess of their heterosexual peers. They are more likely to be truant from school, cease schooling earlier and engage in high risk behaviours. They experience higher rates of mental health issues and have a suicide rate that is eight times that of their heterosexual peers (Riches, 2011; Rossen, et al., 2009).

Hylton (2005) suggests that the invisibility of LGBTIQ people is an insidious manifestation of heteronormativity. Jackson (2010) discusses how the culture of heteronormativity has effectively pushed sexual minority issues away from public discussion, isolating LGBTIQ people further and removing institutional responsibility, thereby limiting the opportunity for collective action or empowerment. Her discussion spoke of people talking about their same sex partner being accused of ‘flaunting it’ or ‘being in your face’. Jackson (2010) argues that this in turn leads to further invisibility, silence and non-disclosure. Riches (2011) identified that isolation in the absence of any support group leads to students feeling out of place on the campus environment. Respondents in Riches (2011) study viewed this isolation as a subtle but equally damaging form of bullying.

**Theme Three: Sexuality a non-issue for heterosexual students.**

Seventy six percent of heterosexual students who replied to the open-ended section five of the survey did not believe there was discrimination or issues on campus for LGBTIQ students. All heterosexual students who responded, however, remained largely uncertain if LGBTIQ students were likely to be harassed on campus. This level of unawareness of any issues, or 'it does not affect me, so it's not a problem' is a common example of heterosexism. It is very difficult for heterosexual students to recognise heterosexism in the same way that it is difficult for any majority group within a society to truly understand the personal experiences of any minority group unless they are a member of that minority group. Many students appeared to assume it was acceptable because they themselves are accepting of it.

Carpenter and Lee (2010) identify that heteronormativity is, in today’s society, so pervasive that it permeates everyday life and can lead to sexuality issues or non-heterosexual identities being perceived as a non-issue. Robinson and Ferfolja (2001) identify that the concept of heterosexism is evident within education systems noting that it is so pervasive in education that most teachers, lecturers and educators naturally assume that all their students are heterosexual unless they are told otherwise or the evidence to the contrary is profound. Riches (2011) in his report “How do we make it better?” also identified that one of the major issues facing New Zealand youth in secondary schools is the pervasive belief that everyone is heterosexual.

Yep (2003) identified that heteronormativity is the most disempowering aspect of culture for LGBTIQ youth and is the force that creates, sustains and perpetuates marginalisation, and
oppressive lived experiences for all non-heterosexual identified people. Informants in Riches (2011) study suggested that the move towards marriage and legal equality and an increase in public of LGBTIQ role models, has in fact led to a culture where it is assumed that being a member of a sexual minority is no longer an issue. This belief that sexuality is no longer an issue has reinforced and contributed further to marginalisation and disempowerment of LGBTIQ-identified people.

**Theme Four: Institutional Responses.**

All students, both heterosexual and LGBTIQ, were uncertain if Unitec thoroughly addressed campus issues related to sexual orientation/gender identity; uncertain if Unitec had visible leadership from management regarding sexual orientation/gender identity; uncertain whether the curriculum adequately represented the contribution of LGBTIQ people; and uncertain if Unitec provided visible resources on LGBTIQ issues and concerns.

Overall, all students appeared uncertain, or had a lack of faith, regarding the institutional ability to provide adequate responses or leadership, or to teach appropriately or provide resources in regards to LGBTIQ concerns. Of all students, 41.9% did however agree that the climate in the classes they took was accepting of LGBTIQ people. When heterosexual opinion of the campus climate for LGBTIQ students was compared to LGBTIQ students' perception and experiences of the Unitec campus, it was found that in every aspect heterosexual students rated the climate more positively than LGBTIQ students. The largest discrepancy related to rating whether the Unitec environment was non-homophobic or homophobic, on a rating of 1-5, with 1 being completely non-homophobic and 5 being very homophobic.

The findings at Unitec in regards to institutional responses echo those found in the US and the UK and indicate a failure of Unitec management to either provide or inform students of their actions, leadership, teaching or provision of resources regarding LGBTIQ issues.

**Response Rate**

The survey questionnaire was targeted towards LGBTIQ students. While the survey questionnaire link was emailed to all students with an active student email, the advertising posters placed around campus advertised the upcoming survey was targeted to LGBTIQ students (see Appendix D). As previously identified, it is only possible to hypothesise the statistics and numbers of LGBTIQ currently enrolled at Unitec campus. As sexual orientation is not recorded as part of the New Zealand census there are currently no statistics in New Zealand to identify what percentage of the population identifies as LGBTIQ. In the Youth’07 survey (Rossen et al., 2009) only 4% identified as same sex attracted. When utilising Youth’07 data, however, it can be hypothesised that given Unitec’s student body of approximately 23,000 it might be expected that 4% (980) are likely to identify as LGBTIQ. A 50% response rate from all LGBTIQ students should, therefore
generate approximately 460 completed questionnaires.

Of the 23,879 students enrolled at Unitec in August 2012, 11,447 had a current and active student email address and were therefore in the target population group. Four per cent of that total sample would be 457 students. Of the total completed responses 43.1% (n=148 students) identified as LGBTIQ. This is an excellent response given the small number of estimated LGBTIQ students within the Unitec population. One hundred and ninety-five students constituting 56.9% identified as heterosexual. To a certain extent, the advertising strategy for the current Unitec research was successful. One hundred and forty eight of the participants in the current survey identified as LGBTIQ. It is therefore arguable, or can be hypothesised, that the sample of 148 LGBTIQ represents 32.5% of LGBTIQ Unitec students in the total sample. However with no valid statistics this has to remain a hypothesis.

The response rate could have been enhanced by longer availability of the survey questionnaire, increased advertising and possible snowball sampling. The lack of time and resources however limited this possibility.

Limitations

As this was an independent piece of research and therefore not sought out or commissioned by Unitec, management permission to complete the project was required. This process was complex and protracted. Ethical approval was granted and a member of the Unitec management team provided organisational consent on the basis of the survey questionnaire being emailed to all students with a current student email account. In agreement with the approved methodology by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee I required the link to be sent to all Unitec students enrolled at Unitec campus in 2012. However, when the introduction/information letter and ensuing link to the survey was delivered to Unitec for distribution to all Unitec students, access to students' emails was declined despite the documented evidence of organisational consent. Confidentiality issues were cited as the reason for declining the request. Management argued that the contract Unitec had with students was that emails sent from Unitec would only involve Unitec business and not be from a third party or independent person.

The Unitec Student Union (USU) also declined to forward the email and link to students on their database because the study had not been commissioned by Unitec management. The issue was resolved after intervention by my supervisors who argued that the study had been approved by the postgraduate proposals committee and the Unitec Research Ethics Committee in the full knowledge that data collection required an email to be forwarded through the Unitec students email system and that organisational approval had been granted. A one-off exemplary approval to forward the email and link to the questionnaire/survey was finally granted; but the process took considerable time. The delays in the approval process led to considerable time restraints to
complete the project.

The full cost of the research and advertising were my responsibility. All advertising costs were incurred by me. While advertising in the USU student magazine would have undoubtedly enhanced the data and response rate, USU declined to offer to include the advertising posters in the magazine free of charge; despite the fact the research was oriented towards improving knowledge and understanding of potential student issues. As a full-time student I was unable to afford the standard marketing rates for USU advertising. The research was therefore advertised only by posters designed and printed by myself (See Appendix D). Members of the Unitec staff support group, Queer@Unitec, assisted me by printing extra copies of the posters and distributing them throughout the three Unitec campuses.

All LGBT studies are identified as sensitive research; as such one of the limitations is whether participants have felt safe to fully disclose their experiences. Baker (2008) identified many stigmas including self-stigma, which is placed upon the student who labels themselves as LGBTIQ. All forms of stigma impact on a person’s ability to be completely forthright in their disclosure of their sexual identity. Despite the anonymous nature of the questionnaire, full disclosure of sexual orientation cannot be guaranteed and therefore may affect internal validity of my study.

Because of the lack of statistics in New Zealand, it is impossible to know the number of LGBTIQ-identified people within the population. No recorded data or statistics at Unitec identifies sexuality and therefore the numbers of LGBTIQ students is also unknown. One of the limitations of the research therefore is that the sample utilised for statistical analysis may not be fully representative of the entire population of LGBTIQ students at Unitec.

Additionally, it was expected that students who are more comfortable and secure with their sexual orientation and identity would be more likely to complete the questionnaire than those who are uncertain or insecure and chose to conceal their sexual orientation on campus. This may have impacted on the results and lead to a more positive depiction of the Unitec campus climate than would have been the case had data been available for the entire LGBTIQ Unitec student population experience.

**Unitec Discussion**

Most tertiary education institutions strive to develop and create a safe environment for the learning and betterment of their students. Unitec is no different in this regard and currently has numerous student support systems in place to ensure equality and inclusivity of all students. It provides dedicated student support such as, Pacific Island support, Maori support services and a marae, as well as International Student support and student counselling services, in order to maximise the likelihood of student success. Unitec undertakes its own student satisfaction survey and explores the retention rate of students as well as the completion rates for its programmes, right through to
successful employment outcomes for its students. In this manner, Unitec demonstrates a clear commitment to student satisfaction and success.

As identified in the research, heteronormativity is pervasive in society as a whole and equally pervasive in education (Carpenter & Lee, 2010). Perhaps as a clear example of heteronormativity and the absolute pervasive nature of this norm, Unitec has never assessed student satisfaction based on sexual orientation/gender identity. It would thus appear that the Institute as a whole, and particularly management and organisational polices at their highest levels, have been as heteronormative as the heterosexual students in the assumption that sexuality is a non-issue in today’s society and therefore a non-issue on campus.

The point must be made that Unitec does not stand alone in its heteronormative practices and its assumption of sexuality as a non-issue on campus. Those heterosexuals, who view the world we live in as composed of heterosexual people, heterosexual relationships, heterosexual marriage, and heterosexual issues, concerns and struggles, are unlikely to see or understand the world from an LGBTIQ perspective. It could be argued that it is not that heterosexual students, or Unitec as a whole, are homophobic; it is simply that they have not thought about or had any understanding of LGBTIQ issues.

However, as identified by students in the study, omission of an LGBTIQ perspective from policies, teaching content, and even support services, and a lack of LGBTIQ presence on campus, constitutes heteronormativity, which can in itself be viewed as a form of discrimination. While a heteronormative campus is not necessarily a homophobic campus, it does contribute further to isolation, invisibility, loneliness and thereby potentially lack of success and negative health and education outcomes for LGBTIQ students.

Summary

This chapter has explored and discussed the results of the research and the individual themes identified along with discussion of the overarching theme of heteronormativity. Results were compared with international studies and potential reasons for differences identified and acknowledged. The difficulties related to LGBTIQ statistics and the response rate for the survey were identified and discussed as a possible limitation of all LGBTIQ studies. Difficulties which occurred throughout the process of the research were again identified and discussed, in relation to how they contributed to limitations and difficulties in estimating generalisability. The following chapter will make recommendations to address the themes identified and the issue of heteronormativity at Unitec campus.
Chapter Six: Future Directions: Transforming the Unitec environment for LGBTIQ students.

This chapter explores and discusses interventions and recommendations to address heteronormativity on the Unitec campus. The recommendations address the issues of, non-disclosure and the perception of fear by LGBTIQ students, their invisibility and the desire for community, as well as addressing the concept of sexuality as a non-issue for heterosexual students. As identified in the findings, all students appear to be uncertain in regards to Unitec’s institutional policies and actions and as such some recommendations will explore ways Unitec management could address this issue.

Historically, the ‘instant fix’ or resolution to LGBTIQ issues on campus has been to simply provide a safe space for LGBTIQ students to meet and be themselves (Rankin, 2003). Research demonstrates however that this solution, as a strategy on its own, tends to fail. LGBTIQ students in Rankin’s (2003) study and again in Rankin et al. (2010), reported that when such spaces are provided as the only strategy they tended to be avoided by LGBTIQ students due to their fear of being targeted for more harassment and violence.

As with many institutional changes in regards to equality and diversity for a minority group, a more holistic multi-pronged initiative is required to ensure success and adequately ensure that LGBTIQ students are afforded the same safety, the same opportunities for acceptance, the same sense of belonging, and therefore potential academic success, as their Unitec heterosexual peers.

In order to address the inequalities and issues experienced by LGBTIQ students on campus, there must be a shift away from heteronormative assumptions, beliefs and prejudices within all areas of the institution. New approaches to support services for LGBTIQ must be accompanied with a commitment to change in areas such as student and staff education, and institutional policies and resources, along with a clear message that homophobic bullying will not be tolerated on the Unitec campus. These changes would help to develop a supportive climate of ‘inclusive excellence’ on Unitec campuses for LGBTIQ students.

Recommendations

Ally Programme

As discussed earlier, this programme was recently initiated at Unitec and its philosophies and outcomes are grounded in considerable research. The Ally programme identifies staff/students who have undertaken the Ally training with a rainbow sticker, usually placed on an office door or a student bag or books. The sticker identifies the Ally as a safe person for LGBTIQ students to turn to for support or to talk to about LGBTIQ issues. Allies may be LGBTIQ, or heterosexual people who are open and educated regarding LGBTIQ issues. The benefits of the programme are
several; with one of the most significant initial benefits being that it increases the visibility of an LGBTIQ-friendly presence on campus via rainbow stickers. This action alone instantly allows LGBTIQ students to identify they are not alone on campus. This is significant as many LGBTIQ students who participated in the research identified that they did not know anyone else who was LGBTIQ. The increase in evidence of an LGBTIQ presence at Unitec by the promotion of the Ally group and the display of rainbow stickers assists in creating a sense of community and belonging for LGBTIQ students.

The Ally programme also helps address the issue of heteronormativity, not just by a visible LGBTIQ presence but also by increasing the gay/straight, LGBTIQ/heterosexual relationship. Allies do not have to identify as LGBTIQ but can be heterosexual students or staff who identify as LGBTIQ friendly. A considerable benefit to the programme is that it identifies clearly and easily where an LGBTIQ student can go for support.

It is recommended that this programme be continued and also advertised on the Unitec website, in the USU magazine, and by posters and information placed in orientation packs to enhance the awareness and use of Allies. Many students are unaware of the programme as it was not identified by students who undertook the survey as a current support. This may be because the programme is so new. Extensive advertising would help to ensure all LGBTIQ students are aware of its existence.

**Safe Space**

LGBTIQ students have a right to have a safe space where they can speak freely without being afraid of homophobic abuse or retaliation – a space where they can talk freely about their issues be it study, confusion about sexuality, advice regarding coming out to family and friends, relationship issues or simply socialise without having to moderate themselves in order to fit in with heterosexual norms. As discussed earlier, this needs to be introduced as part of a holistic, multi-pronged package to address LGBTIQ-identified issues on the Unitec campus. On its own, it may simply increase students’ fears that if they are seen utilising an LGBTIQ student space it will instantly ‘out’ them to fellow students increasing the possibility or likelihood of harassment.

Introducing a safe place, in conjunction with other institutional cultural changes, which incorporate addressing heteronormative presumptions, could have many advantages. A safe space would be an ideal area for resources and books to be kept and to be available. It would enhance the visibility of LGBTIQ students and provide a space to develop a sense of community and support. Allies could be identified in a safe space to provide for LGBTIQ students to locate additional support. LGBTIQ friendly accommodation could be advertised, without fear of repercussions or being outed to heterosexual students by the advertisement. Liaison with local LGBTIQ events and activities as well as additional local LGBTIQ support services could be identified, advertised and
enhanced. LGBTIQ friendly support staff in all of Unitec’s other support services could also be identified.

This initiative needs to be part of Unitec’s institutional core activities, in much the same way as the current Maori, Pacific Island and International Student support services. The benefits of this would be two-fold; it would clearly demonstrate to LGBTIQ students a level of institutional support that values the input and diversity of their LGBTIQ students and creates a sense of belonging and community. It would send a clear message to heterosexual students that management values the resources and individual skills of the LGBTIQ population at Unitec and it would decrease invisibility and isolation. It is important that this service be run and staffed by Unitec employees, in order to identify its significance and value to the institution, but also to enable longevity. Unitec has a history of either staff LGBTIQ volunteer groups or student initiated groups that have eventually disappeared or fallen over, as passionate staff become overworked or passionate students leave the organisation with no one else prepared to take on the role (C. Peters, personal communication, August 15, 2011). Students are often simply overwhelmed in their studies without taking on extra responsibilities that are, in fact, the responsibility of the institution.

The value of allocating a Unitec staff member to run this safe space also increases the safety of the environment for LGBTIQ students. Ideally, this employee could also assist in the running and training of Allies, assist in student support, provide a level of counselling regarding LGBTIQ issues, and liaise with other LGBTIQ services locally and nationally. This staff member could also assist in staff training around LGBTIQ student issues, helping staff to develop confidence in teaching and acknowledging the contribution of LGBTIQ people in the community, and this person could also work collaboratively with Unitec management in the development of policies and strategies to adequately address LGBTIQ issues as they arise and co-ordinate social events for LGBTIQ students.

**Group and Social Events**

As identified by Unitec LGBTIQ students in the current research, there is a desire for a sense of belonging and opportunities to meet other LGBTIQ students. As such, social events, which could be as simple as shared lunches in the safe space area, could be organised to allow this to happen. Again, if a full time staff member was allocated to run the safe space area they could co-ordinate and organise these events.

**USU: Unitec Student Union**

Some students expressed disappointment that the one service at Unitec, which is reported to stand for all students inclusive of differences, does not offer any information, support, resources or even, acknowledge the existence of LGBTIQ students. In failing to do so, from the very first day that students arrive at Unitec and go through orientation, students are sent a strong message,
simply by silence and the lack of LGBTIQ friendly information, that they are not acknowledged or valued, either by USU or Unitec management. Omission from services, or failure to acknowledge LGBTIQ students, is heteronormativity, and constitutes subtle discrimination.

This omission from services enhances the sense of isolation and invisibility that Unitec students have identified as an issue and may encourage LGBTIQ students to stay silent about their sexuality. The result as identified in earlier chapters may lead to decreased self-esteem, self-worth and overall mental health. It is potentially this omission from services, heteronormative practices and subtle discrimination that may contribute to higher dropout rates, increased time off and possible increases in self-harm, drug and alcohol and suicidal behaviour, issues that currently plague our LGBTIQ secondary school youth (Rossen et al., 2009). Further research into the experiences, study completion and mental health issues of LGBTIQ tertiary students would be advantageous to our understanding of the full impact of heteronormative practices and omission or lack of acknowledgement from services. Any initiatives developed by Unitec management to address LGBTIQ issues must be well advertised by USU and new students should be given information in their orientation week or orientation pack about where they can go for advice, support or simply social contacts.

**LGBTIQ Celebrate Diversity Day**

Currently, Unitec celebrates a multitude of different culturally significant days for a culturally diverse student population. The Unitec multicultural chaplain also organises celebrations for a number of culturally significant religious days. Again LGBTIQ celebrations are noticeable only in their absence. If Unitec as an institution wishes to foster an LGBTIQ friendly and embracing culture which avoids discrimination by omission, it would ideally include an ‘LGBTIQ celebrate diversity day’ where LGBTIQ students and staff could celebrate the culture of being LGBTIQ. As other cultural and religious days are celebrated on significant dates it would be ideal if an LGBTIQ celebration day could be held during the week of National Gay Pride. The inclusion of an LGBTIQ culturally significant celebration is in keeping with Unitec’s policy of aiming for inclusive excellence. Additionally, it reduces heteronormativity and allows LGBTIQ students to feel, supported, valued and appreciated by the institution. It contributes to reducing isolation and invisibility and potentially reduces the likelihood of non-disclosure by allowing Unitec LGBTIQ students an opportunity to feel pride in their non-heterosexual identities. Unitec currently has what appears to be an internationally high percentage of students who are currently not out professionally and personally on the campus. Any form of celebration and pride in LGBTIQ identities may contribute to reducing that percentage and encouraging more openness and acceptance of LGBTIQ students.

**Policies and Procedures**
Integrating LGBTIQ issues and concerns into all aspects of the institution’s administration and policies acknowledges and demonstrates a commitment to LGBTIQ students at Unitec. Rather than using the broad umbrella of ‘diversity’, even using LGBTIQ specific language and wording in policies and documents would send a message to LGBTIQ students, and also to heterosexual students, that LGBTIQ students belong and are included at Unitec. While LGBTIQ harassment rates at Unitec are lower than those identified overseas, they still exist. In particular, policies that identify the unacceptability of acts of harassment against LGBTIQ students are required and a strong message needs to be put in place in regards to acts of violence, physical assault and injury. While LGBTIQ students may experience less overall harassment than their counterparts in the US and the UK, the current research indicates they may be experiencing a higher percentage of physical assaults and injuries. Any policies in regards to harassment would need to be well advertised so all students are aware of them. Promotional posters letting students know that LGBTIQ harassment will not be tolerated on Unitec campus (with a phone number or person to contact should they be harassed) should actively be placed around all three campuses to send a clear message to all students. Clear guidelines for the process of reporting LGBTIQ harassment and acts of violence need to be implemented, with checks in place to ensure adequate follow up has occurred. A clear paper trail is required to support any student who should wish to follow through with police charges or complaints.

A victim’s advocate in student services, with clear LGBTIQ knowledge, should be available to support students. If a full-time staff member is allocated to the ‘safe space’ and other identified key institutional LGBTIQ roles this could be included in their job description.

**Education: Staff, students and courses**

As identified by one of the students in the survey it is only through education that true equality can be achieved. Research has identified that spending time with LGBTIQ people enhances understanding (Noack, 2004). In today’s society, heteronormativity is a learned behaviour that most heterosexual people are not aware of (Carpenter & Lee, 2010). Education of all teaching staff and students in regard to heteronormativity would increase awareness of LGBTIQ issues. If orientation courses are offered to both staff and students and taken by LGBTIQ staff and students this would also provide an opportunity for increased awareness. There is, for example an excellent training video entitled ‘homoworld’ which effectively turns heteronormativity around, portraying a fantasy world in which a heterosexual couple struggle to cope and overcome a world dominated by homosexuality. It is a gentle and humorous video, which challenges the heterosexual norms of society and is an excellent introduction to LGBTIQ issues. This video, which is available free via the University of East London, would make an excellent teaching tool or resource for an introduction to LGBTIQ issues, in teaching both students and Unitec staff, as it uses a friendly approach to provoke thoughtful consideration of a different perspective.
In order for all staff to actively meet the needs of LGBTIQ students, it is important that they understand the issues faced by this minority group. As such any staff orientation could incorporate not only the video, but also awareness training of diversity and inclusion from an LGBTIQ perspective. Any staff training should incorporate campus health care professionals, security, students support services and administration staff.

As identified by LGBTIQ students in the current research, the curriculum for Unitec courses does not, at present adequately present LGBTIQ issues. Each department needs to consider how to incorporate LGBTIQ issues into the curriculum for their particular area. Currently, most departments are required to cover issues of cultural differences and LGBTIQ issues could potentially be incorporated into this aspect of teaching.

**Recruiting LGBTIQ staff and students**

Policies that explicitly welcome LGBTIQ employees and students could enhance recruitment of LGBTIQ staff and students. Should Unitec choose to initiate the recommendations within this thesis, they may be able to actively recruit LGBTIQ students by advertising the LGBTIQ services and celebrations they would be able to offer these students. Again, this initiative of actively recruiting LGBTIQ staff and students could help to reduce heteronormativity and the likelihood of isolation and invisibility.

**Additional Research**

There is limited research available in New Zealand in regards to the experiences of LGBTIQ tertiary students. In order to gain a more complete understanding of these experiences further research is recommended. In particular, students’ decisions to not disclose their sexual identity and to remain somewhat closeted require additional investigation. The heterosexual view of sexuality being a non-issue also requires further investigation. This research has disclosed some student-identified reasons for this decision to remain silent or ‘not out and proud’. However, further research into the links between non-disclosure and invisibility, the perception of fear, links to physical assault and injury, along with the impact on secondary school education experiences on decisions by tertiary students, would enhance our understanding. In New Zealand, outcomes for LGBTIQ tertiary students in regard to academic success, time out of programmes, completion of programmes and gaining successful employment is unknown. If we are to explore the concept of discrimination and equality for LGBTIQ students then research into LGBTIQ student outcomes could contribute considerably to the argument for better LGBTIQ-specific support and policies on tertiary campuses. Unitec could complete a needs assessment for LGBTIQ students after the introduction of recommendations to assess the effectiveness of these in addressing LGBTIQ student-identified issues and demonstrate a commitment to inclusive excellence for LGBTIQ students.
Summary

This chapter has explored interventions and recommendations to address the issues raised by both heterosexual and LGBTIQ Unitec students in regard to the Unitec campus climate perceptions and experiences of LGBTIQ students. Interventions were designed to address the overarching concept of heteronormativity on the Unitec campus; the fact that heterosexual students viewed sexuality as a non-issue; the uncertainty expressed by all students, in regard to institutional policies and responses to LGBTIQ issues; the lack of LGBTIQ resources, and support and presence on the Unitec campus; as well as the absence of LGBTIQ in curriculum content. As identified by LGBTIQ students, the issues regarding, non-disclosure, levels of outness, perception of fear, invisibility and lack of a sense of community were also addressed.

A multi-pronged holistic approach, with a variety of recommendations and strategies to address LGBTIQ-identified issues has been suggested here as a priority in order to bring about a culture shift towards ‘inclusive excellence’ for LGBTIQ Unitec students. Strategies and recommendations include: continuation and growth of the current Ally programme; designation of an area identified as a LGBTIQ safe space, with allocated Unitec staff; the organisation of group and social events; an LGBTIQ celebration, with a cultural diversity day; changes to USU services, changes to Unitec policies and procedures; staff and student training; and recruitment of LGBTIQ staff and future students. Continued research into experiences of LGBTIQ tertiary students is recommended, including future campus climate assessments and a possible focus on identifying LGBTIQ reasons for remaining somewhat closeted. Links to secondary school experiences and the impact of physical assaults and injuries are also discussed as potential future research projects.
This research investigated the experiences and perceptions of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Questioning students and how their perception of the campus climate differed from the experiences and perceptions of heterosexual students at Unitec Institute of Technology in New Zealand in 2012.

An extensive review of the literature provided a foundation for better understanding of the significance of the campus environment and its effects on the experiences of LGBTIQ students. A positive campus climate is identified as a strong indicator of successful students and successful learning (Baker, 2008). The tertiary years, in particular, have been demonstrated to play a critical role in the development of an LGBTIQ identity. International research demonstrates that LGBTIQ tertiary students are an underrepresented minority group and confirms that LGBTIQ tertiary students are facing ‘chilly’ campus environments where they report fears for their safety and high levels of harassment, particularly derogatory remarks. Many report physical abuse and a reluctance to ‘come out’ or openly identify as LGBTIQ. They report experiencing a lack of visibility, and identify campus environments as lacking visible leadership, policies or support for LGBTIQ students and LGBTIQ issues. Most studies identified a heteronormative environment that does not feel inclusive of LGBTIQ.

This research was based on previous research completed on campus climates for LGBT students by Rankin (2003) in the US. Data collected was both qualitative, open-ended question and quantitative, closed questions. The sample was the entire population of students enrolled in Unitec in August 2012 who had a current email address. Analysis of quantitative data involved descriptive statistical analysis and factor analysis. Thematic analysis was utilised for the qualitative open-ended question with themes emerging from the data.

A total of 355 usable responses were received from 195 heterosexual students and 148 LGBTIQ students. Four themes were identified in the data. Theme One: Non-Disclosure and perception of fear emerged from the LGBTIQ data, with 38.8% (n=57) of LGBTIQ students saying they had concealed their sexual orientation/gender identity in the last 12 months to avoid intimidation. Seventy three percent (n=107) of LGBTIQ students were not out professionally and personally on the Unitec campus, i.e. remained either somewhat closeted, ranging from fully closeted, to out to friends and family but not out to all professionally and personally on the Unitec campus. Feedback from students, identified that they chose to conceal or not disclose their sexual identity for a variety of reasons, which included, fear of intimidation, fear of being treated differently, fear of being accused of being ‘in your face’ and fear of further isolation. Many students identified a personal ‘Don’t Ask; Don’t Tell’ policy.

Theme Two: Invisibility and the desire for community was identified from LGBTIQ data. Nearly all
LGBTIQ students who responded to the open-ended question identified a desire for more visibility, openness and support on the Unitec campus and many identified they did not know any other LGBTIQ students. The most common form of support requested from LGBTIQ students was for a group. Theme Three: Sexuality a non-issue for heterosexual students was identified from heterosexual data collected from the open-ended question and revealed that 76% of heterosexual students did not believe there was discrimination or issues on campus for LGBTIQ students. Theme Four: Institutional Responses was drawn from both LGBTIQ and heterosexual data and revealed that all students appeared uncertain of, lacked faith in, the ability of the institution to provide adequate responses or leadership to teach or provide resources in regards to LGBTIQ concerns.

A multi-pronged holistic approach, identifying a variety of recommendations and strategies to address LGBTIQ-identified issues has been suggested as a priority in order to bring about a culture shift towards ‘inclusive excellence’ for LGBTIQ Unitec students. Recommendations include: continuation and growth of the current Ally programme; designation of a LGBTIQ-identified area as a safe space, with allocated Unitec staff; the organisation of group and social events; an LGBTIQ celebration with a cultural diversity day; and changes to USU services, Unitec policies and procedures; along with staff and student training and recruitment of LGBTIQ staff and future students. Continued research into experiences of LGBTIQ tertiary students is recommended with future campus climate assessments and a possible focus on identifying LGBTIQ reasons for remaining somewhat closeted. Links to secondary school experiences and the impact of physical assaults and injuries have also been discussed as potential future research projects.

This commitment to LGBTIQ students would also enhance and demonstrate a commitment to the Unitec Equity and Diversity strategy and propel Unitec closer to its goal of inclusive excellence. As identified by Rankin et al. (2010):

> It is said we learn the best when we are able to open up and truly listen to others. Through the stories, voices and experiences of others, we find truth – the kind of truth that exposes raw uncensored emotion and reality. In return others learn to do the same. Creating safe, welcoming spaces for students to learn and succeed is the purpose of a college, technical institute or University. (p. 5)
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Appendices

Appendix A: Questionnaire as uploaded to Survey Monkey™

Unitec Campus Climate Survey

For

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, (Takataapui, Fa’afafine, Whakawahine) and Intersex Students as well as those students Questioning or uncertain about their sexuality

Rationale: You are invited to participate in a survey regarding the Unitec Campus Climate for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, Intersex and Questioning (LGBTIQ) students. This survey is completely voluntary and your responses will be kept confidential. Individual students will not be identified. Only group data will be reported.

Directions: Please read and consider each question carefully before answering. Select the answer you feel is most appropriate for you. You can choose not to answer specific questions.

Completion of the survey is deemed to constitute informed consent.

Any questions concerning this survey or project should be directed to:

Toni Woods, BN, PGDip,HSc
Faculty of Social and Health Sciences
Private Bag 92025
Auckland 1142
tbarney@xtra.co.nz
## Part One: Unitec Campus Experience

Directions:
Please read and consider each question carefully before answering. Select the answer you feel is most appropriate for you. You can choose not to answer specific questions. Completion of the survey is deemed to constitute informed consent.

Note: Harassment refers to behaviour that has interfered considerably with your ability to work, learn, feel successful on Unitec Campus OR has created an intimidating, unfriendly, hostile or offensive environment.

Discrimination: refers to a prejudicial bias for example when a person is treated less well in comparison with someone else because of his or her racial or ethnic origin, religion, beliefs, disability, age or sexual orientation.

Within the last year have you experienced the following?

### 1.1 Feared for my physical safety because of my sexual orientation?
- [ ] Yes
- [x] No

### 1.2 Concealed my sexual orientation/gender identity to avoid intimidation?
- [ ] Yes
- [x] No

### 1.3 Avoided disclosing my sexual orientation/gender identity to a lecturer, supervisor, administrator or student support person due to fear of negative consequences, harassment or discrimination
- [ ] Yes
- [x] No

### 1.4 Been denied opportunities due to my sexual orientation/gender identity?
- [ ] Yes
- [x] No

### 1.5 Was a victim of harassment due to my sexual orientation/gender identity?
- [ ] Yes
- [x] No
Sexuality and Inclusion at Unitec

1.6 In what form was that harassment (mark all that apply)

- Derogatory remarks
- Threats to expose your sexual orientation/gender identity
- Pressure to be silent about your sexual orientation/gender
- Direct or indirect verbal harassment or threats
- Denial of services
- Written comments (e.g. anti LGBTQIQ flyers, publications etc)
- Anti LGBTQIQ graffiti
- Threats of physical violence
- Actual assault or injury
- Other
- Not Applicable

1.7 Where did this harassment take occur? (mark all that apply)

- In a class
- In a student village
- In a campus office
- In a public space on campus
- While walking on campus
- Campus event
- Not Applicable

1.8 Who was the source of this harassment? (mark all that apply)

- Student
- Staff member
- Supervisor
- Administrator
- Don't know
- Not Applicable
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Part Two: Feelings about the Unitec Campus

For the following items, chose the response that most closely describes your feelings.

2.1 Gay men (Takataapui) are harassed on campus due to their sexual orientation/gender identity?

- Very Unlikely
- Unlikely
- Uncertain
- Likely
- Very Likely

2.2 Lesbians (Takataapui) are harassed on campus due to their sexual orientation/gender identity?

- Very Unlikely
- Unlikely
- Uncertain
- Likely
- Very Likely

2.3 Bisexual persons are harassed on campus due to their sexual orientation/gender identity?

- Very Unlikely
- Unlikely
- Uncertain
- Likely
- Very Likely

2.4 Transgendered (Fa'afafine, Whakawahine) persons are harassed on campus due to their sexual orientation/gender identity?

- Very Unlikely
- Unlikely
- Uncertain
- Likely
- Very Likely
2.5 Queer people are harassed on campus due to their sexual orientation/gender identity?

Very Unlikely
Unlikely
Uncertain
Likely
Very Likely

2.6 Intersex people are harassed on campus due to their sexual orientation/gender identity?

Very Unlikely
Unlikely
Uncertain
Likely
Very Likely

2.7 I fear for my physical safety because of my sexual orientation/gender identity?

Very Unlikely
Unlikely
Uncertain
Likely
Very Likely

2.8 I conceal my sexual orientation/gender identity to avoid harassment?

Very Unlikely
Unlikely
Uncertain
Likely
Very Likely

2.9 I conceal my sexual orientation/gender identity to avoid discrimination?
Very Unlikely
Unlikely
Uncertain
Likely
Sexuality and Inclusion at Unitec

Part Three: Unitec Campus Response

Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

3.1 Unitec thoroughly addresses campus issues related to sexual orientation/gender identity?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Uncertain
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

3.2 Unitec has visible leadership from the management regarding sexual orientation/gender identity issues on campus?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Uncertain
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

3.3 The curriculum adequately represents the contribution of LGBTQIQ people?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Uncertain
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

3.4 The climate of the classes I take are accepting of LGBTQIQ people?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Uncertain
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
3.5 Unitec provides visible resources on LGBTQIQ issues and concerns?

Strongly agree
Agree
Uncertain
Disagree
Strongly disagree

3.6 Unitec has a rapid response system for incidents of LGBTQIQ harassment?

Strongly agree
Agree
Uncertain
Disagree
Strongly disagree

3.7 Unitec has a rapid response system for incidents of LGBTQIQ discrimination?

Strongly agree
Agree
Uncertain
Disagree
Strongly disagree

3.8 Please rate Unitec campus climate in general for the following items, where '1' is the most positive (e.g., 1 = most friendly, 1 = non-homophobic, etc.) with 5 being most negative (e.g., 5 = most unfriendly, 5 = most homophobic, etc.).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friendly/Unfriendly</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Communicative/Uncommunicative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concerned/Indifferent</td>
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<td>Respectful/Disrespectful</td>
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<td>Cooperative/ Uncooperative</td>
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<td>Competitive/ Non Competitive</td>
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<td>Non Racist/ Racist</td>
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<td>Non Sexist/ Sexist</td>
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<td>Non Homophobic/ Homophobic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accessible to persons with a disability/Inaccessible</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Part Four: Background Information

4.1 What is your gender?
- Female
- Male
- Transgender (Fa’aafafine, Whakawahine)
- Intersex

4.2 What is your sexual identity?
- Lesbian (Takataapui)
- Gay (Takataapui)
- Bisexual
- Transsexual
- Heterosexual
- Questioning

4.3 What is your age?
- 22 and under
- 23-32
- 33-42
- 43-52
- 53 and over

4.4 Are you a full time or part time student?
- Full time
- Part time

4.5 Do you have a disability that substantially limits major life activity (such as seeing, hearing, learning, mobility)?
- Yes
- No

4.6 With what racial/ethnic group do you identify? (If you are of a multi-racial/multi-ethnic
4.7 Which Faculty of Unitec are you currently a student in?
Faculty of Creative Industries and Business
Faculty of Social and Health Sciences
Faculty of Technology and Built Environment

4.8 What is your citizen status?
New Zealand citizen - born in New Zealand
New Zealand citizen naturalised
Permanent Resident of New Zealand
International Student in New Zealand

4.9 Place yourself on the following continuum
Closeted - not out to anyone
Out to a few close friends
Out to a few friends/family
Out to friends and family
Out to all personally and professionally
Not Applicable
Sexuality and Inclusion at Unitec

Part Five: Your additional comments: Have your say

This survey may have raised a large number of issues. If you would like to tell your story of your experiences of Unitec please use the space below. Include any positive or negative experiences or examples that you would like Unitec to focus on and any suggestions you may have to improve the Unitec campus climate for LGBTQIQ people.
Appendix B: Permission to use International Campus Climate Assessment tool

Copy of Email

Good evening Toni,

Thank you for your inquiry and your interest in conducting LGBT climate assessment work. I have conducted a more recent national assessment for US campuses (2010 State of Higher Education Report for LGBT People). It is a much more comprehensive project than the 2003 project. More information may be obtained at http://www.campuspride.org/research/. I have attached a copy of the survey instrument here for your review. If you choose to use it, I ask that you site the report.

Thank you again for your interest and best of luck with your work in New Zealand.

Kind regards,

Sue Rankin

Susan (Sue) Rankin, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Education Policy Studies, College Student Affairs
Senior Research Associate, Center for the Study of Higher Education
The Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA 16802-3203
814-863-2655 (office)
814-865-3638 (fax)
sxr2@psu.edu

From: Toni Woods [mailto:twoods@unitec.ac.nz]
Sent: Sunday, September 11, 2011 7:19 PM
To: sxr2@psu.edu
Subject: Campus climate assessment tool

Hi Susan,

I am currently working on my thesis which involves a questionnaire for LGBTIQ currently studying at Unitec, New Zealand. At this stage Unitec has no support services specifically for this community as they are reportedly incorporated into “student services”. I have been involved in developing a proposal for funding for LGBTIQ campus group, safe space and events and a part of the proposal is that I will do my thesis on the experiences of LGBTIQ students here. I have read a multitude of your recent research and would like to
request your permission to utilise
your campus climate assessment tool from your 2003 study and modify it for a New
Zealand context and make it Unitec specific. I would clearly reference the tool back your
research and acknowledge that your permission has been given. I would also more than
happily send you the modified document for your approval before including it in the
research proposal. Can you let me know via email if that would be acceptable? Is it
possible to get a copy of the assessment tool which can be modified?

I appreciate your time and effort in considering this request

Yours Faithfully

Toni

Toni Woods
Course Coordinator - Mental Health Praxis
Faculty of Health and Social Sciences
Unitec New Zealand
TeWhareWananga o Wairaka
Auckland
New Zealand
Phone: +64 9 8154321 extension 5072
Fax 64 9 8154373
Mobile 021 522462
Email: twoods@unitec.ac.nz
From: Matthew Farry <mfarry@unitec.ac.nz>
To: Toni Woods <tbarney@xtra.co.nz>
Sent: Monday, 7 May 2012 5:58 AM
Subject: Re: URGENTLY NEED YOUR HELP

Kia ora Toni,

The person you need to contact is Simon Peel, Dean of Research speel@unitec.ac.nz. I fully support your research but have no authority to grant organisational consent. In saying this, once you have found the correct process for this, I would be happy for you to put my name down in support.

Let me know where you get to with this.

Nga mihi

Matt

Matthew Farry Ph.D.
Manager Equity and Diversity
Organisational Development
mfarry@unitec.ac.nz
Tel +64 9 815 4321 Ext 7793
Mob + 64 (0) 21 855 906
www.unitec.ac.nz
At Unitec we see value in diversity
Appendix D: Advertising Posters

Queer @ Unitec

Are you Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex or Questioning your sexuality and a student here at Unitec? ..........Then I want to hear from you

It’s time to have your say (anonymously) about what you think of the Unitec campus…. An email will be coming soon to your student email inbox.

Sexuality and Inclusion at Unitec

Have your say…Make sure your voice is heard.

This research project is being completed by Toni Woods (tbarney@xtra.co.nz) Masters in Health Science student and has approval of the Unitec Ethics Research Committee UREC 2012-1063
Queer @ Unitec

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Appendix E – Unitec Research Ethics Committee Approval

Toni Woods
70 Shearwater Drive
Bakewell
Palmerston City
Darwin, NT, 0832
Australia
21.6.12

Dear Toni,

Your file number for this application: 2012-1063
Title: Sexuality and Inclusion at Unitec Institute of Technology (Unitec), Aotearoa New Zealand in 2012.

Your application for ethics approval has been reviewed by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee (UREC) and has been approved for the following period:

Start date: 21.6.12
Finish date: 21.6.13

Please note that:

1. The above dates must be referred to on the information AND consent forms given to all participants.

2. You must inform UREC, in advance, of any ethically-relevant deviation in the project. This may require additional approval.

3. Organisational consent/s must be cited and approved by your primary reader prior to any organisations or corporations participating in your research.

You may now commence your research according to the protocols approved by UREC. We wish you every success with your project.

Yours sincerely,

Scott Wilson
Deputy Chair, UREC

CC: Dianne Roy
Cynthia Almeida

Appendix F: Organisational Approval
Organisational Consent

I, Ray Meldrum, Executive Dean, Academic Development of Unitec Institute of Technology give consent for Toni Woods to undertake research in this organisation as discussed with the researcher.

The consent is subject to approval of research ethics application no UREC 2012-1063 by the Unitec Research Ethics Committee and a copy of the approval letter is being forwarded to the organisation as soon as possible.

Date: 3rd July 2012

Ray Meldrum
Hi there,

My name is Toni Woods, and I am currently enrolled in the Masters of Health Science at Unitec.

I would like to invite you to participate in an anonymous survey exploring the Unitec Campus environment for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex or Questioning (LGBTIQQ) students.

While this survey centres around the experiences of LGBTIQQ students at Unitec, your opinions on this topic are just as valuable if you identify as heterosexual.

Click here to complete the survey now >>>

(Note: Completing this survey is deemed as informed consent from you, for your responses to support this research.)

Background on this survey
Unitec currently does not have any data on the experiences of LGBTIQQ students on Unitec's campuses. This study will allow you to have a voice, and share your views and experiences without the need to disclose your sexuality to others.

What's involved?
The survey takes about 15-20 minutes to complete, depending on the depth of your responses. All responses are completely anonymous. No-one, including me (the researcher) will be able to identify who has provided which responses.

What about confidentiality?
You have been contacted on my behalf by Unitec Institute of Technology. Unitec have not shared your contact details with me, and never share your contact details with any third party as a matter of policy. All responses you give in this survey will be kept anonymous and strictly confidential. Only the researcher (myself) and my study supervisor will have access to the responses - and none of these can or will be traced back to any one respondent.

Are there any risks?
There should be no risks to any person who chooses to take part in this study. All information you give will be anonymous and confidential. I have provided my contact details below, plus some further contact numbers should you need more information or support.

Are there any benefits for taking part in this study?
Participation in the survey will allow you to anonymously have your say. In doing so you may help to influence the future development of systems and resources to support LGBTIQQ students at Unitec.
What about Treaty of Waitangi and cultural issues?
The survey has been designed in consultation with Pakeha, Maori, Pacific Island, International students, and LGBTIQ staff and students.

Will we hear about the results?
Yes. We will let you know the results via USU Student Association at Unitec. I also hope to publish the results in academic journals and present them at meetings and conferences. Depending on the findings, I may also talk to policy makers and community groups.

More information
I am happy to give you more information and answer any questions you may have about this survey:

Toni Woods – Masters Candidate
Email: tbarney@xtra.co.nz

Or, you can contact my supervisor about this project:
Dr Dianne Roy – Supervisor
Email: droy@unitec.ac.nz

Thank you in advance for taking this survey. I look forward to sharing these results with the Unitec community.

UREC REGISTRATION NUMBER: (2012-1063)
This study has been approved by the UNITEC Research Ethics Committee from 13th April 2012 to 14 December 2012. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Committee through the UREC Secretary (Ph.: 09 815-4321 ext. 6162). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Youthline: Telephone Counselling for all youth 0800 376 633 or TXT 234 for support
Lifeline: Telephone Counselling for all 09 5222 999
RainbowYouth: Provides support, contact information advocacy and education for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered youth 09 3764155 www.rainbowyouth.org.nz
Outline: Telephone helpline for issues around sexual and gender identity. Outside Auckland Phone 0800 802 437 and connect for free to outline by pressing ‘8’. www.gayline.org.nz
Lowdown: Assistance for youth experiencing depression. Text for free on 5626.www.thelowdown.co.nz
Unitec Counselling: 09 8154 321 extn 8160.

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this study, you can contact an independent health and disability advocate. This is a free service provided under the Health and Disability Commissioner Act:
Telephone: 0800 555 050. Email: advocacy@hdc.org.nz