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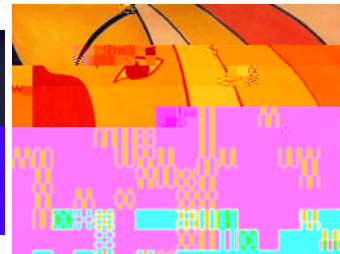
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Equity Matters

at Queen's University

Issue: 2; Vol: 2
July 2012



In This Issue

[Employment Equity Bits and Bites: LGBTQ Definitions](#)

[Equity in Focus: Building LGBTQ Inclusive Workplaces](#)

[Equity in the Community: Gender Neutral Washrooms at Queen's](#)

[Review your LGBTQ Policies](#)

Message from the Editor

Dear Queen's University Member:

Welcome to the second issue of Equity Matters at Queen's, our new, bi-monthly electronic newsletter from the Queen's University Equity Office.

This edition's focus is on building inclusive workplaces for members of the LGBTQ community. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBTQ) employees constitute a sizeable and dynamic workforce population and are an important priority in Diversity and Inclusion (D & I) literature. In addition, the Ontario Human Rights Code has recently been amended to include the ground transgendered in the prohibited grounds of the everyday issues faced by LGBTQ employees. In the "Review your

[LGBTQ Policies and Practices](#) section, a series of questions help us assess the current level of LGBTQ inclusion within our workplaces and provide

Review your LGBTQ policies and practices:

critical points for consideration in the development of future directions. One such direction is highlighted in the "[Equity in the Community](#)" section: we hope to see the designation of gender neutral washrooms at Queen's in order to ensure an inclusive community. For further resources, a suite of D&I practices highlighting cutting edge LGBTQ inclusion efforts from global organizations in Australia, China and India are available on the Catalyst website at: [Inclusive LGBT Practices](#)

We invite you to share your comments and suggestions for future feature articles on the accomplishments and activities of faculty, staff, students, and alumni of Queen's University relating to employment equity. Please contact us at equity@queensu.ca

Ekta Singh, Equity Advisor



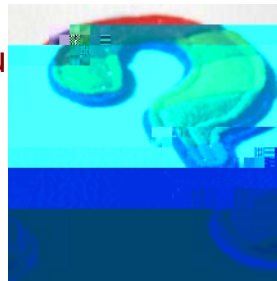
- z Do you have anti-r discrimination statements inclusive of LGBTQ on your department's website? Are they communicated to staff and faculty?
- z Do you participate in benchmarking or other forms of evaluation of your department's LGBTQ demographics and inclusiveness?
- z Are you aware of transgender inclusive health care benefits?
- z Do you encourage the support of LGBTQ allies in your inclusion practices?
- z Do you organize and/or communicate LGBTQ networking or mentoring activities?
- z Are senior managers and administrators knowledgeable in:
 - { LGBTQ benefit offerings and how to describe benefits to staff?
 - { Managing the concerns of transgender employees transitioning at work?

Employment Equity "Bits and Bites"

LGBTQ Terminology: What you need to know

The term "LGBTQ" is useful to refer to individuals in the minority with respect to sexual orientation and/or gender identity or expression but it is important to recognize the diversity of the LGBTQ community. The acronym LGBTQ is most commonly used in Canada and the United States to address the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered community. The acronym can vary in a number of ways, including GLBT, GLB, and can include additional letters such as Q (queer; also questioning) as we have at Queen's, J (intersex), and A (straight ally). It is important to note that terms may evolve over time to reflect changes in thinking and/or preferences within the LGBTQ community. Catalyst (2009) offers the following definitions but also encourages readers to recognize that different language may be used by different people, companies and countries.

Sexual identity or orientation. The terms lesbian, gay, bisexual, and heterosexual all refer to sexual orientation, the emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attraction to individuals of a particular gender (women or men). Critically, these terms do not necessarily refer to sexual practices or behaviours.



Gender identity and gender expression Gender identity is one's inner sense of being a woman or a man, regardless of biological birth sex;

Out in Kingston:

www.outinkingston.org

Here and Queer in Kingston: A directory of Queer Positive Resources:

Equity In the Community:

Gender Neutral Washrooms at Queen's

Jean Pfeleiderer
Sexual and Gender Diversity Advisor
Queen's Human Rights Office

When you use the washroom, which one do you choose, the Men's or the Women's? For those of us who have no trouble thinking of our gender as precisely the one that was assigned to us at birth, this is an easy question. For those for whom that is not the case, those the Ontario Human Rights Commission describes as "transsexual, transgender and intersex persons, crossdressers and other people whose gender identity or expression, or is seen to be, different from their birth identified of

that accorded with the individual's felt gender.

Having such a right, and asserting it in the face of potentially humiliating and even dangerous responses from others, are, of course, two different things. Further, the right to choose the washroom designated for one's felt gender also presumes that everyone has a felt gender, and that gender is either male or female. As we increasingly are coming to understand, gender identity and presentation are complex and fluid; the "gender binary" is not a sufficiently comprehensive concept.

One response to these concerns is to provide more gender neutral washrooms. Many such washrooms have been constructed in public places with an eye to accommodating other needs, such as those of parents and children, and of persons with disabilities; in most instances, these would serve the needs of the trans community as well if signage made it clear that they were available to everyone.

The existence of gender neutral washrooms is a perfect example of how ensuring the rights of one group help make the environment inclusive for everyone. It is important for everyone to do their part to support these initiatives in our community.



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