AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

<u>Rylan R. Wall</u> for the degree of <u>Master of Science</u> in <u>College Student Services Administration</u> presented on <u>April 25, 2016</u>.

Title: <u>Institutional Support for Queer International Students in U.S. Higher Education</u>

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Within the United States, international student enrollment in institutions of higher education has been climbing sharply over the past decade. However, despite this increase, colleges and universities largely do not adequately support these student and their unique needs within higher education. International students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and/or queer (LGBTQ+), further referred to here as queer international students, receive remarkably little attention in student development literature and practice. What little attention this student population does receive suggests that they face many unique challenges in their experiences within U.S. higher education, such as isolation from both LGBTQ+ student and international student support spaces and fear of revealing their queer identity due to severe repercussion for doing so in their countries of origin. In order to, in part, address this gap within the literature, this study examined institutional support programs, policies, practices, and resources that exist to address queer international students in U.S. higher education. The central research question that framed this study was: What types of programs, policies, practices, and resources exist that address queer international students at institutions of higher education in the United States? This research used a qualitative methodology in the narrative research design

tradition to gather data from six participants from four colleges and universities. Three key themes were found in the responses of the participants. First, there are emerging programs, practices, and resources specifically designed to address queer international students. Second, collaboration and visibility have been key components to the current offering of programs, policies, practices, and resources for queer international students. Third, queer international students face a barrage of barriers and challenges within their experiences in higher education in the United States. Several implications from these themes are discussed, such as the dichotomy of creating new support approaches for queer international students versus making existing ones more inclusive and the potential limitations of visibility based approaches.

Key Words: Institutional support, international student support, LGBTQ student support, higher education, queer international students, staff in higher education

Institutional Support for Queer International Students in U.S. Higher Education

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APPROVED

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Rylan R. Wall, Author

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Institutions of higher education throughout the United States are experiencing an ever-increasing influx of international students seeking an education. The *2014 Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange* reveals that international student enrollment has increased 72% since the year 2000, with a record-high 8% increase alone in the 2013-2014 academic year (Farrugia & Bhandari, 2014). The report also estimates that international students have contributed about $27 billion to the U.S. economy in 2013 alone and contribute significantly to institutional research efforts and classroom environments, revealing the substantial economic and learning impacts these students have (Farrugia & Bhandari, 2014).

 The growth in international students can be viewed as an internationalization strategy within higher education, which in part emphasizes international student recruitment and support (Maringe, 2012). There are several motivations behind this internationalization strategy for institutions of higher education, including financial benefit, language acquisition, and enhancing the curriculum (Altbach & Knight, 2007). However, despite the economic advantages recruiting international students can bring to an institution of higher education, these institutions have many competing funding priorities that may not give international education professionals enough resources to adequately ensure the wellbeing of international students (Forbes-Mewett & Nyland, 2013). While all university resources may be considered resources for international students (Forbes-Mewett & Nyland, 2013), international students face a number unique challenges, such as language barriers, financial barriers, and the exploring of identity within a different cultural context (Quach, Todd, Hepp, & Doneker Mancini, 2013; Tung, 2011).

In addition to the increased presence of international students in the United States, media attention has also highlighted LGBTQ+ experiences globally, such as in the new cable TV show,

Gaycation which explores LGBTQ+ identity, politics, and culture in different countries around the world (VICE Media LLC, 2016). However, despite the increasing consideration of international students and culturally diverse LGBTQ+ experiences, LGBTQ+ international students – termed as queer international students or "QIS" here – have not been significantly studied. While there are no known national quantities, it is likely safe to presume that accompanying the rise in international students in the U.S. is an increase in the number of international students that identify as queer. However, what is known about QIS suggests that they have unique considerations (Kato, 1998), which may require additional support from institutions of higher education. Considering the rampant bias and discrimination that is perceived and is concerning for even domestic LGBTQ+ students (Renn, 2010; Woodford, Kulick, Sinco, & Hong, 2014) and international students in general (J. J. Lee & Rice, 2007; R. A. Smith & Khawaja, 2011), QIS likely face additional barriers to their full success and incorporation into U.S. higher education with their intersecting sexual, gender, and cultural identities (Kato, 1998).

The experiences of queer international students and what institutions of higher education do to support them must be examined in order to address the barriers faced by these students. Without further understanding of queer international students, higher education at-large will likely continue to further marginalize these students by not acknowledging their existence at the institution. Therefore, given the acknowledged gap in research on queer international students, this thesis study – through the perspectives of professionals at institutions that may be engaging in work addressing QIS – seeks to (a) further understand the programs, policies, practices, and resources at institutions of higher education that support QIS and (b) use this understanding to promote best practices within higher education for these students.

Key Terms

- **International student:** Any student enrolled in an institution of higher education in the United States that has come to the United States from another country for the primary purpose of studying (Clark, 2009, para. 3).

- **QIS:** This acronym stands for "queer international student(s)." See the operational definition of "queer international student(s)" for further details.

- **Queer:** While this term is recognized to have many different meanings from derogatory slang to a theoretical perspective (Jagose, 1996; Somerville, 2007), it is primarily used here as an umbrella identity term to encompass anyone that identifies with a minoritized sexual and/or gender identity, unless otherwise stated, such as when referring to queer theory.

- **Queer international student(s):** For the purposes of this study, a queer international student is a student enrolled at a college or university in the United States who self-identifies themselves as both an international student at their institution and as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, or other minoritized sexual or gender identity.

- Note: Throughout this research, the term queer international student or QIS is used to denote the population of students in higher education that identify both as international students and as LGBTQ+. While the term queer can also denote political or even derogatory connotations, it is used here for its "umbrella-term" usage, representing various disenfranchised sexual and gender identities, which are often associated with the LGBTQ+ community. Because every student may identify differently and in a multitude of ways, the term "queer" may not

represent an all-inclusive way of representing the entirety of the LGBTQ+

community, particularly for a student population as culturally diverse as

international students. Thus it is perhaps best used only when discussing the

population academically, while still letting individual students identify

themselves. Additionally, there are limitations for using the term queer to

represent both sexual identities and gender identities. This can be viewed as

leading to assimilation and erasing of trans and genderqueer identities; however,

the term is used within this research as the study is initial and exploratory, without

an inherent need to segregate out gender identity.

Overview of the Problem

Given the increasing enrollment of international students in U.S. higher education and the

acknowledged challenges that they face, institutions must examine their policies, programs,

practices, and resources to make continuous improvements of these to better serve and

incorporate queer international students if institutions want to support a diverse and

intersectional student body. Students do not experience their individual identities separately in a

vacuum (Jones, Abes, & Baxter Magolda, 2013) and thus the lack of knowledge and

consideration for this intersection of queer and international student identity may not allow for

their full success and incorporation into campus communities. The existence of LGBTQ+

support offices and international support offices is not sufficient to accomplish this goal, as many

have examined the need for further collaborative work between these two functional areas (Kato,

1998; Katz, 2008; Wall, 2014a).

To further illustrate, a recent assessment was conducted by the researcher from January to

June 2014 at Oregon State University that examined the experiences of queer international

students and their interactions with the university and campus (Wall, 2014b). Through the assessment process, several students that identified within this intersection of identity were interviewed, and they shared their stories, which included processes of struggle with their institution, their peers, their families, their status in the United States, their home country's attitudes and laws relating to queer identity, and many other obstacles for their success and wellbeing on campus (Wall, 2014b). Many of these students further acknowledged the limitations of a LGBTQ+ center or other campus resources to accomplish the task of supporting their unique considerations (Wall, 2014b).

This gap in services and knowledge is also recognized within some of the broader literature as well. According to Renn (2010) an understanding of experiences and campus climate for queer international students is lacking and is a needed direction for future practice and research. This is reinforced more broadly within research and literature, as there is a scarcity of literature on QIS (Quach et al., 2013). In fact, there are only a handful of research studies that even focus on the experiences of QIS in higher education (Kato, 1998; Patrick, 2014; Quach et al., 2013) and of these, none focus on an institutional support perspective. Patrick (2014) also recognizes this gap on the study of institutions relating to QIS and calls for further research in this area.

Through a qualitative methodology, this research study aims to address the gap in our knowledge about higher education institutional support for queer international students and to provide a broader picture of how institutions of higher education have been responding to the presence of queer international students on their campuses through the perspective of relevant staff at these institutions. The development of this knowledge will assist college and university administrators, student affairs professionals, and international educators to better understand

institutional support for queer international students and potentially better design changes in their existing structures. The guiding research question for the research is then as follows: What types of programs, policies, practices, and resources exist that address queer international students at institutions of higher education in the United States?

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature review presented in the following pages is meant to provide an overview and synthesis of the relevant literature related to queer international student populations. However, there is a gap within higher education literature and other academic fields related to QIS in the United States, which has only recently been addressed in a handful of academic works (Kato, 1998; Nakamura & Pope, 2013; Oba & Pope, 2013; Patrick, 2014; Pope, Singaravelu, Chang, Sullivan, & Murray, 2007; Quach et al., 2013). Because of this limitation, it is necessary to pull from related sources and fields of literature to gain a more complete perspective about queer international students. This review is divided up into several sections, including institutional support, queer theory and LGBTQ+ development, international student adjustment and development, intersectionality, and literature focused on queer international experiences.

The first section on institutional support covers ecological perspectives within higher education to further understand how the environment and campus spaces, resources, climate, etc. can impact students at the institution. Following is a section including queer theory and LGBTQ+ development literature to gain further insight into the lived experiences of queer people and particularly their experiences within higher education settings. Similarly, on the other side of this intersection of identity, the third section is about international student adjustment and development within higher education to give context to the international experiences of QIS. The fourth section will focus on literature of intersectionality because a QIS population is defined by an intersection of identity and thus this literature can reveal how different social identities and systems of oppression can interact to create unique situations. Finally, the fifth section will include the few sources of literature that focus on queer international experiences, particularly within the United States, and several of the major themes that come from these.

Institutional Support

Literature has been expanding on fostering diversity within higher education, whether that be regarding racial and ethnic identity (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010; Richardson Jr. & Skinner, 1990), sexual and gender identity (Renn, 2010; Yost & Gilmore, 2011), or many other social identities not discussed within this review. However, the predominate focus of student identity literature has been focused on individual students, rather than institutional adaption (Richardson Jr. and Skinner, 1990). While campus climate and ecology have remained topics of study within higher education and student development over the past several decades (Evans et al., 2010; Schuh, Jones, & Harper, 2010), ecological frameworks "have not been an enduring theoretical force in student development" (Evans et al., 2010, p. 173). Richardson Jr. and Skinner (1990) argue that the lack of institutional focus is because adapting to diversity is widely believed by institutional agents to require lowering of institutional standards leading to an overall lowering of quality of the institution. However, institutional spaces and resources are largely being influenced by incoming students and their generational characteristics, including their diversity of social identities and concern for social justice (Rickes, 2009). Therefore, because this thesis is primarily concerned with institutional support and adaption for a specific student population, literature related to institutional support or lack of support through developmental ecology, physical influence of space, or structural violence is explored within this section of the literature review.

Ecological models. Ecological perspectives in higher education have resulted from both human ecology (an anthropological perspective) and developmental ecology (a psychological perspective; Evans et al., 2010). One primary way that ecological models have been helpful within a broader framework of student development theory is in their explanatory potential.

Evans et al. (2010) give the example of how a racial identity development model may describe an outcome (racial identity) while an ecology model may describe how this outcome was achieved through an interactive process of an individual and their environment.

Bronfenbrenner pioneered in the subject of developmental ecology in order to describe development within early childhood, but the theory has evolved over time and been applied within student development literature (Evans et al., 2010). Brofenbrenner's ecological systems theory primarily consists of four components: process, person, context, and time or PPCT (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007). While different scholars in different fields may emphasize different components that exist within the PPCT model – developmental ecology focuses on Person for instance – the Context portion clearly plays a critical role in all of these models as the site for interactions for individuals, if not the outright focus of scholarship (Evans et al., 2010). Within the Context component, Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2007) further subdivide this into microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems, and macrosystems. Without having to define each in specific here, essentially each level from former to latter broadens out the scope from individual sites of interactions, to collections of those interactions, to systems that influence those interactions (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007; Evans et al., 2010). The differing layers of systems are complex and interrelated, which can be represented by a series of nested circles (see *Figure 1)* with the example of a student at the center surrounding by various microsystem interactions that form into mesosystems (like their classes, friendship groups, etc.) that are further influenced by areas in the exosystem broader policies (like financial aid) or mesosystems of their close relations, which are finally surrounded by macrosystems like historical trends, cultural expectations, etc. (Arnold & Renn, 2003).
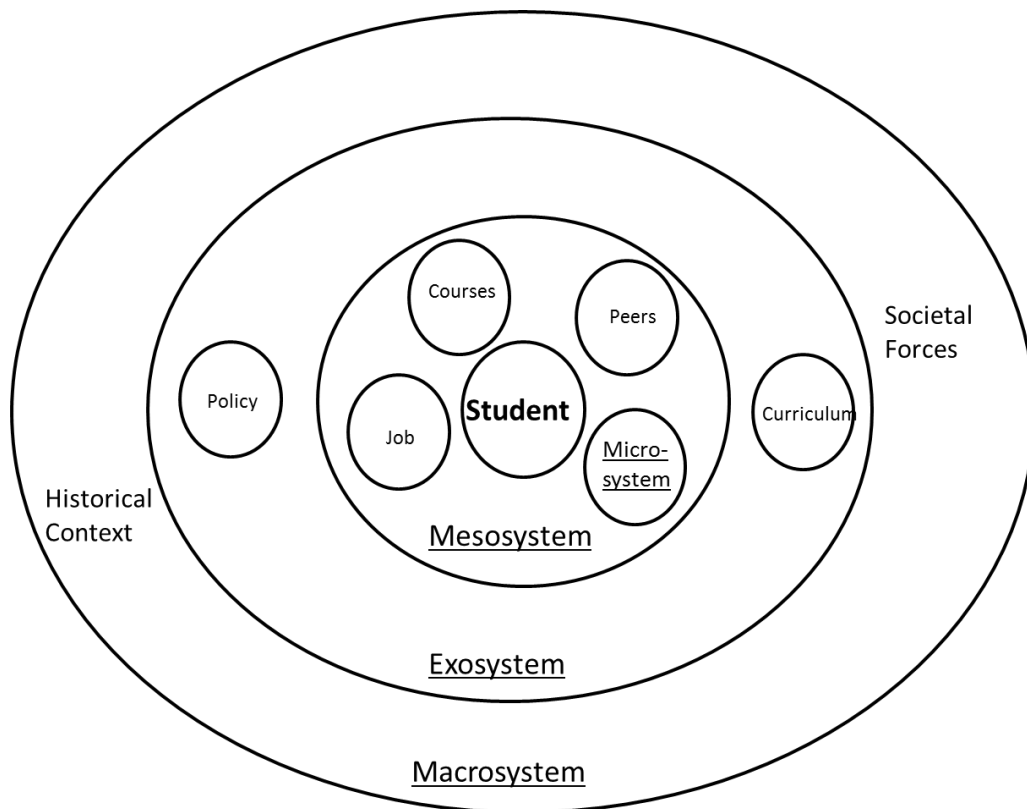
Figure 1. Example of PPCT Model. Adapted from *Student Development in College* by N. J.

Evans, D. S. Forney, F. M. Guido, L. D. Patton, and K. A. Renn, 2010, Copyright 2010 by

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Physical space on college campuses. Regarding the actual physical nature of college

campuses, Strange and Banning (2001) explore how the role of designing and constructing

physical space can influence the institution and the people at the institution in a variety of ways.

Campus physical environments are both functional and symbolic (Strange & Banning, 2001).

While an office or department on campus may have space that is functional for whatever purpose

it needs (often the workspace of staff), the location of the office, the state of (dis)repair it is in,

the modernity of the furnishings, and many other factors communicate a symbolic message about

the office (Strange & Banning, 2001). Essentially the physicality of the space is a form of

nonverbal communication to everyone that interacts with it, from administrators to potential

students, and is often considered a more truthful communication than verbal or written messages from the institution (Strange & Banning, 2001). Through this communication, Strange and Banning (2001) also posit that physical environments shape behavior.

Strange and Banning (2001) also discuss the implications of physical environments and their communication towards inclusion on college campuses. Students and other community members construct meaning collectively of their campus environments, and this can be especially true for targeted groups based upon race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, etc. (Strange & Banning, 2001). For example, incidents of sexist graffiti and/or reports of sexual harassment on campus may cause women to experience a "chilly climate" (Hall & Sandler, 1982; Strange & Banning, 2001). The absence of negative messages in the campus environment is not the only facet to better inclusion efforts, as a positive sense of mattering and validation is also important for marginalized groups (Strange & Banning, 2001). These positive aspects of inclusion are a precursor to becoming involved on campus, particularly in activities that will lead to development and learning (Strange & Banning, 2001). Perceived institutional support has also been shown to improve the daily mood of students and increase their likelihood of organizational commitment behaviors (Lamastro, 2001) and this support can occur in any campus setting by any campus agent (Strange & Banning, 2001). Strange and Banning (2001) also argue that environments are a collection of the individuals that inhabit that environment. This can particularly be applied to students that do not share traits with the dominant group on campus, as the environment does not reflect them (Strange & Banning, 2001). These students are less likely to be attracted and retained at such institutions, suggesting they are less likely to be successful in such environments (Strange & Banning, 2001).

Similar to the ideas of Strange and Banning (2001), it can also be noted that colleges and universities have created specific spaces for various student populations in the form of cultural centers or multicultural offices, termed as "niches"(Renn & Patton, 2010). While little research has been specifically completed on this concept, the research that does exist suggests cultural centers may provide resources to promote positive campus adjustment and identity development that is critical to the success and retention of students (Renn & Patton, 2010). Furthermore, niches are in line with the idea of campuses needing to do more than just negate negative messages around identity and instead create positive microsystems that affirm students and their identities (Evans et al., 2010; Renn & Patton, 2010; Strange & Banning, 2001).

Overall, college and university campuses must be able to adapt their environments for students who would have otherwise been thought of as not suited for college campuses, and they make "good sense" for student affairs practitioners to use in day-to-day policy decisions (Evans et al., 2010, p. 174). Despite the common perception, there are ways to adapt the institutional environment and support that allow for greater access to students with diverse identities, such as QIS, while also maintaining a focus on student achievement and quality (Richardson Jr. & Skinner, 1990). The study of campus climate and ecology has the potential to provide a useful lens to the development of learning environments for these "invisible populations" (Renn & Patton, 2010, p. 253).

Structural violence. The terminology of "structural violence" can be traced to the work of Galtung (1969), who used the term in an article about the state of peace research. One way in which structural violence can be understood is by breaking it down into its component words. "Structural" is used because the violence is embedded within social systems, such as economic, political, legal, religious, and cultural systems, while "violence" is used because these systems

cause harm to people in any way that fails to allow them to reach their full potential (Farmer, Nizeye, Stulac, & Keshavjee, 2006). Because structural violence is embedded within longstanding social systems, it can often be invisible to the population at large and it is closely linked with the concepts of social injustice and oppression (Farmer et al., 2006; Galtung, 1969). A similar concept that has been explored is "administrative violence" (Spade, 2015). Administrative violence is framed within the "distribution of life chances" by systems that cause marginalized people to suffer from economic marginalization, criminalization, and deportation (Spade, 2015, p. 11). While Spade (2015) was focused on trans politics, there are implications for social justice across all kinds of marginality, particularly when seeking to refocus activism efforts on mass-based, radical movements, rather than a purely legal "rights" framework used by mainstream lesbian and gay nonprofit groups.

Furthermore, structural violence is differentiated as a type of violence compared to other classifications. Galtung's (1969) original work proposes that structural violence be differentiated from direct violence. Direct violence refers to violence on a personal level where something or someone is directly destroyed or harmed physically or psychologically, often by intention of an actor (Galtung, 1969). However, structural violence is when the source of the violence cannot be directly traced back to a singular actor or actors (Galtung, 1969). Another way of framing violence that is useful in understanding this concept is how Galtung (1969) defines violence in general as a distinction between the actual condition versus the potential condition. Therefore, if an unavoidable natural disaster happens where there was no way to prevent the damage it causes, there is no violence happening in this definition because the actual and potential conditions are the same (Galtung, 1969). However, if there were ways to prevent or avoid some level of harm that were not taken, this situation would then qualify as violence, which could be either

structural, direct, or both (Galtung, 1969). Another distinction that can be useful in examining violence is between structural violence and institutional violence. While some use these terms interchangeably (Galtung, 1969), there can be a distinction made with institutional violence as the source of the violence coming from a specific institution, such as the police, a corporation, etc. (Bobichand, 2012; Galtung, 1969). Structural violence and institutional violence are related in a similar manner to structural violence and direct violence, in that direct and institutional violence are often rooted in and reinforce structural violence (Bobichand, 2012).

Application to higher education. Structural violence can have several implications within higher education. Higher education institutions are examples of institutions that may cause violence to its members and others, or as termed previously, an example of institutional violence (Bobichand, 2012). Goldstein (2005) explores institutional violence within an education setting, with a focus on a particular violent incident at a high school against a student by another student off school grounds. Institutions can inflict institutional violence through their reactions to such situations (Goldstein, 2005). In this example, the school administration inflicted institutional violence by responding to the incident through installing metal detectors and having police officers present in the high school (Goldstein, 2005). Rather than getting to the root of the problem, Goldstein (2005) argues that the school district is assuming the students themselves are the threat, and the school district's actions silence the community (parents, teachers, students, etc.); therefore, it becomes impossible to teach peace in such an environment. Examples like this demonstrate how institutions, including higher education institutions, can inflict symbolic violence within their communities.

Furthermore, in addition to institutional violence or violence performed by the institution and its agents (Bobichand, 2012), places of education can also be sites where violence occurs to

people, both direct and structural. Herr (1999) explores the implications of this in a case study of one lesbian student and her decision to drop out of school. The student had faced many incidents that ultimately led to a diminished sense of self and learning, and the school officials seemed unwilling to interrupt these practices (Herr, 1999). In this way, educational institutions can act as a site where structural violence occurs to students, but also enacting their own form of violence through inaction (Herr, 1999).

While a framework of structural violence is not used within these, several works on queer international students can be understood through a structural violence lens. Kato (1998) recognizes the various forms of oppression that can be present for queer international students, such as domestic racism and xenophobia for instance. One manifestation of this is the lack of connection between domestic LGBTQ+ student services and QIS (Kato, 1998). In this example, QIS are facing a structural violence through larger systems (racism and xenophobia) preventing them from accessing resources, while also facing institutional violence either from a lack of action by the institution to address these embedded systems within their LGBTQ+ services for students (Bobichand, 2012; Galtung, 1969; Kato, 1998). Furthermore, queer international students may face direct and structural violence in connection with their countries of origin (Katz, 2008; Valosik, 2015). If news of their sexual or gender identity were to spread back to their country of origin, QIS may face real danger, and the fear of that danger, through state action – including imprisonment and capital punishment – or through other actors like family members or groups the state cannot or will not control (Katz, 2008; Olson, 2014). Furthermore, Spade (2015) demonstrates how the most marginalized of communities can face violence in all forms even (and sometimes especially) when pursuing legal reforms, and thus queer international

students – particularly those with other marginalized identities – can be particularly at risk of facing this violence.

Queer Theory and LGBTQ+ Identity Development

There has been a marked increase in the number of publications related to queer theory and LGBTQ+ development over the last several decades; therefore, a comprehensive overview of this literature is beyond the scope of this review. Rather this review serves to highlight the relationship between queer theory/LGBTQ+ development, higher education, and queer international students. It is important to note that while the literature review here is grouping together queer theory and LGBTQ+ identity development under one heading, this is done to highlight works on sexuality and gender as they relate to higher education, not to suggest queer theory and LGBTQ+ development literature are one and the same. In fact, as is discussed later in this review, queer theory can and has been used to critique much existing LGBTQ+ developmental literature. For a thorough overview of queer theory and LGBT identity development, please see Bilodeau and Renn (2005), Jones, Abes, and Kasch, (2013), Renn (2010), and Watson (2005).

Queer theory. As described by Watson (2005), queer theory is a body of work that has been primarily interested in how identities like gay and heterosexual (and other identities related to "desire") have become regarded as stable identities, revealing that they are actually unstable constructs dependent on a performance of gender (pp. 67-68). Similarly, as summarized by Abes (2008), "rather than grouping these classifications [lesbian, gay, bisexual, masculine and feminine] into one category, queer theory recognizes sexual and gender identities as social, multiple, and fluid" (p. 59). Queer theory as a title can also be somewhat erroneous because rather than being a singular work that was produced, it is a collection of a wide variety of works.

These works use the word "queer" for a variety of purposes, and, as a body, queer theory continues to evolve and overlap with other perspectives, models, and theories (Watson, 2005). The varying definitions of "queer" include two somewhat paradoxical uses a: a short-hand for the entire LGBTQ+ acronym and a term to problematize and blur lines of sexual and gender identity (Nelson, 1999; Somerville, 2007) and even further applied to problematizing other essentialized views of identity (Somerville, 2007). Queer theory by its nature resists being defined and made normative within academics as such a move would make queer theory rather less queer (Jagose, 1996).

Queer theory has many of its roots in post-structuralism and feminism. Some foundational theorists like Jacques Lacan presented ideas around identity being an unstable construct and others like Jacques Derrida explored the binary constructions of identity, which have been incorporated within queer theory (Watson, 2005). Furthermore, Watson (2005) argues that Michel Foucault is a key forerunner to queer theory, particularly his work understanding identity to be historical and cultural rather than just human nature. These are widely grouped together with others as post-structuralism texts. Queer theory also ties into feminist writings with its explorations of the significance of gender and sexuality. Jagose (1996) links lesbian feminism to "queer" in some respects, including framing sexuality as institutional rather than personal and critiquing compulsory heterosexuality.

Jones, Abes, and Kasch (2013), while also recognizing the limits of somehow defining queer theory, still attempted to name a number of central tenets of queer theory for the purposes of ease of understanding for newcomers to queer theory and to further define their identity development models. Because in Jones, Abes, and Kasch (2013) these are directly applied to students in higher education and thus relevant to understanding queer theory in this context, they

are briefly listed here. The first tenet is heteronormativity, a system of power that creates a binary in sexuality that preferences heterosexual expression and oppresses other forms of expression (Jones, Abes, & Kasch, 2013). Heteronormativity also serves to reinforce a gender binary, as heterosexual expression deems that women should be attracted to men, and men attracted to women, with no acknowledgement of other gender identity possibilities. Jones, Abes, and Kasch (2013) connect how heteronormative structures have been used in the oppression of other social identity groups as well, such as the portrayal of Black women as more masculine to discredit them or as hyper-feminine to reinforce a view of them as sexually submissive objects. The second tenet is performativity, a concept that states that individuals create their identity in the performance of day-to-day life and as an ongoing process (Jones, Abes, & Kasch, 2013). This then implies that identity is a fluid and changing process rather than a fixed end point as offered by some identity models. The third tenet is desire, a concept summed up by Jones, Abes, and Kasch (2013) as "a compelling force behind the actions that individuals take" (p. 201), which performativity is the actualization of this desire. While desire can and has been applied in a number of different ways, perhaps most relevant here is the notion that desire is the force behind identity development of individuals as they seek out an acknowledged identity (Jones, Abes, & Kasch, 2013). The fourth and last tenet here is becoming, the idea that identity unfolds and "becomes" over time without a fixed end point (Jones, Abes, & Kasch, 2013). While similar in concept to performativity, becoming emphasizes the outcome of action and reflects the ways that performativity can parallel other developmental models (increasing complexity, etc.), whereas performativity emphasizes only the process of action (Jones, Abes, & Kasch, 2013).

Also relevant to this research, queer theory can offer strong critiques of nation-states and the heteronormativity they present (A. Smith, 2010). Many queer, feminist, and postcolonial

theorists have explored how heterosexuality has been a constitutive factor of national identity and thus the queer subject as an "outlaw" of the state (Puar, 2007). However, as argued by Puar (2007) this narrative of the outlaw has been mediated by the rise of the U.S. homosexual consumer and through gains in legal civil rights in the U.S. Puar (2007) continues stating that "by underscoring circuits of homosexual nationalism, I note that some homosexual subjects are complicit with heterosexual nationalist formations rather than inherently… opposed to them" (p. 4). In this way, the United States (and perhaps other nation-states) and its agenda are supported by queer subjects, such as through the othering of people outside the United States (Puar, 2007).

Application in higher education. While queer theory was not developed particularly around or for application in higher education, there have been scholars that have used queer theory as a theoretical framework for studies within higher education. Already covered here, Jones, Abes, and Kasch (2013) applied their view of the tenets of queer theory to the Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity (MMDI) to form the Q-MMDI. Previously, Abes and Kasch (2007) applied queer theory in a study of lesbian college students, and particularly on a singular student and case example from the study, to reveal the utility of queer theory as a framework within development literature on students. More specifically, Abes and Kasch (2007) discussed that "a queer theoretical perspective on development thus illuminates that for students who do not identify as heterosexual, identity development as part of the journey toward self-authorship requires resisting power structures that define one as abnormal" (p. 630). Therefore, students who must deconstruct heteronormative structures and external influences in order to make meaning of their lives and multiple identities are participating in a form of self-authorship termed "queer authorship" (Abes & Kasch, 2007). Queer authorship reveals that self-authorship by itself is not a comprehensive enough framework to encompass the experience of

lesbian college students and further suggests a reexamination of self-authorship regarding other aspects of identity such as race, ethnicity, and class (Abes & Kasch, 2007).

Furthermore, there are studies that apply queer theory within a classroom curricular context, often termed as queer pedagogy (Abes, 2008; Curran, 2006), and perhaps most relevant to this study, it has been applied in English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL) classes (Curran, 2006; Nelson, 1999). However, some ESL instructors believe that discussing sexuality is not relevant to most of the students (only to the "gay ones") and thus is out-of-place for an ESL classroom (Curran, 2006; Nelson, 1999). Others believe that students either do not have the sufficient English language skills to discuss "such topics" or that the students will likely be homophobic due to their religious or cultural backgrounds (Curran, 2006). Some instructors also find the idea of incorporating LGBTQ+ topics in their curriculum appealing, but feel they lack the resources and skills to do so (Nelson, 1999). However, Curran (2006) and Nelson (1999) problematize these perspectives and use their exploratory studies to reveal the utility in the incorporation of queer theory into ESL curriculums. Curran (2006) in particular, through self-reflection on his own experience teaching an Australian ESL class, found that queer theory is most useful in this context for its application towards inquiry and examining the assumptions and discourses students use when discussing sexuality.

Another application of queer theory within higher education is its utility within examining the experiences of queer international students. To start, the terms "queer international students" and "QIS" can be seen as problematic from a queer theory perspective. Due to queer theory's tendency to reject an essentialist view of identity – which works from an assumption that identity is stable, and therefore, there is a fixed notion of what it is to identify as LGBTQ+ (Jones, Abes, & Kasch, 2013) – the labeling of the student population in question as

simply "QIS" perhaps suggests that there is a singular (or at least limited) experience of what it means to be an international student in the U.S. while also identifying as LGBTQ+. More poignant to the exact topic of the research, this then suggests that institutions of higher education may only need one set resource, service, policy, etc. to address the essentialized identity of "who one is" (Curran, 2006) as a "queer international student" versus the complex, intersecting, and varied identities these students may have. This appears to be in line with the limitations of international student literature in general, one of which is the homogenization of international students into one group that fails to recognize the vast diversity present (Kim, 2012; Malcolm & Mendoza, 2014). Queer theory thus can provide a perspective that problematizes the essentialist groupings of QIS and thus forces a more complex perspective.

Additionally, queer theory can refocus the scope when addressing queer international students. Heteronormativity enforces a binary structure that labels a "normal" (heterosexual, masculine men and feminine women) and a "deviancy" (anything that strays from that) (Abes, 2008), which thus can cause a focus on the individual who is "deviant" and, even with good intentions, a view of deficiency of that individual (i.e. they need extra help to fit in at the institution). However, queer theory exposes these heteronormative structures (Abes, 2008; Jones, Abes, & Kasch, 2013; Watson, 2005), and thus, in the context of this research, highlights how QIS interact with, develop in, and wade through institutions of higher education and their heteronormativity. This puts the emphasis on the question of how can institutions address their heteronormative and other oppressive structures rather than simply serving queer international students?

Queer theory can also reveal how queer international students' struggles are more than just a struggle for representation and inclusion through "homonormalization" or becoming part

of dominant power structures through heteronormative assumptions and institutions (Duggan, 2002). This is particularly true when encompassing an alliance between queer theory and Native studies that can be conceptualized as a Two-Spirit critique (Driskill, 2010; A. Smith, 2010). The students' process of seeking resources and recognition from the institution can be characterized within a broader context of coming from "postcolonial" countries and seen as an act of challenging the misnomer that their native countries did not have or recognize queer people within traditional practices, similar to struggles of Native, Two-Spirit people who have challenged for same-sex unions in various Native nations (Driskill, 2010). Driskill (2010) noted that this can often be mistaken as Native activists homonormalizing or being assimilative, similar to when non-Native people advocate for same-sex marriage laws within the United States. However, it is rather the opposite as this stance is opposing colonial influence that erased these histories and is an act of "intellectual and rhetorical sovereignty" (Driskill, 2010, p. 83).

LGBTQ+ identity development and student support. Bilodeau and Renn (2005) provide an overview of various LGBTQ+ identity development models and implications for future practice in higher education. The piece starts with some of the precursor stage models developed in the 1970s, transitioning to research on LGBT people of color, bisexual people, and women. An alternative is revealed emerging in the form of the life-span approaches that emphasize the fluid nature of sexuality with application to trans experiences (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005).

One stage model that Bilodeau and Renn (2005) represent is the Model of Homosexual Identity Formation (Cass, 1979). This model proposes six stages of identity that a homosexual person moves through to recognize and accept their homosexuality based upon clinical work (Cass, 1979). Cass (1979) bases this model on two core assumptions: "(a) that identity is

acquired through a developmental process; and (b) that the locus of stability of, and change in,

behavior lies in the interaction process that occurs between individuals and their environments"

(p. 219). Before this model, little study had been devoted to the examination of how queer

people, or more specifically gay men and lesbians, acquired their identity (Cass, 1979; Kenneady

& Oswalt, 2014). Many similar models also were developed following Cass (1979) and with

similar assumptions and results – though with notable differences as well about the exact stages

and how people moved through them – suggesting some usefulness in stage models for identity

development in adult gay and lesbian people (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005; Kenneady & Oswalt,

2014).

   However, Kenneady and Oswalt (2014) highlight numerous works that critique the work

of Cass (1979) and therefore similar models. These critiques are divided up among four primary

categories: (a) limitations of linear stage models, (b) the exclusive focus on gay men and

lesbians, (c) not addressing differences between men and women in sexual identity formation,

and (d) not addressing the influence of racial and ethnic identity on sexual identity formation

(Kenneady & Oswalt, 2014). One study gives an example of the fourth critique, where some

two-spirit, lesbian, and gay Native Americans did not progress through the model's stages at all,

but rather their identity was formed while growing up in an absence of adversity toward their

identity (Adams & Phillips, 2009; Kenneady & Oswalt, 2014). With the varied geographic

origins and other identity variations within international student populations in the United States

(Farrugia & Bhandari, 2014), queer international students may also experience variations from a

stage model like Cass (1979). However, despite these limitations, many programs, educators, and

resources will hold the Model of Homosexual Identity Formation as a key component (Kenneady

& Oswalt, 2014).

Another model covered by Bilodeau & Renn (2005) is a foundational theory proposed by D'Augelli (1994) emphasizing the life-span model approach that incorporates several variables as people change throughout their lifetime. This model recognizes the role that an individual plays themselves in their development, a human development based model, (D'Augelli, 1994). D'Augelli (1994) is also critical of the essentialized nature of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people that had been promoted by scholars, researchers, and theorists, as it fails to recognize the outside context, and he argues that this serves heterosexism. Furthermore, individuals are not simply passive recipients of the context around them, but rather also actively shape the contexts as well (D'Augelli, 1994). Based on these assumptions, the model proposes six identity processes, rather than stages, which result from the interaction of "subjectivities and actions" (how someone feels about their sexual identity and the actions and behavior of the individual), "interactive intimacies" (how sexuality is developed through personal relationships like parents, peers, and romantic partners), and "sociohistorical connections" (how culture, subculture, societal norms, laws, etc. affect sexual identity; D'Augelli, 1994, pp. 318–319). The use of processes rather than stages symbolizes the critique of previous models for over emphasizing purely internal processes and a static view of development rather than a dynamic one (D'Augelli, 1994).

Perhaps most relevant to studying QIS though are the implications Bilodeau & Renn (2005) provide for student affairs practitioners, particularly stating that "choice of a particular theoretical model influences educational practice and research" (p. 33). Therefore, as warned in Bilodeau and Renn (2005), careful use of these various development theories is warranted when applying them to QIS as it may bring implicit biases or inaccuracies that lead to further ignorance, rather than understanding, of QIS experiences.

Applications to higher education. Student services targeted for LGBTQ+ students in higher education have dramatically increased in the past few decades, particularly since the 1990s (Beemyn, 2002). During that decade alone, over 50 LGBT centers and offices were established at different institutions of higher education (Beemyn, 2002). However, this did not happen in isolation, and LGBTQ+ student visibility can be traced back to the late 1800s in higher education (BestCollegesOnline.com, 2011). Student activism was a major part of the gay liberation movement as it was emerging in the 1960s and 1970s, inspired by antiwar and Black Power movements (Beemyn, 2003). In fact, student advocacy and pressure was responsible for the first staff members hired to support LGBTQ+ students at University of Michigan in 1971 (Beemyn, 2002). While starting off more narrow in focus around issues of sexuality, over time, many of these centers and offices have broadened their scope and constituencies, such as with the inclusion of trans students in support services (Beemyn, 2002).

Given the increased prominence of LGBTQ+ students and related resources on U.S. campuses, Renn (2007) builds upon the foundational theories of LGBTQ+ development and several theories on student leaders and involvement. One finding from Renn (2007) is that the process of involvement in LGBTQ+ campus groups seems to look similar to other identity-based groups, but it connects in ways not seen in other identity groups, such as increased visibility as a LGBTQ+ person and an increased sense of responsibility for activism and leadership (Renn, 2007). While this article does not relate directly to the experiences of QIS, it does suggest that it is possible to combine two bodies of research to form a study. Renn (2007) combines student involvement and LGBTQ+ identity development theory, while the focus of the thesis research here is on QIS, which largely relies on both LGBTQ+ student research and international student research. Additionally, Renn's (2007) work could also be applied to

adjustment for QIS as it provides at least one framework for examining how LGBTQ+ students (and thus potentially QIS) become involved on campus.

Furthermore, a study examining LGBTQ+ students' college adjustment and career development emphasizes the role that social support can play within the adjustment to college (Schmidt, Miles, & Welsh, 2011). The study relied upon previous studies showing that social support can provide a buffering effect against stress. QIS experiences may also differ depending on their perceived level of social support, and these students can be particularly affected by this due to the "intense isolation" experienced by QIS (Kato, 1998, para. 39). Therefore, further examination of how institutions support queer international students experiencing this isolation may be warranted.

Finally, an often overlooked part of LGBT and queer communities is the "T" or trans, transgender, and gender non-conforming individuals. Not surprisingly then, one can find a similar lack of attention to trans identified students, both when examining queer students in general (Dugan, Kusel, & Simounet, 2012) and then of course when examining the already sparse literature specifically on QIS. It is further explained "most institutions offer only marginal attention to the needs of transgender students with support often provided through inclusion with LGB student services" (Dugan et al., 2012, p. 720). Studies such as Quach et al. (2013) and Kato (1998) only address "LGB" or lesbian, gay, and bisexual international students in higher education and there are no studies that address trans international students. Considering the clear lack of focus on trans students (domestic or otherwise), Doug, Kusel, and Simounet's (2012) study of transgender student engagement is vital to understanding trans experiences at institutions of higher education, particularly those that may also be international students.

International Student Adjustment and Development

The phenomenon of students crossing borders to seek education by no means begins in the United States, and in fact, it dates back at least as far as ancient Greece where educational systems capitalized on students from farther away regions (Bevis & Lucas, 2007; Walden, 1909). Since the foundation of the United States in the late 18th century, there have been international students studying within the country (Bevis & Lucas, 2007). However, challenges were often present for these students and in drawing them to study in the U.S. – often mirroring the experiences of many immigrant people groups in general – including inhospitable environments in colleges and universities, tightening immigration regulations, prestige of European institutions over U.S. ones, and overall lack of interest in attracting international students (Bevis & Lucas, 2007; Fraser & Brickman, 1968). It would not be until the 20th century when various colleges and universities would start to design experiences and support services for international students and an eventual boom in international student populations that also followed increasing access to higher education in the United States in general (Bevis & Lucas, 2007). Within more recent history, international student experiences have been shaped by the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks in the U.S., including the broadened implementation of the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) tracking international students and the overall political climate (Bevis & Lucas, 2007; Coppi, 2007).

Despite the restrictive measures put in place after 9/11, recruitment rates of international students have since stabilized and even boomed over the past decade, bringing increased attention to international students and a number of publications relating to these students. Some of these studies can help illuminate aspects of QIS experience and can be used as a basis for further inquiry, combined with the LGBTQ+ student development literature.

Perhaps what is often most discussed in the literature about international students relates to their cross-cultural adjustment into their new environment. Such interest leads to the various models of U-shaped and W-shaped curves of adjustment that exist. Lysgaard (1955) and Oberg (1960) were some of the original scholars to produce work suggesting this. Lysgaard (1955) studied Norwegian Fulbright scholars that came to the United States over a period. One of his main conclusions was that the period of adjustment for his participants tended to follow a U-shaped curve. This curve represents that adjustment is easier to begin with (the start of the U), as a scholar first arrives, followed by a period of crisis (the drop in the U), and then eventually goes back up as fuller integration occurs (the rise at the end of the U). This period of crisis is explained by the scholars coming to realize that they are not forming intimate connections with their new environment (that was once exciting when it was brand new), and until that is achieved, there is this crisis of loneliness and blaming the surrounding society (Lysgaard, 1955). Lysgaard's work is acknowledged as the "most popular and well-known stage theory of cross-cultural adaption" and his work has been at the forefront on of examining cultural adjustments for decades (Ward, Okura, Kennedy, & Kojima, 1998, p. 278). Oberg (1960) builds on the work of Lysgaard to further describe this phenomenon of crisis as "culture shock" and the first part of the U-curve as the "honeymoon period" (terminology that can still often be found in use today).

Similarly, some works discuss the unique challenges that international students face when studying in a foreign country. Because acculturation can be defined as the process of adjustment and absorption into the dominant culture (Spector, 2008), one can call the resulting stress from this process "acculturative stress" (Tung, 2011). As is cited by Tung (2011), there are different sources for acculturative stress, often including: "English language difficulties, academic struggles, cultural adaptation, problematic perfectionism, lack of social supports, homesickness,

and perceived discrimination" (p. 383). This acculturative stress has been found to contribute to increased occurrence of mental health issues in international students (Constantine, Okazaki, & Utsey, 2004; J.-S. Lee, Koeske, & Sales, 2004; Wei et al., 2007).

Glass (2012) presents a study using a self-authorship framework of intercultural maturity that proposes 12 educational experiences that may be associated with international student development. These twelve experiences are associated with more positive campus perceptions and/or learning and development (Glass, 2012). Some of these experiences include: leadership programs with a focus on collaboration and teamwork, dialogue between students with different backgrounds and beliefs, community service activities, and activities sponsored by groups relating to the student's heritage (Glass, 2012, p. 244). Queer international students may similarly have more positive perceptions of campus or further learning and development through these experiences; however, further barriers that exist to these experiences for QIS need to also be considered. Kim (2012) also examines the development of international students, but with further emphasis on psychosocial development in addition to interaction with the environment. Factors that influence progression include: "degree of interaction with others, length of stay in the U.S., level of self-confidence, emotional and social support, motivation, personal temperament, and utilization of student services such as mentor programs" (Kim, 2012, p. 108). Similar to Glass 2012, Kim (2012) seems to recognize that certain experiences and interactions on campus can lead to positive outcomes for international students.

With experiences of discrimination on campus experienced by both queer students and international students, Karuppan and Barari's (2011) study of international students' experiences with discrimination may be of particular relevance for QIS. One of the primary findings from their study was that perceived discrimination negatively impacted international students'

educational experiences and prevented engagement, which was exasperated by limited spoken English skills (Karuppan & Barari, 2011). These findings also speak to some of what Kato (1998) states for QIS, with one student describing multiple layers of discrimination that she has to face in her daily life for being a woman, a person of color, an international student, and a queer person.

International student development theory is relatively sparse within the larger context of student development literature. Kim (2012) notes how despite their increasing presence within higher education and the increasing examination of other social identity subpopulations such as African American, Asian American, mixed race, and LGB students, international students largely are "left out" of the college student development theory body (p. 100). A few counterexamples exist that do specifically look at certain populations of international students (Malcolm & Mendoza, 2014; Sheehan & Pearson, 1995), but these seem to be the exception rather than the rule when it comes to the development of international students in the United States or any other country for that matter.

Kim (2012) gives attention to this gap in developmental literature in order to emphasize the need for further study, and with this acknowledged gap, Kim (2012) proposes a developmental model for international students. This psychosocial model, titled the International Student Identity (ISI) model, suggests six phases international students move through (not necessarily sequentially or unitarily) as they enter their new environment (Kim, 2012). As a psychosocial model, the ISI describes the content of this identity development. While the ISI attempts to generalize the experience of development by international students coming to the United States, Kim (2012) recognizes the limitations of not accounting for the heterogeneous nature of international students, which is complimented by Malcolm and Mendoza (2014) who

critique the tendency of studies on international students to either homogenize the group or focus only on Asian international students. Various cultural backgrounds and other social identities could change or influence psychosocial development for international students.

While no model has specifically incorporated queer international students, as foreign students to the United States, there are sure to be experiences that QIS share with their non-queer peers. When looking at barriers related to adjustment for instance, QIS would similarly face the same barriers around language adjustment (if applicable), educational stressors, sociocultural stressors, discrimination, and practical stressors (R. A. Smith & Khawaja, 2011). Additionally, the role of social support as a way to buffer against acculturative stress is well supported for international students (J.-S. Lee et al., 2004; R. A. Smith & Khawaja, 2011; Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001), and thus this may likely be important for QIS to buffer against these stressors as well. However, due to the already described social isolation of queer international students by Kato (1998), there is reason to believe that these students may have even less social support than other international students. Smith and Khawaja (2011) state there is a negative correlation that exists between social support and psychological stress, and thus QIS may have increased exposure to this stress, including anxiety and depression.

Intersectionality

While Kimberlé Creshaw is first credited with using the term "intersectionality," in doing so, she actually was naming a varied body of practices that had been discussed and used for decades (Collins, 2009). Intersectionality is a theoretical framework that reveals how multiple systems of oppression overlap and affect the lives of people, particularly those that are situated within multiple minoritized social identities. Traditionally, scholars have treated inequities in society as separate and independent concepts that may happen to sometimes overlap;

intersectionality specifically challenges this notion and its tendency to erase the experiences of entire groups of people, such as women of color (Dill & Zambrana, 2009). In fact, Dill and Zambrana (2009) explain that women of color were the origin of intersectionality literature, critiquing the exclusion of their "experiences, needs, and perspectives from both White, Eurocentric, middle-class conceptualizations of feminism and male dominated models of ethnic studies" (p. 3). This intersectionality framework is still considered as an emerging approach and has gained more prominence following the civil rights era in interdisciplinary fields such as ethnic studies, women's studies, critical legal studies, multicultural studies, LGBTQ+ studies, and other fields (Dill & Zambrana, 2009). This literature review will overview the mission of intersectionality as a framework, the core components of an intersectional analysis, the central tenets of intersectionality identified, and its application to higher education and this thesis research.

Intersectionality, rather than seeking to view existing social issues in just a new way, actually aims to completely reframe these issues as new ones and to "reformulate the world of ideas so that it incorporates the many contradictory and overlapping ways that human life is experienced" (Dill & Zambrana, 2009, p. 2). Ultimately, intersectionality promotes a social justice mission to use the reformulated ideas to create an equitable society where all voices are heard and thus public policies that are responsive to those voices that are often forgotten or excluded from the conversations of society (Dill & Zambrana, 2009). Shields (2008) also acknowledges that intersectionality comes from a research perspective that incorporates an agenda of positive social change and belief that research can benefit society as a whole, thus furthering the notion that intersectionality as a theoretical framework is inherently interested in promoting an equitably just society.

Intersectional analysis functions on two levels: an individual one and a systemic/structural one (Weber, 2009). These two levels are important because they allow intersectionality to connect individuals to systems and vice versa. At the individual level, intersectionality reveals how the connectedness of systems allows for a broad range of expression and performance of identities, as they are interconnected (Dill & Zambrana, 2009). At the systemic/structural level, intersectionality reveals how systems of power are intimately involved in creating and maintain inequities and injustices that exist in society, which impact individuals (Dill & Zambrana, 2009). Through this intersectional analysis, subjugated peoples' knowledge is highlighted and creates new ways of studying power and inequity (Collins, 2008; Dill & Zambrana, 2009).

Furthermore, this framework of intersectionality that links systems of power and individuals is expanded upon by several "theoretical interventions" or essentially central tenets that integrate "analysis, theorizing, advocacy, and pedagogy" (Dill & Zambrana, 2009; Jones, Abes, & Baxter Magolda, 2013, p. 143). These interventions proposed by Dill and Zambrana (2009) are:

> (1) Placing the lived experiences and struggles of people of color and other marginalized groups as a starting point for the development of theory; (2) Exploring the complexities not only of individual identities but also group identity, recognizing that variations within groups are often ignored and essentialized; (3) Unveiling the ways interconnected domains of power organize and structure inequality and oppression; and (4) Promoting social justice and social change by linking research and practice to create a holistic approach to the eradication of disparities and to changing social and higher education institutions. (p. 3)

The theoretical interventions and thus intersectional analysis are able to unveil power and how power is connected in structures of inequality (Dill & Zambrana, 2009).

The third theoretical intervention above can also be further expanded upon in a way that is useful in understanding the different ways that power can manifest in everyday life (Jones, Abes, & Baxter Magolda, 2013). There are four domains of power that Dill and Zambrana (2009) present: structural domain, disciplinary domain, hegemonic domain, and interpersonal domain. The structural domain refers to the way people have been systemically excluded from institutions, such as marriage, healthcare, and education. The disciplinary domain refers to bureaucratic rules can be used to benefits some groups over others, such as the two-tier system of welfare setup by the New Deal that disproportionally helped white men (Dill & Zambrana, 2009). The hegemonic domain is largely based on the work of Collins (2008) who describes how ideology is the base of this domain with symbols and representations of people holding immense power in the culture, such as the depictions of women of color on welfare. Finally, the interpersonal domain refers to the everyday interactions of people and how they treat other that can be rooted in systemic power, such as micro-aggressions.

Application in Higher Education. As stated previously, intersectionality is informed by and applied to many interdisciplinary fields, such as ethnic studies, critical legal studies, etc. In this way, intersectionality also is informed by and applied to education as a field too. Dill and Zambrana (2009) specifically state that it is a central mission of intersectionality to use reformulated knowledge and ideas to rework curricula and change institutions of higher education. Thus, intersectionality has important applications to explore within higher education that can be applied to the topic of this thesis research. However, despite the recognition of higher education as a central setting that intersectionality targets, using intersectionality in higher

education and student development scholarship is still a relatively new and growing phenomenon

(Jones, Abes, & Baxter Magolda, 2013). Therefore, the literature is somewhat limited within

student development.

       One study that addresses this growing area comes from Abes (2012), whose research was

pioneering for two reasons: "first, she provided a compelling example of how different analytic

frameworks create different narratives and produce different interpretations and results. Second,

she was one of the first to systematically apply an intersectional framework in data analysis"

(Jones, Abes, & Baxter Magolda, 2013, pp. 149–150). Abes (2012) provides a further

understanding of college student identity that was not possible from solely a constructivist

perspective and it was only through the addition of an intersectional framework that allowed for

an explicit focus on power and how power structures interrelated to meaning making and

identity. For example, the study reinforces how lesbian identity is intertwined with social class

identity as society dictates that lesbians are (stereo)typically from a particular class background

and how being from a certain class background can either inhibit or enable existing as queer

(Abes, 2012).

       In a similar manner, using an intersectional framework can be illuminating for the

experiences of queer international students within higher education. The student population is

defined by an intersection of identity, which clearly ties a connection to intersectional

frameworks, but even further analysis reveals an even more complex intersection of several

identities. "International student identity" is often homogenized in higher education to the

detriment of students (Kim, 2012; Malcolm & Mendoza, 2014). While there are some countries

that certainly have larger proportions of students studying in the United States, international

students actually come from hundreds of different countries with thousands of students from

every continent and major regional groupings in the world (Farrugia & Bhandari, 2014). Because intersectionality has a core tenet that aims to explore the complexities of individual and group identities and how these are often ignored (Dill & Zambrana, 2009), an intersectional framework can provide a means for higher education professionals to critically examine how international students are conceptualized and addressed in higher education. Much in the same way as intersectionality reveals the essentializing of identity, Kim (2012) and Malcom and Mendoza (2014) acknowledge the limitations of homogenizing international students. Additionally, much of this may only be considered through the diversity of culture and nationalities represented in international students, when there are also potential complex interactions between these identities and other social identities, such as class, race, religion, and, indeed, sexual orientation and gender identity.

In addition to the complexity of identity, intersectionality delves deeper to also examine systemic level oppression, as described by Weber (2009) and in the third intervention of Dill and Zambrana (2009). Relating within higher education, Jones, Abes, and Baxter Magolda, (2013) also acknowledge "structures of power and oppression are entangled with lived experience, so although intersectionality enables us to say something about individual narratives, the analysis must not stop with the individual" (p. 142). Several studies and works further this notion that the use of intersectionality in higher education involves analyzing more than just individual identity (Abes, 2012; Jones, Kim, & Skendall, 2012; Jones & Wijeyesinghe, 2011). For instance, one of these studies connects how external influences, context, and structures of power play into the concept of authenticity of identity (Jones et al., 2012). Authenticity is thus shown to not be a static state but rather a phenomenon that is dynamic and changing based on context within larger structures of power (Jones et al., 2012). Abes (2012) similarly examined

how an individual student constructed identity within structures of power, particularly heterosexism, racism, and classism.

Applying the intersectionality concept of examining structures of power to queer international students can reveal the complex processes these students face around forming and performing their identities within the context of various systemic oppressions like racism, xenophobia, heterosexism, etc. (Abes, 2012; Jones et al., 2012). This is further evidenced by Patrick's (2014) study which demonstrates that some queer international students will struggle with identifying themselves within several different cultural contexts, often changing the language used to identify themselves and comfortability with that language. While we can view these contexts as having some similarities in how structures of power operate, there are of course numerous differences in terms of language, legality, attitudes, and other factors (Patrick, 2014). As discussed respectively with queer theory earlier, an intersectional framework thus necessitates a focus on not just individual QIS or QIS as a group, but how QIS are affected by the cultural context and corresponding power structures they exist in.

Queer International Student Literature

As part of the assessment work of the researcher at Oregon State University, there was found to be a significant portion of international students that identified as non-heterosexual in some way, and this did not account for any students that may have identified as trans or genderqueer (Wall, 2014b). In fact, the rate of international students that identify as non-heterosexual was larger than the rate of students in the population at-large (Wall, 2014b). However, despite the relatively high rates of international students that identified as LGBTQ+, there is little literature that exits about this student population. The following sub-sections will

thus reveal the lack of research and study on QIS and then overview the small amount of literature that does exist on queer international students.

Lack of research for QIS. The literature reflects a general lack of attention for queer international students in many respects. One way this is revealed is through the missing literature on this student population, and several pieces address the gap in the literature. As Nakamura and Pope (2013) stated, "LGBT immigrant issues have been . . . largely overlooked by the psychological literature" (p. 122). They later went on to include LGBTQ+ international students as part of this population (Nakamura & Pope, 2013). Similarly, an article examining gay, lesbian, and bisexual Chinese international students in the U.S. stated, "there is a dearth of academic literature pertaining to sexual identity development for international students . . . . It remains unclear how sexual identification is impacted by factors related to dual and competing cultural exposure for this unique and growing group of young-adult international students on American college campuses" (Quach et al., 2013, p. 256). The lack of research incorporating QIS is thus a recognized issue and further evidences the need for this thesis research.

Lack of resources, services, and programming can also reveal a more general trend of oversight towards QIS. For instance, a case study of a university revealed that despite its well-regarded reputation as an academic institution, which attracted many international students to seek and gain admittance to the institution, the university had a lack of support services for international students (Forbes-Mewett & Nyland, 2013). In fact, the study found that the academic and research reputation of an institution negatively impacted support for international students due to resources being allocated primarily to support the academic reputation through funding research; therefore, the very aspects that attracted international students in the first place, the academic and research reputations, was taking away resources to support these students at the

institution (Forbes-Mewett & Nyland, 2013). It is important to note the case was conducted at an

Australian university (limiting its application to a U.S. context) and clearly did not focus on QIS

in particular. However, this may have implications for how an even smaller subset of

international students can receive a lack of attention from their institutions, particularly with

many competing constituent demands that exist within a higher education setting.

Several pieces of literature also urge skill and competency development within

professionals at universities to interact with QIS. One study recognized the lack of comfort

international student advisors (ISAs) feel with dealing with issues around sexual identity, and

recommends ISAs learn more and act as a resource for the international students they serve

(Kato, 1998). From a different professional perspective, one article addressing counseling for

QIS similarly states the need for mental health professionals to not only know about the local

LGBT resources on campus and in the local community, but to also critically analyze these

resources and communities; this is essential to be able to share if there may be issues with

marginalization of different cultural identities, recognizing these communities are often built

around serving the local population (Oba & Pope, 2013, pp. 189–190). This need for skill-

building and knowledge seeking also suggests the overlooking of QIS because if professionals

have not been exposed to the population, they would then lack the knowledge and expertise to

best serve them.

Challenges faced by QIS. Kato (1998) may have produced the first piece of literature

that studies a QIS population or particularly "GLB international students." This work presents

two primary issues QIS face: "fear of returning to a less GLB-friendly home country and

difficulty staying in the United States long-term to be with a partner" (Kato, 1998, para. 5). Oba

and Pope (2013) reflect the issues with returning to a home country as their identity may be

threatened by the environment in these countries. However, Oba and Pope (2013) do not address the complex immigration situation students may find themselves when trying to stay in the United States, if they should decide to pursue this option. Kato (1998) thoroughly addresses these issues, including the possibility but difficulty of successfully seeking asylum in the United States based upon sexual or gender identity persecution.

Another common theme identified throughout much of the QIS-related articles, is the isolation that these students can face. As stated about LGBT immigrants in general, "Although immigrants often rely on their ethnic immigrant communities as a safe harbor . . . for LGBT immigrants, these communities can be inhospitable" (Nakamura & Pope, 2013, p. 123). While not one of the explicit main themes addressed by Kato (1998), her interviews extensively comment on how these students can feel isolated both from international student peers – particularly students from their home country – and local GLB communities, creating an "intense isolation" (para. 39). Stacey Struber, a coordinator of the LGBT Resource Center at Missouri University, describes this as a "double barrier" in that QIS struggle to create a sense of community when they are the "LGBT one" in international groups and the "international one" in LGBT groups (Valosik, 2015, p. 48). The double barrier here is also tied with a fear that a QIS being open about their identity may lead to the news spreading back to their country of origin (Katz, 2008; Valosik, 2015). These can lead to both state-sanctioned consequences from criminal penalties (including the death penalty in some countries) as well as consequences from family and friends, which a student may rely on for emotional and financial support (Olson, 2014; Valosik, 2015).

It is important to note here that it can be easy for an observer to place blame on students' hostile countries of origin that either directly propagate homophobia/transphobia or allow for

cultural environments that enforce these; however, diversity in sexual and gender identities is viewed as "his disease which he sinisterly spreads to Third World people" with "he" being white men (Moraga, 2000). While Moraga (2000) is more specifically addressing homosexuality within a Chicano and Chicana context, this statement reveals a broader truth for many areas of the world. For instance, of the countries that still have laws criminalizing homosexuality, 57 percent of these laws are a result of a British colonial origin alone, with others being traced to other colonial origins (Han & O'Mahoney, 2014).

Health concerns are also present in the literature for QIS. Oba and Pope (2013) acknowledge the difficulty for this student population to access health systems on campuses and the difficulties presented by some queer international students not having learned about sexual risks and what "safe-sex" may look like. Additionally, Oba and Pope (2013) recognize the various health concerns that QIS share with both their non-queer, international counterparts (such as language barriers and finding locations of health services, etc.) and their non-international student, queer counterparts (such as disclosure of sexual identity to healthcare workers). Similar to Oba and Pope (2013), Nakamura and Pope (2013) simply acknowledge that there are specific needs from this community for health issues and frame the usefulness for more knowledge that can assist mental health practitioners.

Finally, Quach, et al. (2013) provide a rather unique perspective on QIS. Their focus was specifically on LGB Chinese students in the United States and their sexual identity development (Quach et al., 2013). Quach, et al. (2013) specifically recognized the inadequacy of current developmental literature for application to this student population and that Chinese students' sexual identity development must recognize concepts of collectivism that are often not present in Western literature. This speaks to the larger theme of the recognition that QIS, while grouped

together here for the purpose of this review, is actually a rather disparate group of students with very different identities and very different ways of conceptualizing those identities, based partially on their diverse cultural backgrounds from all over the world. Any developmental literature therefore must consider these cultural and other intersecting identity pieces, as recognized by Quach, et al. (2013).

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter explains the research methodology used for the thesis research and why it has been selected. Several aspects of the methodology will be explained, including the research question, the overall methodology – why qualitative methods were selected, the research tradition used, and the procedures for site and participant selection.

Research Question

The guiding research question is: What types of programs, policies, practices, and resources exist that address queer international students at institutions of higher education in the United States?

Overall Methodology

This study will use a qualitative methodology to explore the research questions posed. Because of the major gap in the literature exploring queer international students and their experiences, their support, their intersecting identities, etc., a quantitative research study would be difficult to design and measure when there is so little information and thus so few measuring devices. Quantitative research relies on previous literature and information for the structure of its design (Patten, 2013), which is not present for the topic of study. Additionally, qualitative research will allow for a more fluid research process where change of the exact focus of the study could happen based on the responses of professionals at the institutions being studied (Patten, 2013). The exploratory nature of the research proposed will necessitate this flexibility as it is not certain what may be discovered through the responses. Additionally, the research study approaches the problem from a constructivist and transformative viewpoint. The research is constructivist as it approaches the field with the assumption that knowledge, ideas, organizations, etc. are socially constructed and thus interested in the constructed perceptions of professionals

within higher education. This study is also transformative in that the researcher is openly

advocating with queer international students and aims to use the research to further justice at

higher education institutions. The next section will focus on the specific tradition of qualitative

methodology that will be used for the study.

Tradition

The thesis research uses a narrative research design to guide the approach of the study.

Narrative research designs broadly collect and tell the stories of individuals and usually follows a

chronology of events (Creswell, 2014). While narrative research has origins in several different

social science disciplines, it was first comprehensively overviewed by educators D. Jean

Clandinin and Michael Connelly (Creswell, 2014). The exploration and examination of narrative

research has since been expanded upon by several authors, including further works from

Clandinin and Connelly (Creswell, 2014). One unique aspect to narrative research design is the

idea of "restorying" or reordering the narratives of others from the data collection into a

chronological presentation (Creswell, Hanson, Plano, & Morales, 2007).

There are four central questions Creswell (2014) poses to determine the type of narrative

research design a study is using. These questions are not so much to diagnose a specified type of

narrative design, but rather to process what are the aspects a particular research study can and

should use based on its goals. The narrative research questions are answered for this research

below.

- Who writes or records the story? – Participants are interviewed and their responses
  recorded so as to remain as true to the words they use as possible. The analysis and
  coding incorporates the researcher's own interpretations of these.

- How much of life is recorded and presented? – Only a limited part of the life of the participants is recorded: their experiences with queer international students and the programs, policies, and practices that support their students. This is consistent with a "personal experience story" within narrative design (Creswell, 2014, p. 506).

- Who provides the story? – Professionals in higher education that have worked with QIS and/or the programs, policies, and practices relating to these students are interviewed. This aspect is similar to "teachers' stories" about the nature of their professional experiences (Creswell, 2014, p. 506).

- Is a theoretical lens being used? – While no specific, singular theoretical lens is used to examine the stories of the higher education professionals, several theoretical lenses are used within the research to give a greater understanding and advocate for change, including institutional perspectives, queer theory, intersectionality, and LGBTQ+ and international development models.

The research study here thus collects the stories of professionals at several different institutions about their experiences with queer international students and the ways their institutions have addressed social marginalization and isolation of these students.

Procedures

The research study collected data from the participants using semi-structured interviews that were conducted over the phone. Semi-structured interviews allow for an interview protocol that has prepared questions based on the central research questions as well as prompts for recording necessary demographic and logistical information; however, it also allows for the flexibility often central to qualitative methodology (Patten, 2013) with participants able to respond to follow-up questions from the researcher and guide the conversation based on what

they construct as being most relevant and important. This is in line with what Patten (2013) recommends for qualitative interviews. Furthermore, as Patten (2013) further recommends, the interview protocol was developed with standard questions at the beginning of the interview to further build rapport and start the conversation.

For site and participant selection, purposive sampling was used to find the professionals most likely to yield relevant information (Patten, 2013) about QIS and the institutional programs, policies, and practices relating to these students. Colleges and universities were selected as potential sites based upon those that have received "4 stars", "4.5 stars" , or "5 stars" on the Campus Pride Index, which assigns star values based on self-reported data about the existence of various "standard" programs, policies, and practices to support "LGBT-friendly" campuses (Campus Pride, 2015). After compiling a list of these institutions, the institutions were examined for the total enrollment of international students that attend their institution. These enrollments were identified from the *Open Doors Report*, which collects such information (Institute of International Education, 2013). Institutions that are ranked, by total enrollment of international students, in the top 40 doctorate-granting institutions, top 40 master's colleges and universities, top 40 baccalaureate colleges, or top 40 associate's colleges were selected as sampling sites, if they are also ranked as somewhere between 4-star and 5-star on the Campus Pride Index.

This site selection was used because it allowed for a cross-section of institutions recognized for having the best LGBTQ+ resources and services and the largest number of international students. The result of this cross-section may have revealed the institutions most likely to have addressed queer international students. This is because they are more likely to have a presence of these students – with high rates of international students and the attraction of developed LGBTQ+ resources and services – as well as the institutional means to have

developed such programs, policies, practices, and resources. It is important for the sampling to select sites more likely to have addressed QIS because the thesis research centers the development of best practices for QIS.

There are a number of limitations that must be acknowledged about the research study site selection. Since the Campus Pride scoring methods rely on self-reported data from colleges and universities, these institutions may be at very different levels for addressing various LGBTQ+ considerations. Additionally, the idea that the institutions with both a high star rating from Campus Pride and a relatively high number of international students will then have a higher rate of QIS and/or programs, policies, and practices to support them is not verified. There may be several mediating factors that influence the likelihood of QIS programs, policies, and practices that are not accounted for. Finally, using the cross-section of institutions limits the applicability of the results of this study to different institutions and higher education as a whole, as the focus is on a particular type of institution with the proposed characteristics.

With the institutions identified, email invitations were sent explaining the topic of the study, what was needed from participants, and other relevant information to recruit participants. Participants were those that either worked directly with LGBTQ+ services or international student support at the institution and/or would have knowledge about any institutional efforts to address QIS. Once identified, participants were contacted by email to participate in a phone interview to conduct the semi-structured interview described above.

While the procedures above were the primary method used to recruit participants, other participants that were identified through other means were still asked to participate if they had an interesting, exemplary, or indicative case at their institution that they could speak to. This was done because the overall goal of this thesis research was to identify programs, policies, practices,

and resources, and thus, it was important for the research to consider any participants that could share their experiences that may have highlighted these, even if their institution did not fit within the original parameters set for site selection. Having these other participants was also consistent with exploratory research changing to fit the needs of the study to best examine the research problem. Overall, one institution was added based on a recommendation during an interview with one of the institutions initially identified.

To ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the study, member checking and external auditing was used. For member checking, following the collection of data from participants, participants were asked to review their own responses collected and the analysis that resulted to ensure transcripts were accurate and representative. This was made clear from the beginning of the study. External auditing was also utilized by having several faculty members at the researcher's institution examine the study before and after its execution. Both member checking and external auditing are recognized by Creswell (2014) as ways to further enhance validity for qualitative research.

This study prioritized the protection of its human participants and thus was reviewed by the Institutional Review Board to ensure appropriate measures were taken. Because participants were asked about their opinions, particularly on a subject that may or may not reflect a deficiency of their institution, it was vital their responses were kept private and confidential (Patten, 2013). Thus real names of the participants are not used and the institutions they work at are only described in vague enough terms to where they could describe multiple institutions with demographic and location information. These measures were also important because there are risks of revealing specific students the professionals have worked with in the past (particularly if

the institution is known). Therefore, any names or overly revealing personal information that could be used to specifically identify a student was redacted from the study.

Data Analysis

Once all interview recordings were collected, all were transcribed for qualitative data analysis and member-checking by participants. The transcripts were coded based upon recurring subjects that appeared within the interviews. These codes act as short-hand in order to go back and retrieve data on specific topics later on and allow for the beginning of the organization of qualitative data (Merriam, 2009). Rather than having conceived notions about what is to be found in the data, the researcher engaged in open coding, going through the data line by line and remaining open rather than fitting it into already established notions (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2013). As the open coding process was happening, codes were also being aligned and categorized within sub-themes and larger themes or categories as Merriam (2009) refers to them. This process of combining, reassigning, and categorizing codes is known as axial coding and was the procedure used in the data analysis for this research (Merriam, 2009). Data analysis followed a pattern from inductive to deductive, as stressed by Merriam (2009). As data was initially being coded and described, it was largely an inductive process, trying to build larger themes and categories out of smaller pieces of the data. However, as these started to take shape and reached "saturation" the process increasingly became more deductive as the existing codes and themes were tested to see if they fit with new data or if they needed to be changed (Merriam, 2009).

Chapter 4: Results

This section of the research will report the findings of the study from the interview responses. The research question will be revisited, a brief overview of the participants and their institution is given, and a selection of themes will be introduced based upon the interviews of the participants. Upon qualitative analysis of the data, several major themes were produced. These themes are: (a) there are emerging programs, practices, and resources specifically designed to address queer international students, (b) collaboration and visibility have been key components to the current offering of programs, policies, practices, and resources for queer international students, and (c) queer international students face a barrage of barriers and challenges within their experiences in higher education in the United States.

Research Question

The guiding research question is: What types of programs, policies, practices, and resources exist that address queer international students at institutions of higher education in the United States? As stated previously, this is an exploratory study meant to provide a general overview of what is currently in existence to support queer international students in higher education. In addition this research aims to gain an understanding of the perceptions and understandings of staff that are in positions to support queer international students.

Overview of Participants and Sites

Four institutions of higher education participated in this study with a total of six participants. Two of the institutions had two participants that were interested in participating in the study, and thus, two of the interviews had two participants; this interview protocol change was suggested and requested by the participants within them, and it was decided to allow this format as having the additional participant granted further perspective and conversation within

the interview as both participants could elaborate on what the other had said or give a different perspective on the same subject material. In short, it seemed to enhance the gathering of information for the study and allowed for a more complex understanding of what has happened at an institution. This is consistent with how group interview data collection is viewed as a way to encourage participation, enhance information gathering through cooperation, and gain perspective developed within a social context (Creswell, 2014; Patten, 2013). However, because not every interview was done within a group setting, it is important to note that that could provide some inconsistency amongst the data.

Each individual participant was asked to provide a pseudonym and each institution they were at has been assigned a random, alphabetical designation from letters A through D. Each participant is listed in Table 1 with their corresponding institution and a generic title of their role at the institution.

Table 1

Participant Breakdown

Institution	Participant Pseudonym	Generic Position Title
Institution A	Anna	Director of LGBT Resource Center
	Fiona	Director of LGBT Resource Center
Institution B	Don	Director of LGBT Resource Center
Institution C	Julia	International Student Advisor
Institution D	bert	Director of LGBT Resource Center
	Paige	International Student Advisor/Programmer

The four institutions are classified by their alphabetical designation, the type of institution it is, the size of the institution based upon enrollment of students, and the location of the institution within the United States. Institutional type gives information about the focus of the institution, degree types granted, and whether the institution is public or private. All institutions

in this study are doctoral-granting universities that are considered research-focused. Institutional

size classification is decided somewhat arbitrarily, but for the purposes of this study, it

differentiates large institutions (between 20,000 and 30,000 students) and very large institutions

(over 30,000 students). Finally, the location of the institution is classified into general regions of

the United States.

Table 2

Institution Breakdown

Institution	Institution Type	Institution Size	Location
A	Private Research University	Large	Northeast
B	Public Research University	Very large	Midwest
C	Public Research University	Very large	Mid-Atlantic
D	Public Research University	Very large	Midwest

Major Themes

There were three major themes that appeared within the data analysis of the interview

responses that are highlighted here: (a) there are emerging programs, practices, and resources

specifically designed to address queer international students, (b) collaboration and visibility have

been key components to the current offering of programs, policies, practices, and resources for

queer international students, and (c) queer international students face a barrage of barriers and

challenges within their experiences in higher education in the United States. These themes were

created by the researcher to be comprehensive of the responses from the interview participants

and address the primary research question of the study.

Theme 1: Emerging Program, Practices, and Resources. One of the primary themes in the responses is that there are new programs, practices, and resources at institutions of higher education that are addressing queer international students. Many of the participants talked about various ways that they have tried to address considerations of queer international students. The way these approaches are structured and designed looks different, but the crux of this theme is that they are emerging.

Before even launching into discussion about the different kinds of programs, practices, and resources that have been emerging, it is important to address a major caveat to this theme, the often invisible nature of this student population. As Anna from Institution A puts it, "there is some awareness, but… it's not like the issue is on the forefront of everybody's mind right now." Fiona and Anna further explain this by stating that there is not a deliberate attempt by higher education to ignore queer international students, but instead different issues are at play within the LGBTQ+ community and staff are not always aware of the concerns of the QIS population. While other participants did not disclose as much detail, there is further evidence of this point. For example, Julia near the closing of the interview emphasized the importance of research like this by stating "Thank you for doing this work. Like I said, there's very little research out there… you're doing great work on something that really needs attention." In summary, while the theme of emerging programs, practices, and resources highlights the increasing attention, there is still an overall lack of focus on queer international students.

One of the programs mentioned by two participating institutions was the creation of a student group focused on queer international students. At Institution A, within the past two years, several undergraduate, international students started utilizing the LGBT center. Anna stated that they encouraged these students to form a student group on campus. Fiona further clarified that

they told the students "all of the student organizations that come out of [Institution A] are student run and student lead. So it was they who really came up with the idea themselves with us helping them walk through the process." The student group provides mentorship, social events, and discussion around queer international student issues. Anna also explained another resource of the LGBT center has on their website at Institution A. They have a web page dedicated to providing various resources, including information about U.S. terminology, frequently asked question by international students, and information about LGBT advocacy in different countries if a student is returning back to their country of origin. This resource is a product of the close collaboration between the LGBT center and the queer international student group. Institution B has also seen activity from queer international student groups since as far back as the 1990s. Don explains that a group operating in the late 90s was "very covert" and goes on to say:

> They had their own list… they didn't want us to have the list of who these students were, but they did encourage us to advertise their meetings and they would meet at what was, at that point in time, the international center and they had their own meetings. I would drop-in on them on occasion, but they kept pretty tight control over who was involved in that.

Beyond this student group, another group formed at Institution B from staff members, including an instructor from Ecuador. This group was open for everyone to join and focused on speakers and discussion of LGBTQ+ and ally experiences in different cultures.

Another form of programming addressed within the interviews is various trainings, panels, and workshops. These were mentioned in all four interviews. These take a wide variety of forms and the audience intended for them can range as well. Institution D provides a couple of examples to illustrate this point. Karaokeparty first mentions how they are working on several video testimonials from various international students on campus. One of these videos is from an

international student sharing their experience with being terrified to come out back home, but how the LGBT center helped him find community and allowed him to come out at Institution D. This video, in compilation with the others, will then be used as part of a mandatory, pre-arrival orientation for all international students going to Institution D. In contrast, Paige also mentions another type of training aimed at staff members; the LGBT center at Institution D holds a queer leadership and learning training, in which the entire staff of the international student services office participate in order to be more inclusive in their practice. While not for the entire office, Julia from Institution C also cites her experience in a training put on by the LGBT center as a way to make themselves more visible to students in need of support. Institution A's LGBT center has been sure to include international students in panels and trainings they have done with staff and students alike. Fiona recalls a particular training done for their international student services office:

> We did a quick ally training for [the international student services office] to make sure that, you know, they meet with all the international students who are coming through them. And there's different advisors, and so we talked with all the advisors briefly just to make sure that they have an idea of what was going on on-campus and what international LGBT students… need from them.

While not in existence yet, Paige from Institution D shared her desire and work on building a re-entry workshop for international students returning to their countries. While the idea as a whole addresses concerns for all international students who may be ending their time at the institution (such as with reverse culture shock when going home), Paige also notes that one of the sections that would be part of this would definitely be geared towards queer international students, such

as discussing if, when, and how a student is potentially coming out to their families and what to do if it does not go well.

Another kind of program that was discussed in the interviews amongst multiple participants was having events with relevant speakers centered on LGBTQ + international topics. Fiona stated for instance that Institution A recently had speakers that talked about being LGBTQ in the Middle East, Israel, and Uganda. Don from Institution B explained how they believe that large scale speaker events draw in international students, like an appearance of Laverne Cox on their campus, but they also note that "I wouldn't have a way of knowing what percentage of those students on any given audience are international students." Furthermore, as mentioned previously, Institution B has a group program that is meant to discuss sexuality and gender around the world, though this has been sometimes hit or miss according to Don. Julia from Institution C also mentions that they have tried to engage international students in general through having a first semester, orientation class they teach go to a panel event of international student LGBT activists for extra credit. While there were some complicating factors that came up from this decision, which will be addressed in another theme below, Julia noted that the students that attended had very good responses to the talk and that they appreciated the opportunity to learn more.

Don at Institution B spent some time talking about the relationships they have formed with queer international students and international students in general. From these relationships, Don describes how they are able to form an informal mentoring association when students from a certain culture seek resources at the LGBT center by establishing contact between the help-seeking student and the students that Don already has relationships with. Don also states that

there is often real interest in this type of connection, especially for students who may not attend a program or a group.

Theme 2: Collaboration and Visibility as Key Components. The next major theme within the results focuses on how collaborative efforts and visibility in a variety of capacities are important aspects of the offerings of these institutions to address queer international students. All participants mentioned both of these pieces one or more times within some capacity. These responses are reported here.

By far the most mentions of collaborations came within the context of collaborative efforts between the LGBT centers and international student services offices. Don at Institution B for instance speaks about how their international student services office has several gay men on their staff that are out. Don met with them to "solidify that relationship" and share information and resources between the LGBT center and their office. In that sense, Don explains how "not all students need to come to our office. They have support within their own office by virtue of a handful of allies or out gay men on the staff in that office." Bert and Paige of Institution D also provide an exemplary case in this regard as bert works in the LGBT center while Paige works in the international student services office. Bert describes their relationship as sporadic, but that they have been able to come together in a variety of fashions, including providing "student support when critical incidents happen." Paige furthers this by explaining they have international students come to them with different personal matters, and they can often refer the students to the LGBT center, whether it is to their programs or by calling over to collaborate on how to best help in a particular situation. Bert furthers this point by stating:

"We don't necessarily hear of many major challenges for international students who

might be more... who aren't connected with our office or the larger LGBT community,

Paige is definitely their go to person. I think they're most likely to seek, I think,

counseling and guidance from Paige than they would be to come to this office."

The LGBT center also lists Paige as a liaison to their center, which involves putting up flyers and

sending emails to international student listservs. This is not the only place a liaison type position

is referred to. At Institution C, Julia is also the official liaison for the international student

services office to the LGBT center. Julia says within this responsibility she has established good

communication between the offices and worked to be someone who is visible in the international

student services office for students to come to when they need to talk about issues relating to the

needs of the LGBT community. Furthermore, as noted in the previous theme, several institutions

have also done panels, trainings, and workshops between the LGBT center and international

student services offices. All mentions of these seem to be facilitated by the LGBT center on a

particular campus. Institution C has even had a collaboration between the two offices that

focused on hosting a conference on LGBTQ+ issues in international education.

Other forms of collaboration were also present in the responses. As already mentioned

above, Anna and Fiona collaborated with the queer international student group at their institution

on various resources at Institution A. Institution D also has collaborations between the LGBT

center and international student groups. Bert said that developing relationships with international

student leaders, such as in their international student association, has really helped with

developing connections between the LGBT center and international students. Paige also

expressed that she believes there is even more potential for collaboration with the LGBT center

and a variety of student groups, such as their Indian student association, their Saudi student

association, etc. "just [to] make sure all of those leaders know to be spreading the word to all of

their members about what they have to offer, in case someone comes to them seeking advice or help."

Further collaborations have also been discussed that are individual to each institution. Institution D for instance had several collaborations not covered in the above categories. Bert is a part of a collaborative group that does work on relationship violence, sexual health, and sexual assault. Through this effort, the group had worked on an anonymous online resource platform for Chinese international students because group member noticed that there was a significant demand for sexual health resources in the local area from this population of students compared to others. Paige also worked with outside entities to the institution, such as with immigration services and resources. This collaboration can be particularly challenging because there are not a lot of immediate immigration resources for asylum or refugee status in the immediate area of Institution D, but the institution also has a law clinic that can potentially help in some areas. Additionally, both bert and Paige have worked with on-campus resources to help students secure "elementary resources" like housing and food. In addition, as already mentioned, Institution C has a liaison program between the LGBT center and various departments on campus, so that students and staff can easily find a LGBT-friendly presence within a certain department. The programs focused on international LGBT experiences at Institution A are also a collaborative effort amongst multiple departments.

Several participants also mentioned how it can be difficult to make these collaborations happen. Institution A has programs that are quite decentralized according to Fiona. Anna states "physically housed we have the LGBT center which is a standalone building. And then [the international student services office] and those types of programs are in a building that's almost off-campus, a few blocks away. So physically those are our locations." Fiona believes that

because of this decentralization it can be "overwhelming" to coordinate efforts sometimes.

However, because of this, Fiona said that some students do not realize how closely the staff can

collaborate, and so they try to be as transparent as possible. The way these different

organizations are setup was also cited in other interviews as well. Don at Institution B declared

"I'm part of the office for the vice president of diversity. International students are under a

different umbrella, so we don't necessarily relate directly." Still Don said, despite this separation,

they still have a positive relationship, and they include the international student services office in

their programming. Don also cited the loss of the international student center on campus as

unfortunate and now collaboration requires additional effort. Institution C also has had similar

difficulties. Julia clarified that:

> About physical location, I can say that [the LGBT center has] a great space on campus. It
>
> is a bit more welcoming space. So they are physically located in a permanent location for
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> that. And I mention that because our spot has been shuffled around the university for
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> about eight years… moving into a permanent home in about two years, just maybe about
>
> six years after they said they were going to.

Julia went on to say that, organizationally, institutions of higher education in general can be a

"hot mess."

Visibility was another prominent aspect of programming and practice and was often

intertwined in with collaborative efforts as described previously. Around Julia's office there are

various trinkets to at least represent the LGBT movement in the United States, and they are

working on having an even broader representation from cultures around the world. Additionally,

Julia displays several signs about the ally training they have on their campus. To further explain

this practice, Julia stated:

I take a little bit of a passive approach here. I realize how cumbersome it could be for an

international student to constantly be coming out to people… so you know I never

publically ask a student about that and I've never had anybody actually step up recognize

the signs and engage in conversation with me about it. So I think that hasn't worked yet,

but I don't expect it to. I really want that to be just something that they step up and see,

and they can decide on their own terms whether or not they're, you know, wanting to

engage in conversation about that.

Institution A and B both also engage in visibility through inviting international students into the

LGBT center on campus. Anna talked about partnering with their international offices to invite

exchange students for a tour of the LGBT center. Don similarly mentioned that while in previous

years people had been hesitant to add the LGBT center to the list of tours of the cultural centers

at Institution B, this has been changing and this past year they had an open house for

international students that attracted probably around 40 students to find out what the center did

and have refreshments. Don further mentioned the reputation of Institution B as it relates to

visibility. The university is often associated with having a history of exploring sexuality and

gender identity. Don believes this also allows for another form of more passive education and

specifically cited the student newspaper running many articles on LGBT issues. At Institution D,

the participants conveyed the prominence of word-of-mouth being an important draw for

students. Paige believes their visibility has been crucial in having student come seeking support

from the international student services office. Paige also stated that this is especially important

for Chinese students, the institution's largest population of international students.

Another type of visibility revealed by the participants is in the form of collaboration with

other departments, mainly participating in resource tabling fairs, where several departments host

information about their programs and services for students. Don at Institution B shared their

experience at a recent orientation fair for international students:

> Although, our office is always invited to international orientation and that takes place as
>
> new students come in. And this last year I noted more students stopping by our table than
>
> I think has been the case in the past. This year we played a trivia game with those
>
> students. And I was struck with how many of them knew the Supreme Court decision that
>
> had happened in June. I probably talked to forty or fifty students during the course of the
>
> afternoon. And even some of them knew about Caitlyn Jenner, so the internet is certainly
>
> impacting students from other cultures. I would ask, "How do you know about these
>
> issues?" And social media had informed them, and they enjoyed playing a game and
>
> winning a prize by answering some of my trivia questions. They were more at ease than
>
> in years past and more engaged. These are all anecdotal. I don't have research to pass on,
>
> but I noted more people stopping at our table with our rainbow flag. In many years past,
>
> students wouldn't just stop by. They wouldn't know what LGBT meant, or they knew
>
> what it meant but they didn't want to stop. There seemed to be more of a willingness to
>
> engage and have fun and answer questions…for what it's worth.

Institution D also reported having the LGBT center represented at resource fairs for international

students. However, students responded differently when staff were or were not present at the

table. Bert reported having more success with international students from areas of the world that

are more restrictive, oppressive, or less likely to talk about sexuality, when staff stand away from

the table.

Electronic means of visibility was also brought up by two participants. As stated in the

previous theme, video projects have been one of these approaches. Institution B had an

international graduate student as a volunteer recently who worked on a video about queer international students. She had interviewed several students for the video, which was originally for a class project but eventually led to her facilitating several programs. Furthermore, as already mentioned, Institution D has a video testimonial from a queer international student that will be incorporated into a mandatory, pre-arrival training for incoming international students. Paige suggested creating more videos and incorporating them into a weekly newsletter to help engage students. Paige also sends out emails promoting LGBT center programs to listservs and posts up flyers in international spaces.

Finally, one interesting case surrounding visibility happened at Institution D and was even referred to by Julia from Institution C as a "unique practice." Bert and Paige found out about a campaign in China that posts photo images of different couples with sayings like "love is love" or "love comes in all forms" They received permission to use the posters and modify them with information about the LGBT resource center and the international student services office. They printed around 5000 copies and have them up around campus.

Theme 3: Barriers for Queer International Students. The third theme reported here is important because it was a major topic within all of the interviews, and it helps to inform the creation of programs, policies, practices, and resources for queer international students, particularly in revealing gaps and limitations in current institutional support. Thus, the third theme is how queer international students face various barriers to their full potential within higher education, from the perspective and understanding of staff members interviewed for this research.

One of the major points within this theme is that queer international students coming from places in the world that are less supportive of diverse gender and sexuality identities can

face unique challenges because of that. Anna from Institution A stated that they tend to work more with students from cultures that are not as supportive, though both Anna and Fiona are quick to mention that there are students that come from places that are generally more supportive than the United States too. Fiona framed the challenges faced by saying that:

> Well a lot of it depends on where they're from. Is it illegal to be out in their home country? Or if it is not illegal, is it dangerous? We have international students that when they go home they have to put all their queer memorabilia away and act as if they were straight, you know, when they're in their home country because of fear of retaliation from their family or the government.

Anna added complexity to this statement by making the point that some students may be from places that are generally more "liberal," but the student's family may be particularly conservative and/or religious, which makes it difficult for students. Anna thus stated "you really have to take each student as a unique person." Don from Institution B explained another angle of this subject. Because of the serious consequences that queer international students can face in their places of origin (whether from family, the government, etc.), they are often afraid to be out in the United States for fear that this information will spread back to their countries of origin. Don has even "heard some international students speak of fellow students from their culture as 'spies'. That sort of speaks to the fear that exists in some cultures that people have about being open when they go home or if they go home." This brought up how queer international students can be isolated from fellow international students. Bert and Paige from Institution D also shared similar stories within their responses. Bert first mentioned how violence can really be a pervading aspect of the experience for students who may be out and comfortable in the United States, but greatly fear the violence they face from their family or others in their countries of origin. Paige shared how

families have cut off funding to their students when they discover they are queer, and thus they have worked to help students pay for expenses they can no longer afford. Paige went on to say, "if their parents do pull their funding then it can be really hard to get that diploma. Some of them have told me that for financial reasons, they're just going to have to keep their mouth shut until they get their education paid for." This is particularly difficult for international students as they are often faced with very high tuition and fee costs and have less financial resources available to them. Bert also brought up student situations where students from Nigeria and Pakistan thought certainly that they would be killed. Without wanting to be overly stereotypical, bert stated religion often plays a central part in these stories, so it is not necessarily the same situation for every queer student from a particular country.

In addition to these concerns about the countries of origin for queer international students, there were also other challenges faced by students that are linked to the institution. Anna from Institution A mentioned that international students have shared with them that they are often "pegged first as international" and no one really thinks about their experience beyond this, ignoring any other intersecting identities they may have and thus they feel "they can't really be who they are." Anna made the point that even though she kept saying "queer international," the students she works with usually say "international queer" or some variation of placing "international" first because there is a shared experience of being international, even when from very different places. These shared experiences also came from culture shock, which Fiona stated students will often be more concerned with when they are first arriving to the United States, and it may be awhile before they address the queer aspects of their identity. The labeling of international students with homogenized "international student" identity also leads to a lack of understanding of these students by their American peers who do not face the same level of

potential repercussions related to being openly queer, according to Anna. Similarly, Paige at Institution D stated that domestic students do not need to worry about the same things as international students, such as the dangers of being out in their countries of origin and whether to abide by an arranged marriage or not. Bert also articulated how student organizations at Institution D may not be fully inclusive for international students because the campus and student organizations in general are predominately white. Even organizations with more diversity, such as Institution D's queer students of color group, are overwhelming domestic students. Fiona stated a similar sentiment about the cultural centers at Institution A which are generally viewed as serving domestic students rather than international students from their respective populations.

Furthering the point on the othering of international students, Don stated that international students were hesitant in the post-9/11 political climate on being involved on campus in anything that may be viewed as controversial, including LGBT spaces. Don believes this is because international students overcome hurdles to be and stay in the United States, they did not want to risk being out on campus for fear of risking their status in the U.S. As such, they needed to stay "beneath the radar screen." Paige also mentioned how difficult it can be for international students to stay in the United States, particularly post-graduation. There is a lot of paperwork to go through and they must secure a sponsorship if they wish to stay. Students that fear returning home may also apply for asylum, but this can also be difficult and is no guarantee for the students if they do not qualify or are rejected.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Within this concluding chapter, the results of the research presented in Chapter 4 are further discussed and analyzed. To do this, the research question and themes are revisited for reference, the themes are discussed in how they answer the core research question, limitations of the research study are covered, and recommendations are provided for further research and improvements within U.S. higher education.

Research Question and Themes

The guiding research question for the research is: What types of programs, policies, practices, and resources address queer international students at institutions of higher education in the United States? The main findings are included in the following three themes: (a) there are emerging programs, practices, and resources specifically designed to address queer international students, (b) collaboration and visibility have been key components to the current offering of programs, policies, practices, and resources for queer international students, and (c) queer international students face a barrage of barriers and challenges within their experiences in higher education in the United States.

Visual Conceptualization of the Themes

The three major themes of this research are represented here using a visualization that is based on the interrelationship between the themes, thus forming a bigger picture of institutional support for queer international students (see *Figure 2*). The first theme (labeled "1" on the figure) represents the existing programs, practices, and resources for queer international students, such as the QIS student groups that have formed at some of the participant institutions. The second theme is represented by the arrows surrounding the first theme (labeled "2" on the figure), which point toward collaborators and an outcome of visibility for queer international

students. Therefore, these arrows reflect the second theme because they highlight and connect prominent aspects of the programs, practices, and resources, which are collaboration and visibility. The third theme (labeled "3" on the figure) is represented by the dotted-line circle surrounding both of the other themes. The circle, in representing the challenges of QIS in higher education, highlights where there are gaps within existing programming, practices, and resources, such as in addressing how a student returns to a queer and trans hostile country of origin. Additionally, the circle intentionally overlaps with the collaborator and visibility boxes to demonstrate that QIS experiences and challenges demonstrate limitations in existing approaches, such as the potential dangers inherent with QIS being more visible.
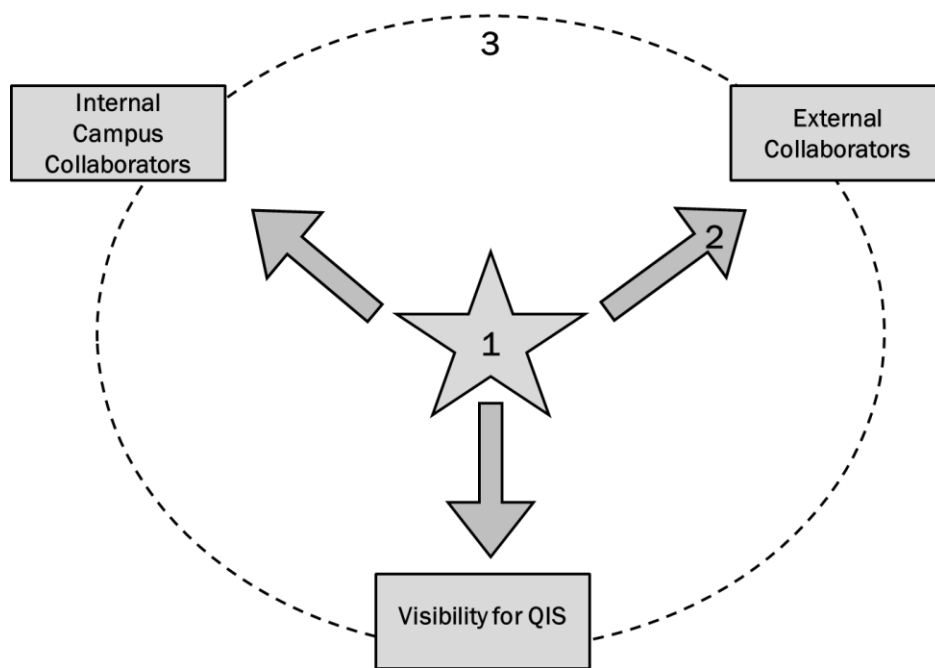

Figure 2. Visual Conceptualization of the Research Themes. This figure visually represents the three major research themes, labeled "1," "2," and "3" respectively.

The visual representation in *Figure 2* assists in illustrating how programs, practices, and resources do exist at the participating institutions and how these three themes rely on

collaborations between various internal campus partners and external partners, as well as highlighting how visibility has been a key component of these programs. At the same time, the challenges and barriers faced by queer international students (as understood by staff in higher education) provide context on how and why these support mechanisms exist, where gaps are in support for queer international students, and the limitations in current efforts to supper QIS.

Observations and Implications

The research themes of this study are connected around the main research question of determining what kinds of programs, policies, practices, and resources exist within higher education to address queer international students. In order to draw implications from the results, the themes are analyzed here in how they answer the research question and connect with the relevant literature.

There are several observations from the researcher about the participants' responses that are worth exploring. First, with the emergence of collaborative efforts for queer international students, one dichotomy that exists within participant responses is that some of these are more formalized while others are more informal. Formalized efforts are those that are more clearly documented and supported by an institution or multiple departments at an institution (potentially around a program), while the informal collaborations tend to be more relationship based, intermittent, and performed on a case-by-case basis. For example, at Institution C, the liaison program the LGBT center has is an example of a more formalized collaboration as it is prominently promoted and has certain expectations of what the liaison and campus partner do. However, at Institution B for instance, the LGBT center has some unofficial relationships with gay staff members in the international student services office. These differing forms of collaboration seem to serve different functions and both may be necessary to consider in moving

forward with programs, policies, programs, and resources for international students. To illustrate, when a queer international student may seek support for a complicated situation that could involve many on-campus and off-campus resources (say if they were cut-off financially by their parents after coming out), various campus professionals may work together through a less well-established, informal, and flexible means to give the student the support they need. In addition, formal collaborations, such as creating a regular discussion group, may create a consistent venue for typical support needs. These various styles of collaboration are also supported in the scarce literature about queer international students (Katz, 2008; Valosik, 2015).

Another observation from the data is the difference between programming efforts, for example creating new programs versus making existing programming inclusive of queer international students. The creation of the queer international student group at Institution A is an example of a new program created specifically for QIS, while the incorporation of international students at Institution A into LGBTQ+ speakers' panels is an example of inclusion in existing programming. Similar to the formality of collaborations, these differing approaches may result from different needs within a given context. International students, particularly queer international students, have some specific, unique challenges, as was presented in Chapter 4 and within various sources of literature (Kato, 1998; Katz, 2008; Patrick, 2014; Valosik, 2015). Therefore, the creation of new programs that address some of these specific challenges makes sense. On the other side, the broadening inclusion of existing programs makes sense in situations where this inclusion can improve the program for the better for everyone (such as the incorporation of global perspectives on queer issues) or perhaps when insufficient resources would otherwise not allow for any new program to be made. It is important to note that only

striving for inclusion may be insufficient as the issues of queer international students are still largely unseen and not fully understood by domestic actors, as mentioned in Chapter 4.

Several participants brought up the organizational structures of the institution were not necessarily conducive to addressing queer international student populations. Many collaborative efforts took place between the LGBT center at an institution and the international student services office; however, these offices are typically segregated, both organizationally and often physically on-campus. One participant even noted how the international student services office was often moved around campus without a stable presence. While many of the participants noted how they have still made collaborations work despite these challenges, it is still a hindrance to the development of programs, policies, practices, and resources for queer international students. Returning to Strange and Banning (2001), the physical spaces on campus do communicate messages and thus the displacement of these offices or the lack of emphasis on collaboration can communicate a lack of understanding or regard for students that would be served by such collaboration. Furthermore, as discussed in the literature on structural violence, queer international students may be facing various forms of institutional violence. The results demonstrated how institutions have not been sufficiently organized to support queer international students – thus not allowing them to be at their full potential (Galtung, 1969) – is a form of institutional violence.

Another important consideration is the means by which the participants gained their understandings of queer international students. These understandings, at least in part, inform the approaches used to support queer international students. Much of the understanding and ideas actually appeared to come from colleagues, whether through conferences or other forms of information gathering, such as website exploration for Institution B. Additionally, while not

directly cited by participants (except for Institution A), understandings largely came from the

students they have worked with in the past. When describing a particular challenge for queer

international students, the participants would often recall incidents in their work with specific

students. While there were some scholarly works that the participants from Institution A found

helpful with regards to international students in general, it was noted that there is not much

research to draw from, leading to several participants expressing their excitement for this thesis.

However, the amount of information on queer international students is insufficient, as even

personal experience can give a warped view of the current issues (Adichie, 2009). Conversely,

most of the challenges that were stated by the participants did seem to reflect the existing

literature.

As noted in the results, visibility also plays a major role in programs, practices, policies,

and resources. Institution C, for instance, seems to have proactively focused on visibility, even

though they have not had as many interactions directly with queer international students. This

may be because queer international students are a population that has been mostly invisible in

U.S. higher education until recently. Therefore, the visibility of the population, highlighted by an

institution of higher education, may be a common and important first step towards addressing

queer international students. However, as discussed within the third theme and the visualization

of themes, there are certain limitations to

Literature review and results. The major parts of the literature review also have

applications in the results, as can be seen in the section above as well. Several pieces of the

literature review are briefly revisited here to highlight different perspectives and further the

analysis of the results.

The institutional support perspectives are a central piece of this research, as the research primarily focuses on how institutions of higher education support queer international students. The physical nature of campus spaces (Strange & Banning, 2001) has already been mentioned above for how an institution can communicate certain messages, positive or negative, through the organization of the campus and its resources. In addition, Strange and Banning (2001) and Renn and Patton (2010) highlight the implications of needing a lack of negative messages and the intentional design of positive ones for campuses to be more open for diverse populations of students, including invisible populations. This further highlights queer international student institutional support approaches that emphasize visibility, which can be an important aspect of designing spaces for QIS.

However, an examination of administrative and structural violence also reveals gaps in some approaches for queer international students. As stated previously, the way that higher education institutions are organized can be considered a form violence against QIS. If using Spade's (2015) critique of recent gay and lesbian political organizing as a comparison, one can also find comparable flaws in an institutional support strategy that only uses visibility and inclusion. These more traditional strategies used within mainstream gay and lesbian organizing are criticized for their lack of outcomes for the most marginalized people in queer communities (Spade, 2015). Thus the same could be said with similar strategies in institutions of higher education, as they may provide insufficient change for many queer international students.

International student literature is also relevant to the results of this research. Several of the participants mentioned common struggles for international students, such as culture shock and financial difficulties, which are reflected in works about international students (Oberg, 1960; Redden, 2014). However, further research is needed about the experiences of queer international

students and how they can be supported. Participants mentioned how a particular student's experience is influenced by their country of origin, their family, their religion, etc. One participant even explicitly stated how international students perceive being "pegged" as international students by others in higher education. These comments directly relate back to how international student literature critiques the homogenization of international students in the practices and research of higher education (Kim, 2012; Malcolm & Mendoza, 2014). Therefore, queer international student experiences are going to vary substantially based upon their individual identities and cultural backgrounds, which must be understood within higher education practice.

As explored in the literature review, queer theory can form alliances across different disciplines to illuminate previously unseen phenomenon and to address the limitations in previously held assumptions, such as with the combining of queer theory and Native studies in Two-Spirit critique (Driskill, 2010). Queer international student experiences highlight another potential area of alliance-building across academic disciplines because of the lack of attention and understanding of QIS from any singular academic field. To illustrate, while research on the adjustment of international students may provide some understanding of the challenges faced by queer international students, there is little to no acknowledgement of how diverse gender and sexual identities may influence an international student's experience in the United States. To further complicate matters, even when combining up-to-date LGBTQ+ and international student research, an investigation into how colonialism and postcolonialism influence QIS experiences in both their country of origin and in the US has not been explored. Therefore, a new dialogue may be necessary that connects queer theory, applicable student development literature, intersectionality, and other critical studies to fully appreciate and understand QIS experience.

Queer theory and intersectionality literature highlight the larger systems at play when discussing social identity. While institutional support and ecological models may provide some insights into these larger systems as well, without additional lenses used for analysis, such a viewpoint may only advocate for the broadening of inclusion efforts for queer international students. However, the critical analysis promoted by scholars of queer theory, intersectionality, and other related fields more directly addresses how these systems are oppressive and calls for a more radical restructuring of institutions and societal systems.

Participants did acknowledge larger forces at play for QIS, such as the difficulties of the United States immigration system and complexities of cultural identities relating to queer international student experiences. However, one aspect that was not mentioned in any of the interviews was a fundamentally Western understanding of gender and sexuality being applied to students from all over the world. Although one participant did acknowledge that international students may not feel that domestic LGBTQ+ resources are for them, it is important to take this acknowledgement one step further and consider that perhaps the Western understanding of gender and sexuality in other cultural contexts is limited. It is also important to note that many of the challenges faced by institutions of higher education in supporting queer international students are larger than the institution itself; changing how higher education is organized and operated may be part of a larger social shift (Dill & Zambrana, 2009). There are many aspects outside of the direct control of higher education, such as the U.S. immigration system, cultural attitudes (both abroad and domestically), distribution of resources at a societal level, and others.

Recommendations

Although this research is not necessarily intended to produce results that are reflective and comprehensive for U.S. higher education, there are still several recommendations that can be

made based upon the results and analysis. These are presented here and include both recommendations for higher education and recommendations for future research.

One recommendation for institutions of higher education is to begin assessing how their institution has interacted with queer international students. Even if an institution has no formal programs created that specifically include QIS, it is likely that a portion of its international students identify as queer in some way and thus have interacted with campus student services. These students may even be known to staff, faculty, or other students on campus, and thus they may have already developed some kind of informal support system. With this knowledge, an institution can begin to develop a larger picture of how queer international students currently exist on their campus, where they seek out resources, how they integrate socially, etc. Another recommendation is to learn from these students directly. While secondary sources can be an important perspective, learning from these students directly can be the most impactful way to actually find out about their experiences at the institution. Additionally, as has been discussed in this research, these students may have varying experiences from what the literature suggests and even different experiences from each other at the same institution. In other words, context is important, and it may lead to greater understanding for the implementation of better transformation of institutional programs, policies, practices, and resources.

Another recommendation is for institutions to resist homogenizing its international students, including its queer international students. The use of groupings can help to better understand experiences of international students in their commonalities, as can be seen in the literature on international students. However, it can become harmful when these experiences become assumed and stereotyped about international student populations. Everyone is unique and thus there will never be a perfect program, policy, practice, or resource that addresses queer

international students in all ways (even when looking at a singular institution). Flexibility and adaptability are thus necessary components of any institution looking to better support their students.

Using flexibility and adaptability, staff should be open to creative ways and methods of better addressing queer international students. For instance, if there is a need for social connection and sharing experiences with others who can relate, the institution can reorganize its resources to better meet this need. Institutions should also look at larger ways they can restructure their operations to support queer international students. Because participants mentioned having some struggles with collaborating across departmental divisions, the institutions should search for ways to reorganize to make this collaborative process easier. This could take the form of physically relocating offices, reorganizing divisions, rearranging staff responsibilities, etc. Similarly, this shifting of organizational resources can be done to better communicate positive messages to queer international students. Overall, institutions of higher education should not rely solely on traditional ways of serving diverse student populations (by creating new programs or attempting to broaden inclusion within existing ones), but should also implement a more radical restructuring of the institution to center marginalized student groups, including queer international students.

Institutions of higher education should also continue to focus on how larger systems impact queer international student populations. Though it can be easy for this to be obscured and rely on a deficiency view of any population, it is important to remember that institutions of higher education and other U.S. institutions were not designed for queer international students. Therefore, it is the institutions and perhaps broader social systems that are deficient, not the students. This counters the narrative in higher education that adapting to diversity lowers the

quality of education (Richardson Jr. & Skinner, 1990). Institutions should consider how to design or redesign programs, policies, practices, and resources in order to avoid support that is demeaning, objectifying, or insulting to those it is intended for, as well as actually addressing the root causes of the challenges for these students.

There are also multiple areas where further research can explore and develop the literature on queer international students within higher education. From an institutional perspective, this research was rather broad in focus and takes a narrative perspective, and thus, there are many different ways to help build upon the scant research in this field. Quantitative research, for instance, could compliment this study and reflect the views of a wider range of participants, give more insight into the number of different kinds of programs, policies, practices, and resources, and reveal correlating factors to successful programming. Additionally, with further use of qualitative research, greater depth of institutional support for queer international students can be revealed through a case study methodology. Further research on students that identify as queer international students is needed as well. While there are a few studies that exist, further aspects of student experience can be explored, including focusing on students from different social and cultural identities and how these identities may influence their experience. As stated previously, this research would benefit from an interdisciplinary approach of building alliances between academic fields of study in order to create space for the complex considerations of queer international students. Trans and genderqueer international students also must be included in future research as it is probable that these students are overshadowed by gay and lesbian identities, similar to domestic students. Also another interesting area for examining gender in QIS populations would be a study focused on only women because several study participants noted that many of the queer international students they have worked with identify

as men. Another possible direction for exploring cross-cultural, queer student experiences is to interview LGBTQ+ students from the United States who have studied abroad; this is another area with a dearth in research (Pattison, 2010). Finally, both institutional and student-centered perspectives must work together to truly evaluate the impact that institutional support efforts have on queer international students in order to move towards best practices for higher education.

Limitations

As suggested previously, this research had several limitations that have influenced the results and applicability. These are explored here in order to understand how the results may or may not be applicable in other higher education settings.

Primarily, this research was intended to highlight a few examples of different kinds of programs, policies, practices, and resources at U.S. institutions of higher education. Therefore, the scope of this research is somewhat limited in a number of ways. For instance, the selection process for sites and participants was intended to attract participants that have done some institutional work with queer international students previously. Therefore, this study should not be considered an accurate reflection of the current state of higher education, as there are likely many institutions that have done less explicit work centering queer international students (if any at all). Additionally, this study only has participants from larger, research-focused universities, which tend to have more specialized student services that may look different than support provided at smaller institutions known for staff that operate as generalists (Hibel, n.d.).

This study also only includes perspectives from higher education staff members likely to have worked with queer international students. Therefore, their experiences may not be reflective of student experiences at their respective institutions. This could mean, for example, that while a

staff member believes the institution is doing much to support their queer international student population, students within that population may view the institution as doing little to support them (or vice versa). Additionally, because of the selection methodology used, all participants either worked in the LGBT center or the international student service office on their respective campuses. While it is likely these departments are going to be involved at a given institution in efforts to support queer international students, staff outside these departments may also be involved.

Furthermore, a major limitation of this research is its own role in homogenizing international students. While this homogenization can be viewed as a necessity for a study attempting to conduct broader research, it still does not do full justice to the diversity of students labeled under "queer international students." These students deserve more individualized attention to better understand their experiences and provide appropriate support for them related to their time in U.S. higher education and beyond.

Conclusion

This research aimed to highlight several examples of programs, policies, practices, and resources at U.S. institutions of higher education and how staff administrators have approached these activities. At the selected institutions, queer international students face various challenges and there is an emergence of institutional support systems that incorporate visibility and collaboration to address these. At the very least, the researcher anticipates that readers of this study will have a better understanding of queer international students in higher education and what are some possible avenues being used to support them. While this research cannot claim to provide best practices, the researcher hopes that this study will help inform future directions for further research to develop and implement these. The development of these best practices would

be a step in the right in direction in order to not only change how our systems and institutions have largely been disenfranchising for marginalized social identities, but to also allow for the enrichment of higher education through the incorporation of their perspectives. In other words, the landscape of institutions of higher education is largely unexplored and unexamined as it relates to queer international students, and thus further work must be done to promote the full success of these students within these institutions.

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Appendix A: List of Interview Questions

1) Tell me about yourself.

   Probe: What is your position at your institution?

   Probe: What responsibilities does this position entail?

2) Have you had any experiences with international students that identify as LGBTQ or queer international students, within your position?

   Probe: What have those experiences been?

   Probe: Did you identify any particular experiences or challenges these students were having and how did you address them if at all?

   Probe: Why do you think that you have not had any experiences with queer international students?

3) Are there any programs, policies, practices, or resources that exist at your institution to address and support queer international students? Please elaborate.

   Probe: Are there any specific programs, policies, practices, or resources at your institution specifically designed for queer international students?

   Probe: Where are these programs, policies, practices, and resources located, either physically or organizationally, within the institution?

4) What other programs, policies, practices, and resources or what changes to those that already exist do you think are needed at your institution to address and support queer international students, if any?

   Probe: Are there other programs, policies, practices, and resources you are aware from other institutions of higher education? Please elaborate.

5) What is your understanding of queer international student experiences?

Probe: How have you gained this understanding?

Probe: What differences and similarities do you see in queer international student experiences?