

Overview

These proceedings are the outcome of the 2018 Cultivating Change Foundation Annual Summit Research Poster Session that took place June 20-22 in Des Moines, Iowa. Each of these abstracts underwent a blind peer review in the winter of 2018 and lead authors were notified in the spring of 2018 regarding acceptance. This effort represents the first attempt by both of these organizations to provide a systematic and standardized opportunity for the review process as well as a formal documentation of the reviewed materials. Poster Abstracts are detailed in this publication.

The abstracts are presented alphabetically by the first author's last name. The compilers wish to recognize and acknowledge the peer reviewers that provided their time and expertise for the review process as well as the many authors who contributed to this effort. We hope you enjoy these proceedings!

Dr. Katherine E. Soule, University of California Cooperative Extension

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Amaral, J. Ryan | Virginia Tech

Jeremy Elliott-Engel, Dr. Donna Westfall-Rudd, Connor Owens, Chelsea Corkins, Dr. Rick Rudd
Track: Education and Youth

Perspectives of LGBTQ+ Individuals in Agriculture and Collegiate Agricultural Organizations and Inclusion Efforts at University Campuses

As a result of certain conditions in his way of life, the farmer is said to develop a frame of mind characterized by introversion, provincialism, ... conservatism, and numerous other traits peculiar to the rural setting (Landis, 1948 as cited by Haer, 1952). This mindset is infused in rural culture, and as a result, some involved in the industry have a negative connotation of diversity and inclusion efforts in agriculture. The Cultivating Change Foundation has started a national discussion on LGBTQ+ agriculturists (Cultivating Change Foundation, 2016), which has allowed the conversation to advance to universities with agricultural studies.

Understanding student perceptions of diversity and inclusion is not a new subject. In a College of Agriculture setting at a land-grant institution, it was found that minority students did not have the same experiences as other students (Drape et. al, 2017). To provide representation for LGBTQ+ undergraduate and graduate students, and faculty, the Students for Cultivating Change at [the university] was established and is the second student organization of its kind. The mission is to advance LGBTQ+ issues in agriculture and natural resources while serving undergraduate and graduate students, as well as faculty and staff.

This in-progress study seeks to answer the question, what are the perspectives of LGBTQ+ individuals in agriculture and collegiate agricultural organizations and inclusion efforts on a university campus? Rural youth have unique identities from their urban and suburban counterparts (Gray, 2009) entering higher-education brings their unique cultural background to campus. The researchers are unaware of previous published literature on higher-education organizations role of supporting LGBTQ+ identities in agricultural colleges and the resulting participation of LGBTQ+ individuals entering the workforce. Lack of representation of LGBTQ+ agriculture students in higher-education reflects a cultural assumption that LGBTQ+ youth are not present in rural or agricultural communities (Leslie, 2017).

Qualitative methodology will be employed. Focus groups of agricultural staff/faculty, and students will be conducted. Focus group questions are:

When you think of the words lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ) or questioning what comes to mind? Do individuals that use words such as LGBTQ or questioning belong in agriculture? Why or why not. Do you know individuals who use words LGBTQ or questioning to identify themselves in agriculture? If so, describe your relationship to them. How important is it for the agriculture industry to have a conversation about LGBTQ or questioning individuals in the industry?

This research is currently being conducted. Preliminary anecdotal feedback has informed the expected results from this study. The researchers expect study participants to acknowledge that they are having a unique experience being a member of the LGBTQ+ in agriculture fields of study which reflects the nature of a campus micro-culture (Vaccaro & Newman, 2017). Because the influence on sexual identity and outness influences how LGBTQ+

individuals develop their identities at a postsecondary institution (Vacarro & Newman, 2017). The results will show how members of the Students for Cultivating Change acknowledge their LGBTQ+ identities and the presence of LGBTQ+ identities at universities.

Gray (2007) highlighted that rural youth utilized different community resources to create safe spaces because of limited access to traditionally LGBTQ+ spaces represented in the dominant cultural narrative based on urban and suburban public-spaces, such as gyms, bars, and performance spaces. Rural LGBTQ+ youth are coming to campus to join the College of Agriculture, which reinforces rural cultural narratives, while also navigating the urban-liberal on-campus cultural paradox that agricultural youth feel on campus, thus placing LGBTQ+ individuals at an intersectionality of not feeling comfortable in either LGBTQ+ campus organizations or within agricultural organizations, where their LGBTQ+ identity may, or may not be welcomed.

LGBTQ students are contextualized within multiple societal layers that influences their well-being (Higa et al., 2014). Bronfenbrenner's (1992) ecological model is a framework of the interconnected environmental systems that include the people's immediate, e.g., family, peers, school, larger, e.g. neighborhoods, communities, and cultural/societal contexts, as well as historical events, that largely shapes human development. Both the individual and society can shape the immediate environment, what Bronfenbrenner calls the microsystem. Incorporating a person's influence within the microsystem is useful for understanding the relationship between multiple contexts that may be unsupportive and how sexual minority youth cope with, and respond to, these contexts (Higa et al., 2014). The preliminary results indicate that there is a presence of LGBTQ+ individuals in the community. Participants expressed an organizational space will allow them to feel secure, allows individuals to be able to own their own identity, and build strong positive relationships with other individuals with similar experiences and identities.

Harlow, Perry | Illinois State University
Richard Steffen, Maria Boerngen, and Lisa Hood
Track: Academic Research & Government

Factors Contributing to Illinois Legislators' Perception of School-Based Agricultural Education

There are fewer people than ever working in production agriculture; 1.9% of the nation's labor force is employed in agriculture (Dimitri, Effland, & Conklin, 2005). Families are moving to urban areas and leaving rural areas. People who live in urban and rural areas have different views on agriculture and school-based agricultural education. Wachenheim and Lesch (2002) surveyed Illinois residents about their perception of agriculture as an important part of the states economy. In counties containing a major population center, agriculture was ranked in the bottom half of the industries. A large percentage of the legislative members in Illinois come from Chicago. These groups of legislators can control the outcomes of many issues in the state legislature. It is essential to know what factors are contributing to their perception of school-based agricultural education because that affects their decision on policy issues. Very few studies have looked at the attitudes and perception of agriculture from the lenses of an elected official, but there is no research looking at their views of school-based agricultural education. This is a problem because there is no research to guide how school-based agricultural education programs should be marketing themselves to local elected officials because they provide program money.

This study utilized an explanatory sequential mixed methods design. Explanatory sequential mixed methods design consists of first conducting quantitative research, analyzing the results and then building those results to explain them in more detail with qualitative research (Creswell, 2014). The quantitative data was collected first using a questionnaire. The qualitative data was collected by conducting interviews. The data was then triangulated to determine the results of research. The questionnaires collected data about demographics of the legislators, the legislators perceptions of agriculture and school-based agricultural education, and how often the legislators heard or saw school-based agricultural education event in various media outlets. The qualitative interview questions were developed after analyzing the data from the questionnaire. The interview questions asked the legislators more details about their perceptions of school-based agricultural education and how much they rely on media as a source of information. The target population for this study was defined as members of the 100th Illinois General Assembly. These legislators served from 2016-2018. The researchers used total population sampling for this research. In the total population, there were 177 members that were contacted to participate in the research.

Thirty respondents out of 177 legislators completed the questionnaire, but 29 of them were considered valid. The data revealed there was a significant difference ($F(3, N = 27) = 10.515, p = .015$) between the 4 different geographical locations of the legislator's district and their perception of school-based agricultural education. Legislators whose district was in Cook/collar counties had a lower perception of school-based agricultural education compared to the legislators whose district is south of interstate 80 and north of interstate 70 in Illinois. The

data did also reveal that there was a significant difference ($t(4, N = 25) = 11.470, p = .022$) on how often legislators saw information about school-based agricultural education on Facebook. Legislators who saw posts about school-based agricultural education on Facebook 3 to 5 times a year compared to legislators who did not see any posts had a higher perception of school-based agricultural education. An analysis was conducted to determine working on a farm affected the legislators perception of school-based agricultural education. The results of the analyses indicated that there was not a significant difference.

This research concluded that the more contact legislators have with school-based agricultural education, they will have a higher perception of it. Legislators who lived between interstate 80 and interstate 70 had a higher perception of school-based agricultural education. This may be due to the fact the legislators are around production agriculture more often than the urban legislators. This data was also reflected in the qualitative data. The legislators indicated that they are not away of what classes are taught in urban and rural education programs. They believed that urban school-based agricultural education programs focus more on gardening while rural programs are focused on production agriculture practices like managing different livestock operations and utilizing different soil programs. Advocates for agriculture should be conscious of this finding when talking to legislators in urban areas about agriculture issues. The researchers found that legislators have a higher perception of school-based agricultural education if they receive invitations to school-based agricultural education programs. Even though society is living in a digital age, some generations still prefer to receive hard copies of letters and cards. The average age of the legislators falls in the category of Generation X. Michael Fleischner (2006) reported that 86% of Generation Xers bring in the mail the day it's delivered. Generation X consumers rate 75% of the mail they receive as valuable. From the research, this is still important to send paper copies to Generation Xers. When legislators did receive invitations to school-based agricultural education activities, it did affect their perception of school-based agricultural education. It is important to point out that legislators prefer to receive information about school-based agricultural education through different media outlets. The qualitative strengthened this finding because legislators prefer to see information about events happening in their community through various media outlets.

Establishing the Ohio 4-H LGBT Summit

At the annual Ohio 4-H Volunteer Conference in 2015, a session was hosted to provide attendees with an introductory knowledge base of creating inclusive environments for LGBTQ+ identifying individuals in 4-H. Pre-conference registration revealed approximately 20 participants enrolled to attend the session. When the session began, there was standing room only with over 50 individuals filling the room. This change in expected audience posed the question, Why didn't many of these attendees pre-register for this session? While the answer may vary for individuals, one idea is that participants needed to submit their session selections to their county office in order to be registered for the conference. The uncertainty of how a county Extension staff member may respond to an individual expressing interest in a topic related to LGBTQ+ community was determined as a potential deterrent to registering for the session. Regardless of the reason, the young adults presenting the session and the 4-H educator hosting the room recognized a need for further conversation. From this, the Ohio 4-H LGBTQ+ Summit was born. The Summit will bring together 4-H affiliated adults, Extension staff, and volunteers for Professional Development Day and young people between the ages of 13-19 for the Youth Summit.

A committee composed of 4-H alumni and Ohio 4-H staff members began meeting regularly in August of 2017 after many initial conversations had happened informally over the past year. The design of the Ohio 4-H LGBTQ+ Summit was determined to offer a safe and inclusive space for adults and youth. Due to the emotional security and privacy concerns of youth participants, the committee decided it would be best to offer specific tracks for the participants - a youth day and an adult day. The committee worked hard to recognize local LGBTQ+ organizations and resources that would be supportive of the event. These resources were secured as session presenters on a variety of topics. Additional local resources were contacted about providing additional support, such as hosting an educational table at the summit or providing material giveaways to conference attendees. The committee applied for and received funding through the Ohio 4-H Foundation and Ohio State University College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences Office of Equity & Inclusion. Prominent names in LGBTQ+ community and in Extension were discussed when selecting keynote speakers for the event. Accepting the invitation included Glenda Humiston, of University of California and Ash Beckham, an engaging equality speaker.

The ultimate result of the Ohio 4-H LGBTQ+ Summit is yet unknown, as the event will be hosted in Columbus, Ohio on April 27-28, 2018. At the time of this proposal, a few outcomes can already be identified. These include a creation of a safe space to discuss LGBTQ+ specific needs in the Ohio 4-H program. Interactions between state staff, county educators, and young people who seek more information on how to create an inclusive environment or how to respond to LGBTQ+ topics have grown more comfortable. This change in culture is a positive turn for folks recognizing that some topics are difficult to initiate in conversation. There are now

recognizable safe people in the Ohio 4-H program to support these conversations and “walk the talk” that is necessary in setting up inclusive programs. Additional outcomes include new topics presented at professional development events such as Ohio 4-H Camp Directors Inservice and Ohio 4-H State Update. The Ohio 4-H Teen Leadership Council has been motivated to support local LGBTQ+ youth centers by creating rainbow bracelets at multiple community service events including at the State Fair and Ohio 4-H Day of Service.

In conclusion, the founding of the Ohio 4-H LGBTQ+ Summit is recognized as the first of its kind for a specific 4-H-based audience. The arrangement of the summit has been a learning experience for all committee members and state 4-H administration involved. Potential outcomes of the summit include seeing a similar program replicated in other states or at a national level, given the positive response from 4-H colleagues in other states and at National 4-H Council. Additional outcomes include the learning that takes place and causes a ripple effect for summit participants to take the knowledge they have learned to continue to create inclusivity in their local 4-H programs and communities. The committee has learned first-hand the positive outcomes and support of young people, volunteers, and educators who seek new information on LGBTQ+ and supportive ally topics. The initiative of hosting the Ohio 4-H LGBTQ+ Summit has also come with learning that there is controversial pushback from some members of the 4-H community. The committee’s awareness of the potential negative responses has allowed the team to formulate appropriate replies when these difficult conversations arise. Due to the overall success and support of the program, the positives outweigh any of the roadblocks, though the committee did have to recognize that there would be some hurdles along the way. Ultimately, the opportunity to support young people in their quest to be accepted for who they are, the experience to host a safe event for youth and adults, and the outcomes of knowledge learned and social connections forged will be the true positive outcome of this event.

Examining Non-Discrimination Policies within Student Organizations Related to Agriculture

Both agriculture and society are constantly evolving entities. In this age of shifting cultural and societal values, there exists a perfect opportunity to adjust the cultural practices of agricultural communities to open possibilities for historically marginalized populations. This project looks at the existence of non-discrimination policies within student organizations related to agriculture and to analyze how encompassing they are of students with different identities of marginalized communities. Analysis of how these policies shape cultures of acceptance and inclusivity within their respective organizations - as well as how accessible and encompassing these policies are - shows how these policies either perpetuate systemic barriers and attitudes to restrict these marginalized communities from accessing these student organizations, or how well they promote inclusivity for these communities to access the organizations. This project focuses on the aspect of how policy and culture intertwine and shape one another, while also understanding how to enact positive systemic change through different policies.

The primary method of data collection is seeking out online resources that contain non-discrimination policies - resources such as organization constitutions, bylaws, policies and procedures manuals, websites, and rule books - noting how accessible and visible they are through a basic search, and contacting organization heads if they cannot be found, or to ask for clarification when needed. Policies, or the lack thereof, and their level of accessibility are noted and the location of these policies are linked for reference in the data collection. The theoretical model is grounded in the theories of content analysis, leadership and identity development in students, policy analysis and impact, and cultural growth and change within societies.

Preliminary data shows that there are many organizations and associations that either do not have a non-discrimination policy within their founding documents like constitutions or bylaws, or that this policy is not readily available for an external source to have access to. Additionally, the preliminary analysis of the policies found shows that many organizations rely on state, federal, and local school system policies on non-discrimination, and do not have a specific internal policy that is explicitly applicable to their organization.

Further, final research and analysis are needed to confirm absolute findings and recommendations for the inclusion of non-discrimination policies for these organizations, however preliminary conclusions point towards the drastic lack of inclusive and accessible policies and documentation to allow students from historically marginalized populations to feel welcome or accepted into these communities. Additionally, impactful policies are typically known to be proactive in nature and not reactive or with the attempt to just prevent behavior or attitudes from happening, but to encourage the specific behavior or attitudes - so further analysis into a policy system that encourages systemic change and attitudes would be recommended to be an

effective policy alternative that could reshape organizational cultures to be more inclusive and accessible to marginalized populations.

Soule, Katherine | University of California

Kimberly Allen, Jeffrey Howard, Michelle Krehbiel, Mark Mains, & Lilian Vega

Track: Education and Youth

Success and Challenges of Promoting Acceptance and Inclusion of Individuals Who Identify as Members of LGBTQ+ Communities in 4-H Programming

As the 4-H Youth Development Program is administered through the USDA and universities across the nation, 4-H personnel and programs must be inclusive of all protected classes in programming and work environments. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) requires programs support with their federally funds to be inclusive for clientele of all sexes, gender expressions, gender identities, and sexual orientations (USDA, 2015). “Given Extension’s role in operating 4-H and working with urban youth and families through nutrition and other educational efforts across the country, Extension personnel have the capacity to positively impact the experiences of millions of urban youth, families, personnel, and educators by creating inclusive programming. For 4-H professionals, these efforts are directly related to the foundations of positive youth development, particularly to youth’s sense of belonging, caring connections, and physical or emotional safety” (Soule, 2017). To support these efforts, the USDA developed the LGBTQ+ Champion Team within their Vulnerable Populations Workgroup, through which “4-H National Headquarters is leading the effort to expand access to meaningful positive youth development opportunities, engaging the expertise of the Extension, land-grant universities and its faculty, educators and researchers” (USDA, 2018).

The LGBTQ+ Champions Group was convened in 2015. This group has met regularly to identify and address needs for 4-H and Cooperative Extension across the nation. These efforts included conducting a needs assessment, conducting informal stakeholder interviews, collating resources, developing resources, conduct trainings and webinars, and disseminating research-based information through professional networks, publications, and conferences. In partnership with the Western Region 4-H Program Leaders, the LGBTQ+ Champion Group supported the development and publication of guidance to states on inclusive practices and policies. Over many months, this guidance was reviewed and eventually adapted by the USDA. It was released in March 2018. Following the release of this guidance, there were some negative responses on social media and from some news media outlets. Subsequently, this guidance and all other documentation related to the LGBTQ+ Champions Group was removed from the Vulnerable Populations website. There was no direct communication from USDA leadership to our Champion Group. Nonetheless, several states have continued to seek guidance and input from Champion Group members as they seek to develop inclusive policies and procedures.

Organizational change without strong support from leadership is difficult; yet, youth and adult volunteers continue to seek support in improving the inclusivity of their programming. Opportunities for discussion, sharing of best and emerging practices, and training can provide important moments of support and validation for individuals seeking to promote inclusivity within their organizations.