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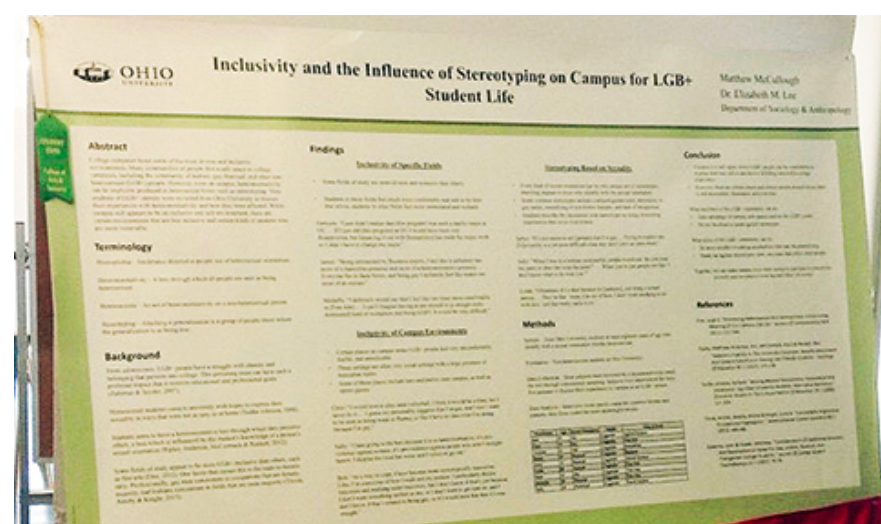
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Undergraduate Researches Inclusivity and Stereotyping for Campus LGB+ Students

April 26, 2017

Categories: Research

Tags: Elizabeth Lee, Matt McCullough, sociology news, Student Expo, undergraduate research



by Matt McCullough '17

I presented a research project I conducted, titled “Inclusivity and the Influence of Stereotyping on Campus for LGB+ Student Life,” at the [Student Research and Creative Activity Expo](#).

Getting Involved in Research

I am a senior studying sociology with a professional goal of doing research.

This is only one reason I decided to do this project.

I signed up for “SOC 4940,” [Research Problems in Sociology](#) with my advisor, [Dr. Elizabeth Lee](#), because I wanted her to be acquainted with my academic skills when I ask her for letters of reference. I also picked up credit hours.

In addition to the educational component that comes with any research, this experience enhanced my research skills.

The research process itself has been a semester-long journey. The first task to accomplish was deciding the research topic.

I am contemplating graduate school and human sexuality is a sociological topic of particular interest to me, especially because of my passion for the LGBT community. I knew I wanted my research to somehow involve this element.

As an Assistant Professor of Sociology, Lee specializes in the sociology of education as well as social inequality. By putting our interests together, I came up with my research topic.

The next several weeks were devoted to reviewing literature, as well as waiting for the [Institutional Review Board](#) to approve the project.

As part of this process, I had to do [Collaborative Institute Training Initiative \(CITI\)](#) training to ensure I was informed on ethical research practices.

Once the project was approved, I recruited and interviewed nine different students all over the university, talking with them about their experiences on campus as a LGB+ person.

I transcribed the interviews and coded them for results, with those results finally written up into a research report.

As fun and busy as this work was, I took it a step further by presenting it at the Student Expo.

Presenting at the Expo

Impact is an important aspect of research and something researchers need to be able to talk about.

Whether you are pursuing publication, preparing for a job interview, or applying to graduate school, as a researcher you must be able to explain how your research makes an impact on the world.

Knowing that people from all over Athens attend the Student Expo, I knew I would gain experience talking with people and sharing my results with them.

Posters are key at the Expo because they serve as a visual aid outlining research – and provide an easy conversation starter!

It was rewarding to have visitors stop to talk with me because they were particularly interested in my research topic.

Expo visitors included groups of OHIO students, Athens high school students, and professors.

It was fun to be interviewed by students and to talk with the different groups about my research.

Since the Expo posters are judged, I had the opportunity to not only talk with Expo visitors about my research, but to also discuss my project with two university faculty, who served as Sociology & Anthropology judges.

It was quite a tiring day, and my voice was stretched and throat sore, but it was worth it.

Engaging with the Athens Community

As mentioned before, the main reason I presented at the Expo was to gain experience sharing my findings and make an impact on the world.

I know I was successful because of the many conversations and comments from different members of the Athens community, from passing on advice about college to discussing concerns and questions such as “what does it mean to be cisgender?” and “what does it mean to be pansexual?”

Answering these questions gave me confirmation that I was completing the objective I had set out for myself, both with the project itself as well as participating in the Expo.

Perhaps most importantly, peoples’ reactions showed me that my findings matter.

One person expressed how it hurt to see some of the results I found. Shedding light on the issues is an important part of finding solutions.

I also met members of the LGB+ community, who were all able to relate to my findings and appreciate them.

So, finally, being at the Expo confirmed that I had accomplished my task. It made the research all worthwhile.

Overall, I have gained so much experience out of doing this project and I feel proud to have set these goals and accomplished them.

Interested in the Expo?

The Student Expo takes place every year in April, with registration opening in January.

Any kind of research or creative activity can be displayed, so show yours off!

Hundreds of presenters participate every year, each with their own unique type of display. Registration closes in February, so do not wait!

The benefits of presenting are worth it!

Contact [Dr. Roxanne Malé-Brune](#) with questions.

Abstract

College campuses boast some of the most diverse and inclusive environments. Many communities of people find a safe space in college campuses, including the community of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and other non-heterosexual (LGB+) people. However, even on campus, heteronormativity can be implicitly produced in heterosexist forms such as stereotyping. Nine students of LGB+ identity were recruited from Ohio University to discuss their experiences with heteronormativity and how they were affected. While campus still appears to be an inclusive and safe environment, there are certain environments that are less inclusive and certain kinds of students who are more vulnerable.