

CAMPUS CLIMATE FOR LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, AND
QUEER UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI: A
QUALITATIVE STUDY

Garrett Drew Hoffman

Dr. Jeni Hart, Thesis Supervisor

ABSTRACT

The University of Missouri has been engaging in ongoing campus climate research since 2001. Previous studies have revealed that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) students perceive the campus climate as more hostile and experience more harassment than any other identity group. This case study explores further, utilizing qualitative methods, the perceptions of the campus climate at the University of Missouri by LGBTQ-identified undergraduate students as well as the unmet needs of this population. Five broad themes emerged from the data including (a) discrimination, (b) intersecting identities that influence the perception of discrimination, (c) (dis)comfort, (d) support, and (e) suggestions for improvement. Data analysis shows that while the LGBTQ undergraduate population does experience high levels of harassment and discrimination, these students have created their own supportive communities and networks utilizing existing on and off campus resources. Recommendations for campus improvement are included.