

# LGBT and the LSAP

## Law School Admissions Process

**Collaboration** should start before the student becomes an applicant. Knowing the best way to support a student starts the moment the student shows interest until the day the student enters law school.



**Innovation** is fostered through awareness of current matters in the LGBT community.

**Navigation** is using all available resources from student groups to social media to national organizations. Resources are out there!

### Is the law school welcoming to LGBT students?

#### Checklist of Questions

- Will the school value the diversity LGBT students bring?
- Do they have any LGBT student organizations?
- Are there any LGBT faculty/staff?
- Does the student want to study LGBT issues?
- Any LGBT classes?
- Any Gender Studies Journals?
- Are Staff/Faculty/Students Safe Space trained?
- Are there all-gender restrooms?
- Does the school's non-discrimination statement include sexual orientation or gender identity?
- Does the town/city have a LGBT community?
- Visit the school!



### Should students “come out” on their applications?

**Yes**, if they feel that it will strengthen their applications.

- Defines identity
- Give applicant unique perspective
- Wants to study LGBT issues

#### Ways to come out on the application

##### Personal Statement

- Defines identity
- Drives passion to be a lawyer
- Want to study and work on gender issues

##### Resume

##### Letters of Recommendation

If students are unsure of how an Admissions Committee views the information, encourage students to contact the schools they are applying.

#### Diversity Statement

- Shapes identity but not purpose
- Gives unique worldview which can be brought to classroom

### 5 Questions the LGBT Law School Applicant Should Ask:

1. Is the law school welcoming to LGBT students?
2. Should an applicant “come out” on their law school application?
3. How will your LGBT identity be perceived by the Admissions Committee?
4. Where can LGBT students find guidance and support?
5. Do law schools really support the “silent T”?



### Where can LGBT students find guidance and support?

#### The Law School

- Some schools take an active stance, and professors, administrators, and staff members show support for the LGBT community by announcing “safe zones” or “I am an ally.”
- Schools on a bigger campus may have multiple resources for LGBT students. Independent law schools typically have student services staff available to support LGBT students.
- For students who want to handle legal issues related to LGBT individuals, some schools now have clinics for their students, and some schools will make this part of their Family or Constitutional Law clinics.

#### Student Organizations

- LGBT student group.
- National LGBT Bar Law Student Congress. A list of schools who partner with the LGBT Bar Associations is found on their website.
- Lavender Law – Annual Law Conference & Career Fair which targets issues, achievements, and career placement for the LGBT community and allies.

### Law School Outreach to LGBT Students through LSAC

- On students' LSAC profiles (Candidate Referral Service), they can indicate whether they are LGBT or are interested in LGBT student organizations.
- Checking these boxes notifies schools and allows law schools to proactively reach out to the student and let them know about opportunities for LGBT students.
- Students can then learn about schools that they may not have previously considered.

### Do law schools support the “silent T”?

**Silent T** – For many years, transgender issues were often ignored or alluded to but never directly addressed. Policies would typically include language about sexual orientation but not gender identity.

*Transgender students* often face complex issues in their daily lives and the law school setting. Law schools are aware that gender identity is a different issue than sexual orientation and are therefore finding ways to be inclusive through various resources:



- Gender neutral restrooms.
- Shifting of policies to be inclusive for transgender individuals (name change, use of neutral honorifics).
- Making policies and support accessible and openly available to all students.
- Most students do have to take initiative to be open to some administrators and professors at the schools they attend.

### Online Resources

- LSAC Diversity in Law School, LGBT Applicants – videos covering areas such as coming out on your application, choosing an LGBT friendly law school, being out in law school, being transgender in law school, and being out at work.
- Law School LGBT Survey Results (2014) - allows students to see individual schools and where they stand on key LGBT issues.
- Transgender Equality –Has a “know your rights” section for students entering schools at all levels.
- Transgender Law Center –This organization works to change law, policy, and attitudes so that all people can live safely, authentically, and free from discrimination regardless of their gender identity or expression.



Matthew V. Kerns  
Assistant Dean of Admissions, Scholarships, & Enrollment Data  
University of Arkansas at Little Rock, William H. Bowen School of Law



Denée A. Page  
Director of Graduate  
Legal Studies  
Cornell Law School



Elizabeth M. Cavallari  
Senior Assistant Dean  
for Admission  
William & Mary Law School