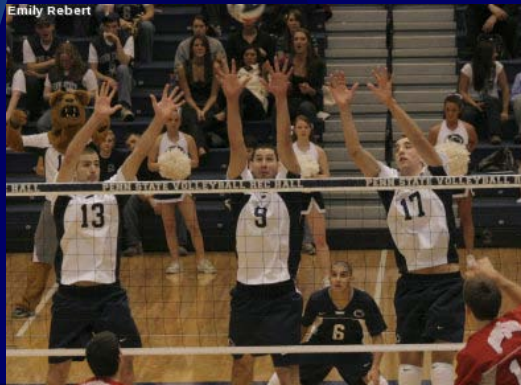
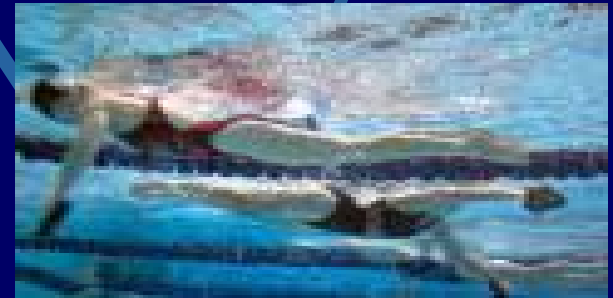


EXPERIENCES OF LESBIAN, GAY, AND BISEXUAL STUDENT-ATHLETES IN INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS



College Student Educators International Convention
Boston, MA
March 22, 2010

Project Objectives

- To identify how student-athletes currently experience and perceive the **climate** in intercollegiate athletics
- To examine the climate with specific **focus on LGBTQ-identified student-athletes**
- To examine the impact of climate on the **identity development** of LGBTQ student athletes

Why Study Climate?



- College campus climate not only affects creating knowledge, but also impacts members of academic community who, in turn, contribute to creating campus environment.^{1,2}



Impact of Climate on Students

■ Research indicates that perceptions of negative campus climates exert direct influence on the psychosocial and learning outcomes of students who are:

■ **African-American**^{1,2,3}

■ **Asian American**⁴

■ **Latino/Latina**⁵

■ **LGBT**^{6,7}

■ **Disabled**⁸

■ **Women**^{9,10}

¹ Cabrera, Nora, Terenzini, Pascarella, & Hagedorn, 1999; ²Harper, 2007; ³Rankin & Reason, 2008 ⁴ Cress & Ikeda, 2003; ⁵ Hurtado, 1994; ⁶ Rankin, 2003; ⁷Brown, Clarke, Gortmaker, & Robinson-Keilig, 2004; ⁸ Junco & Salter, 2004; ⁹ Pascarella et al., 1997; ¹⁰Persaud & Salter, 2003



Student-Athletes?

One group of students whose experiences are missing from the climate literature are those involved in intercollegiate athletes.



Research on Student-Athletes

- Participation in collegiate athletics contributes to healthy development in some areas of students' lives, but can also impede it.¹
- Climate, both institutional and within respective athletic departments, contributes to student-athlete retention.²
- Student-athletes cope with scrutiny from the public and serious time demands in addition to maintaining academic success and many athletes, particularly those involved in football and basketball, feel isolated and lonely.³

Methods

- Invited 6 NCAA institutions to participate in the pilot project in Fall 2008
 - 3 Division I; 2 Division II; 1 Division III
- Funded from a grant from the NCAA
- Research Team consisting of NCAA team physicians, former NCAA Division I coaches, NCAA representative, and graduate students

Survey & Sample



Final instrument

- ✓ 49 questions
- ✓ Created by members of the research team and representatives (athletic administrators, team physicians, coaches) from the institutions involved in the pilot project
- ✓ Reviewed and approved by Penn State Institutional Review Board and each institution's Institutional Review Board

Sample = Population

- ✓ All student-athletes at each institution were invited to participate
- ✓ Method of recruitment determined by participating institution

Project Limitations

- Self-selection bias
- Response rates
- Caution in generalizing results for constituent groups with significantly lower response rates

NCAA Aggregate student-athlete population vs. sample respondents

Characteristic	Subgroup	Population		Sample		Response Rate
		n	%	n	%	
Gender	Men	2066	56 %	649	49 %	31 %
	Women	1600	44 %	674	51 %	42 %
	Transgender/Other	n/a		3	0.3 %	n/a
Race/Ethnicity	American Indian/Alaskan Native	18	1 %	14	1 %	78 %
	Asian/Pacific Islander	93	3 %	38	3 %	41 %
	Black ,non- Hispanic	335	9 %	114	9 %	34 %
	Hispanic	111	3 %	42	3 %	38 %
	White, non-Hispanic	2828	80 %	1154	87 %	41 %
	Other/Unknown	167	5 %	9	1 %	5 %
Class Standing	First Year Student-Athlete	1227	34 %	455	34 %	37 %
	Second Year Student-Athlete	904	25 %	367	28 %	41 %
	Third Year Student-Athlete	772	21 %	287	22 %	37 %
	Fourth Year Student-Athlete	659	18 %	210	16 %	32 %
	Fifth+ Year Student-Athlete	84	2 %	6	1 %	7 %
	Graduate Student-Athlete	20	1 %	5	0.4%	25 %
Citizenship	U.S. Citizen	3518	96 %	1232	93 %	35 %
	International	164	5 %	99	7 %	60 %

Other Salient Demographic Information

- Featured Sport
- Learning Disability
- Physical Disability
- Psychological Condition
- SES
- Social Club Membership (Fraternity/Sorority)
- Spirituality
- Residence

LGBO Student-Athletes

It is imperative that research empirically substantiates existing inequities because homophobia/heterosexism is perpetuated by not ameliorating them.



Student-Athlete Identity

- Athletic identity is the degree of strength and exclusivity to which a person identifies with the athletic role.¹
- Athletic Identity is impacted by other factors such as:
 - Race²

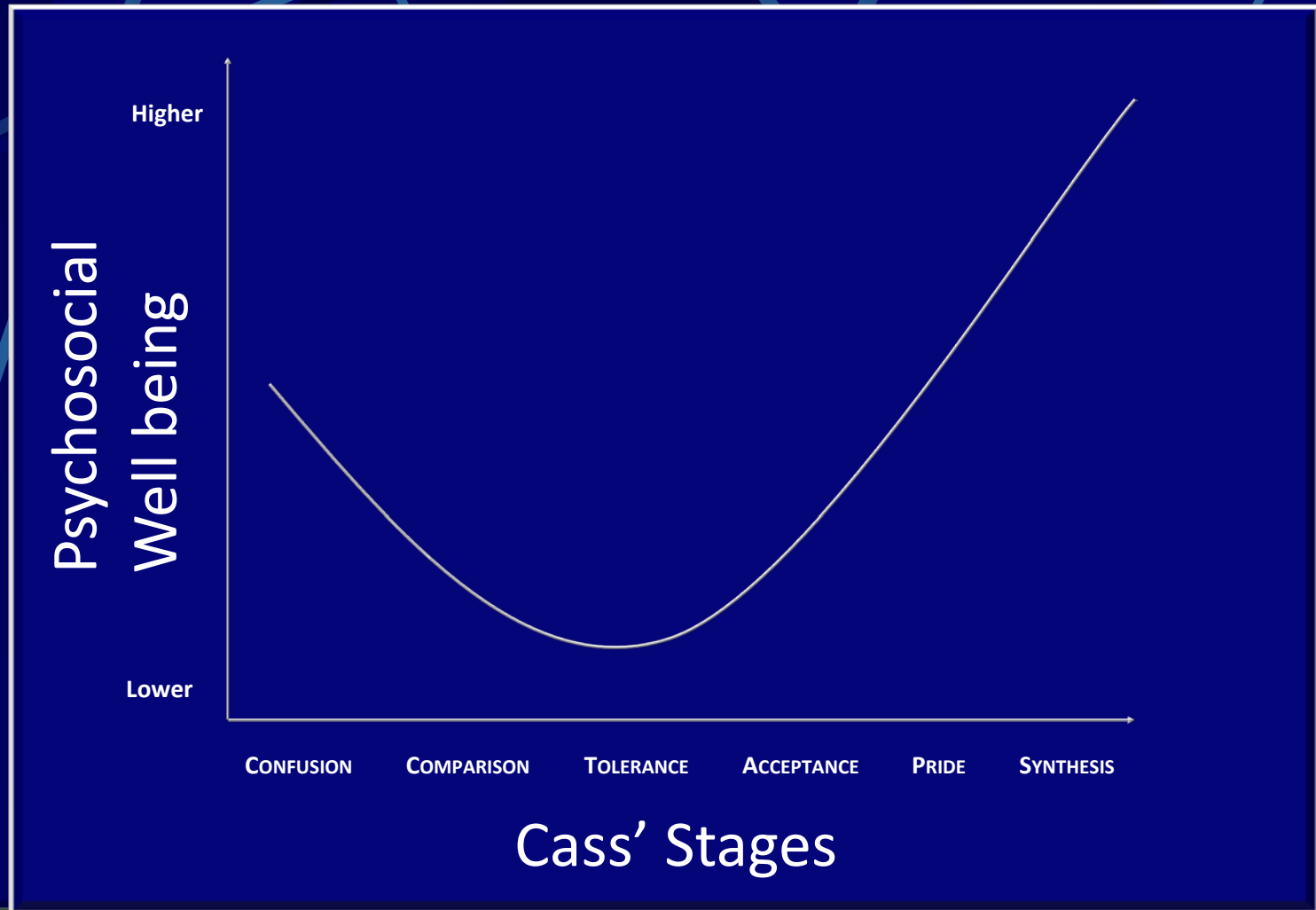
Race and athletic identity centrally interact to influence how student athletes view racial (and athletic) group membership and how (the athlete) perceives discrimination.
 - Stereotype threat³

The risk of confirming the stereotypes of athletes as less engaged and competent academically than other students may hinder their performance on academic tasks.

Sexual Identity Development

- Process in which people transition from an presumed heterosexual identity and affirm an LGBTQ identity, becoming part of a marginalized group.
- Cass Stages and Psychosocial Well-Being
- Disclosure = Coming Out

Changes in Psychosocial Well-Being and Cass' Stages¹



¹Halpin & Allen, 2004

Intersections: Sexual Identity and Student- Athlete Identity

- Homosexuality and sports have seemingly disparate ideologies.^{1,2}
- Sports not only rejects homosexuality, but also venerates hyperheterosexuality.³
- Homophobia in the overall American culture is decreasing⁴; however this is not the case for collegiate athletics.⁵
- While women athletes must constantly prove their heterosexuality, most people assume male athletes are heterosexual until proven otherwise.⁶



Small Group Discussion



1. How many “out” student-athletes do you have on your campus?
2. Do LGBTQQ student-athletes experience the campus climate differently than other students?



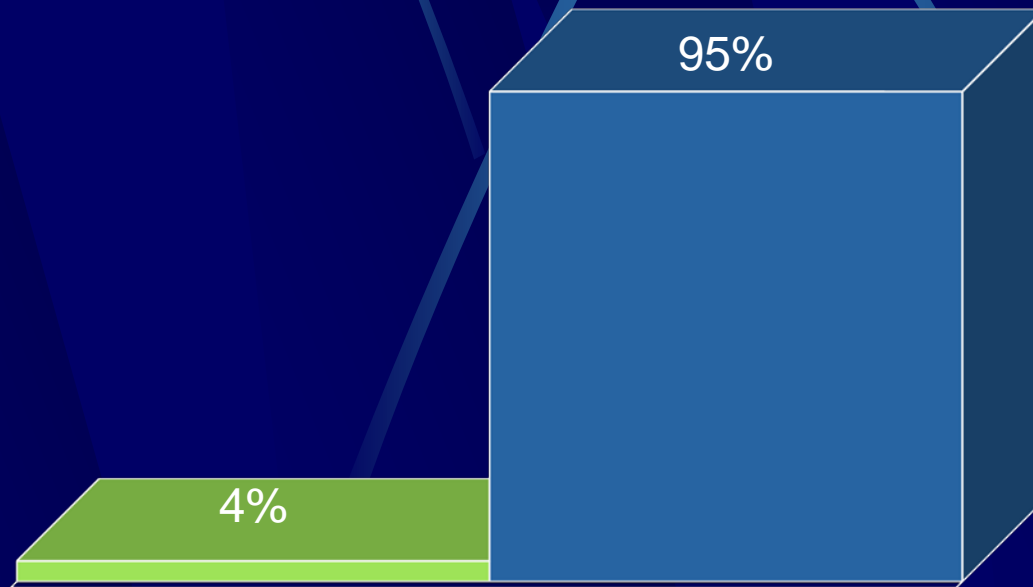
LGBQ Student-Athletes

Salient Demographic Characteristics



Respondents by Sexual Orientation¹ (n)

- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Questioning
- Heterosexual



¹ Unduplicated totals. Missing 13 responses.

Sexual Identity by Gender

	Women	Men	Trans/Other	Total
LGBQ	40 (80%)	7 (14%)	3 (6%)	50 (100%)
Heterosexual	631 (50%)	637 (50%)	0	1268 (100%)
Total	671	642	3	1313/1318

	Women	Men	Trans/Other	Total
LGBQ	40 (6%)	7 (1%)	3 (100%)	50
Heterosexual	631 (94%)	637 (99%)	0	1268
Total	671 (100%)	642 (100%)	3	1313/1318

$X^2(1) = 22.65$ (no trans)

$p < .001$

Sexual Identity by Race

	Heterosexual	LGBQ	Total
POC	195 (95%)	10 (5%)	205 (100%)
White	1070 (96%)	40 (4%)	1110 (100%)
Total	1265	50	

	Heterosexual	LGBQ	Total
POC	195 (15%)	10 (20%)	205
White	1070 (85%)	40 (80%)	1110
Total	1265 (100%)	50 (100%)	

$$X^2 (2) = .849$$

$$p = .654$$

Summary Slide

- In the sample:
 - 80% of those who identified as LGBTQ were women.
 - Of those who identified as men, only 1% said they were LGBTQ.
 - When comparing the sample by race, there were no statistically significant differences between the prevalence of those who identified as LGBTQ and a Person of Color and LGBTQ and White.

LGBQ Student-Athletes

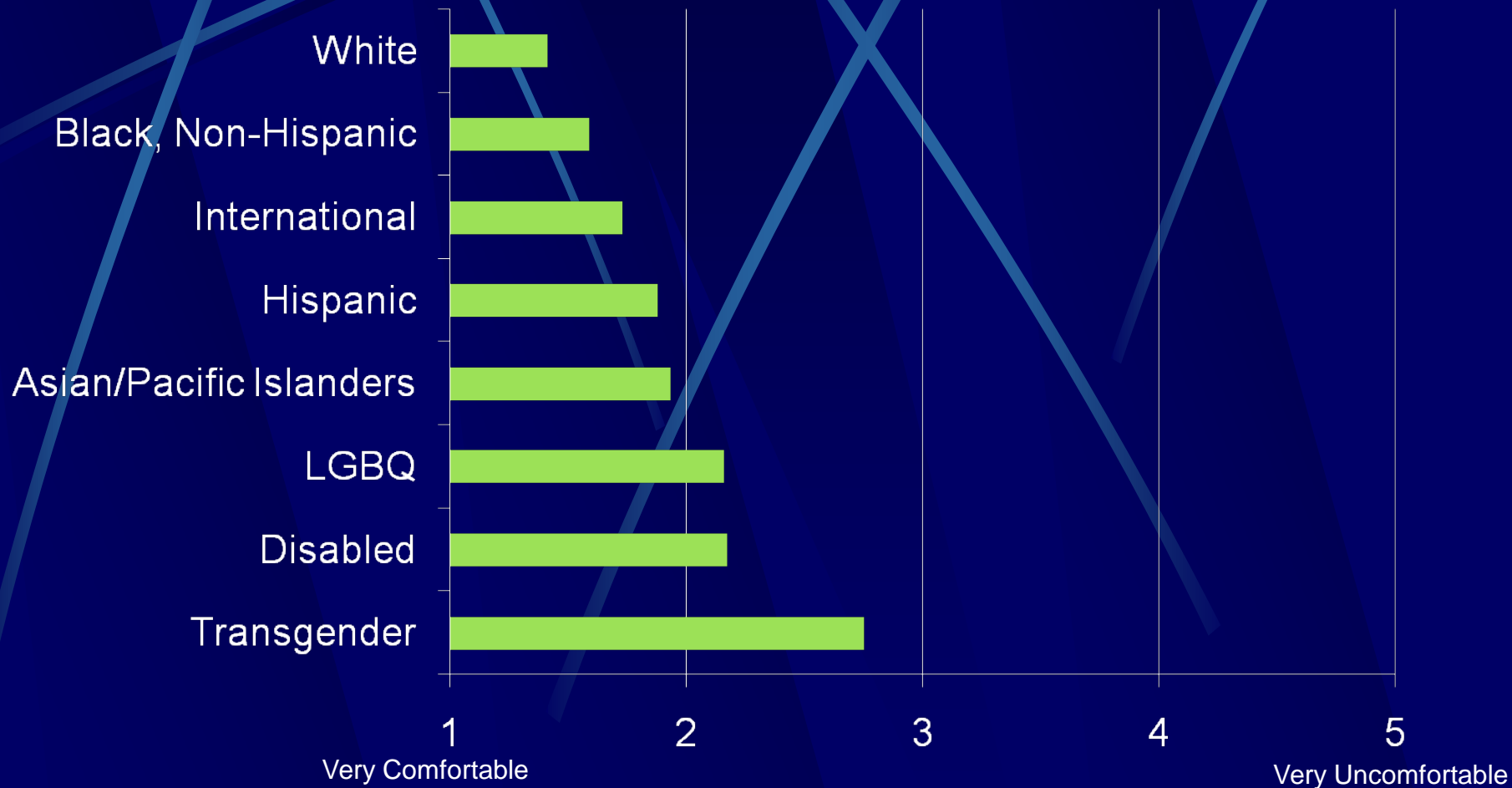
Experiences/Perceptions



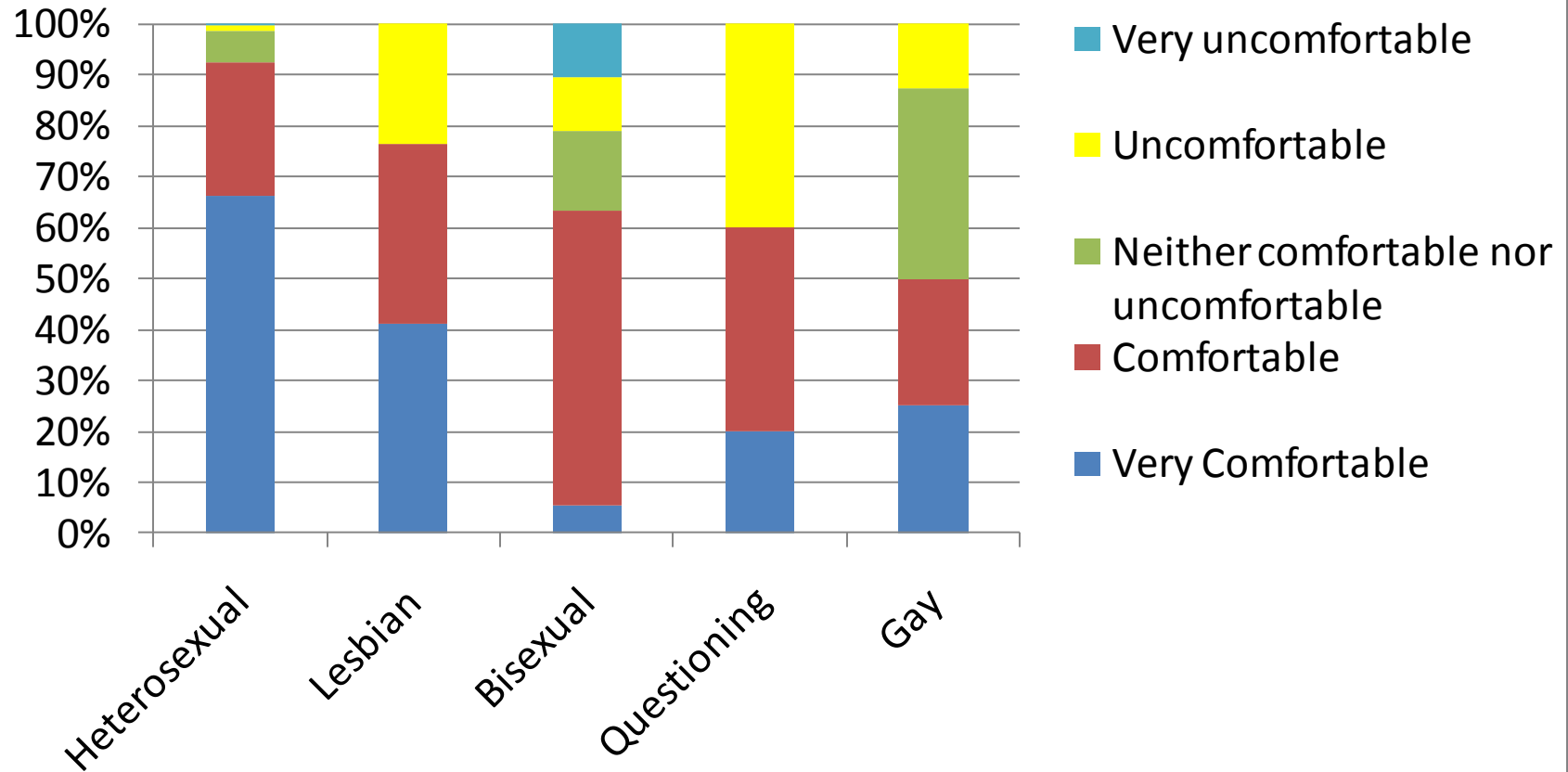
Experiencing and Perceiving Harassment

- Seven percent of heterosexual student-athletes experienced hostile or intimidating conduct that interfered with their ability to play their sport or learn in the classroom. Fourteen percent of LGBTQ student-athletes experienced this conduct.
- For heterosexual students experiencing harassment, it was most often based on their student-athlete identity. For LGBTQ student-athletes, it was most often based on their sexual identity.
- Harassment based on sexual identity was the second most frequent form of perceived harassment.

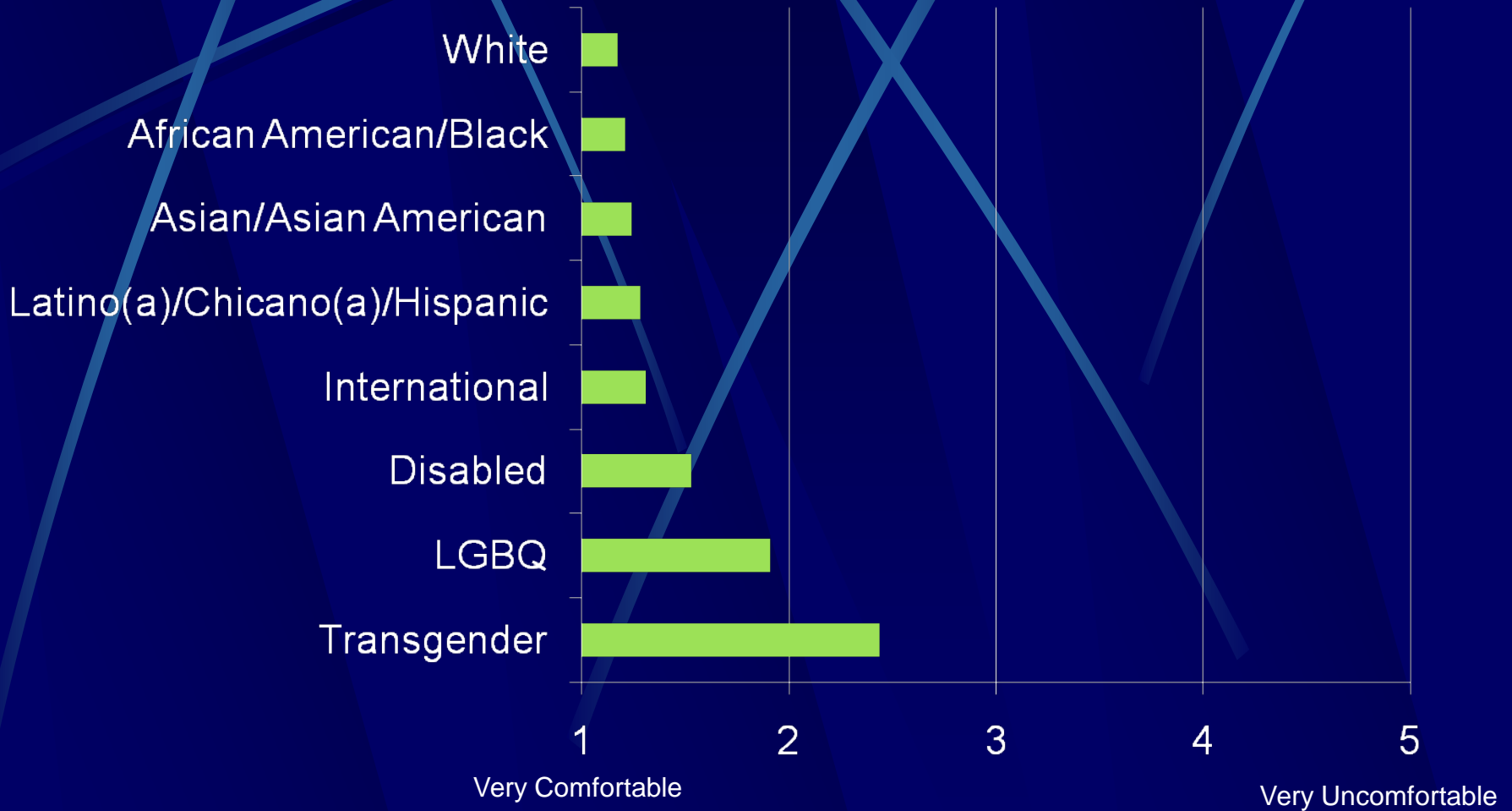
How would you rate the climate in intercollegiate athletics for...



How comfortable are you being open in intercollegiate athletics about your identity?



How comfortable are you having a teammate who is...



Summary of Analysis

- Only 1% of men identified as LGBTQ.
- Harassment of LGBTQ student-athletes is most often based on sexual identity, not student-athlete identity.
- LGBTQ student-athletes are significantly less comfortable being open about their identity in intercollegiate athletics than heterosexual student-athletes.
- 50% of gay student-athletes report being comfortable about their identity in intercollegiate athletics, compared to 76% of lesbian student-athletes.
- Student-athletes are moderately less comfortable having a teammate who is LGBTQ than all other identities except for transgender.

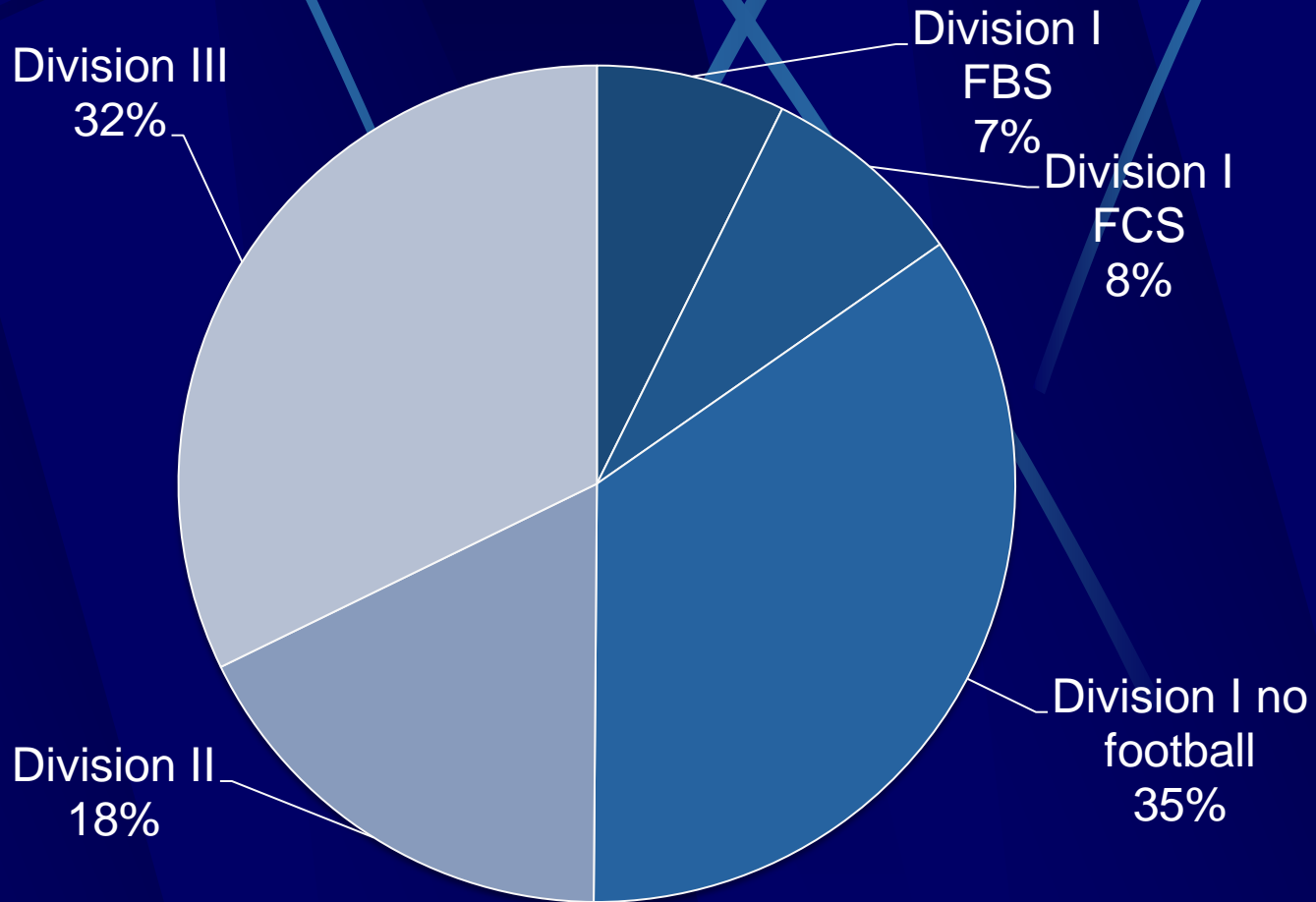
So What?

- Paradox of Identities – negotiating students' LGBQ identity and student athlete identity
- Being out about one's LGBQ identity is beneficial for healthy psychological adjustment; however there are risks associated with disclosure.^{1,2,3}
- Becoming comfortable about one's identity is a part of college students' development.⁴ Social engagement is necessary for healthy identity development.⁵
- Not resolving one's sexual identity could leave the student in a state of moratorium, when achievement is the desired outcome, thus stifling development.⁶

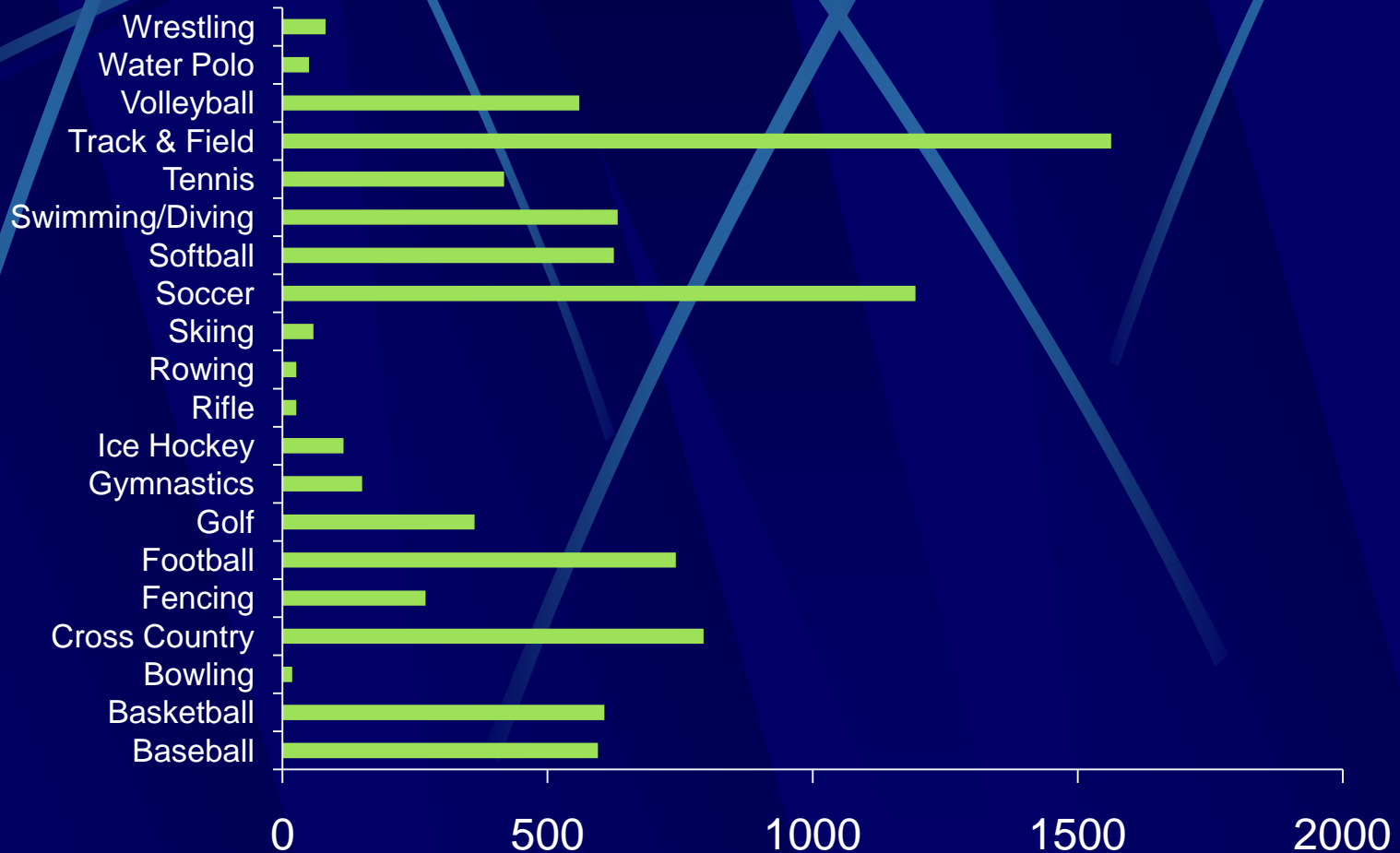
Current Project

- 8,683 Student-Athletes
- Gender Identity
- Sexual Identity
- Division
- Monograph available on project's website;
presentation at January 2011 NCAA
Convention

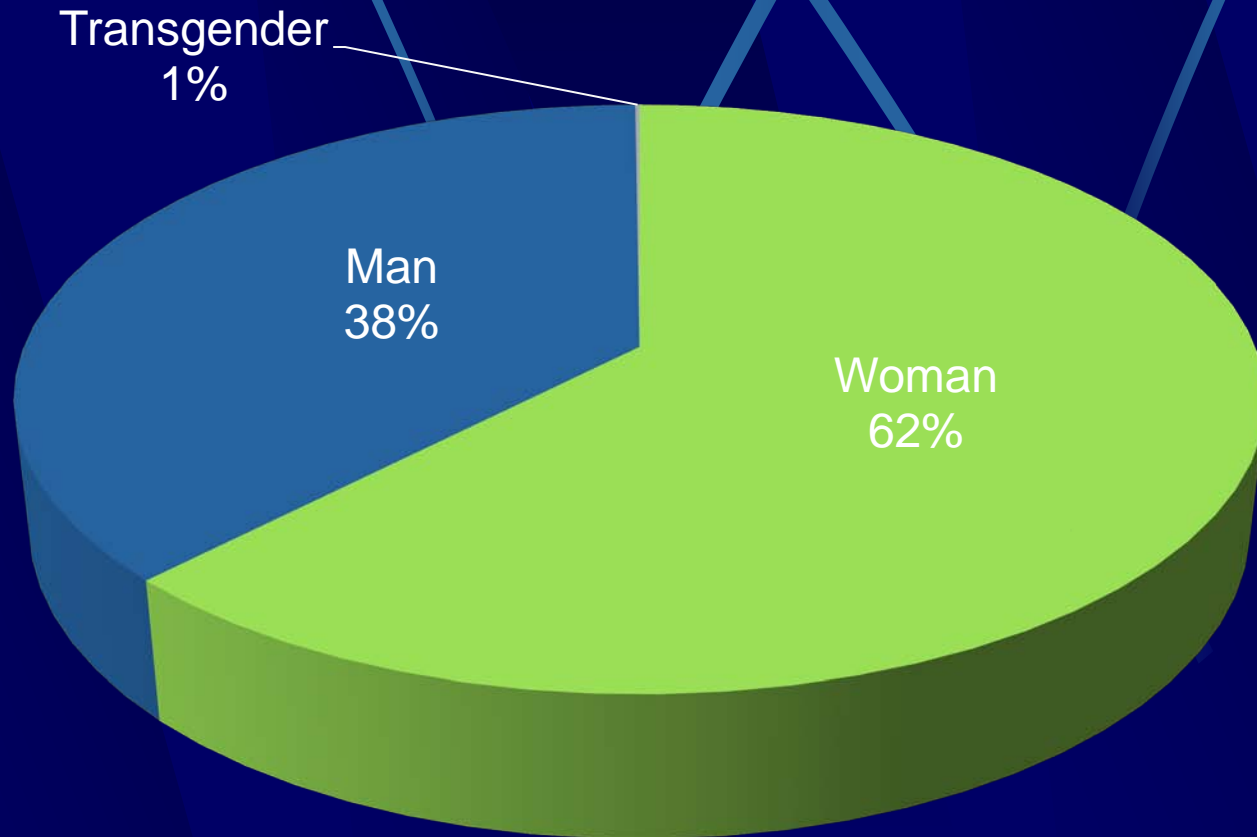
2010 Project Student-Athletes by Division



2010 Project Student-Athletes by Sport

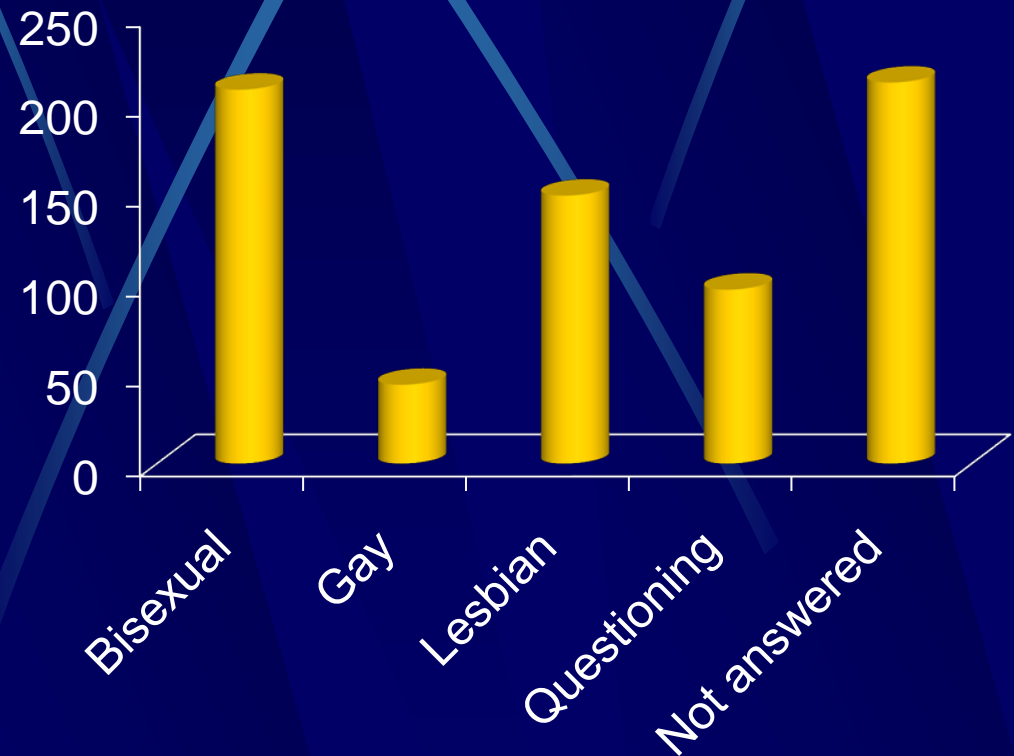


2010 Project Student-Athletes by Gender Identity



2010 Project Student-Athletes by Sexual Identity

	Count
LGBQ	498
Heterosexual	8054
Not Answered	212
Total	8764



Discussion

What can we do to better support LGBTQ student-athletes given these preliminary findings?

Please share potential best practices?

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Thank You!

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