Spring 2023

Handbooks, Policies, and Power: Discursive Language and LGBTQIA+ Representation in Christian University Handbooks

Kaitlin Merlino
Messiah University

Handbooks, Policies, and Power: Discursive Language and LGBTQIA+ Representation in Christian University Handbooks

Kaitlin Merlino

Department of Communication, Messiah University

COMM 493: Honors Research Project

Dr. Kate Oswald Wilkins

May 2, 2023

Abstract

For many years, tensions have existed between Christianity and the LGBTQ community, most apparent in contexts such as politics and education. One site of conflict is within the realm of Christian higher education, specifically in regards to campus-wide regulation of same-sex behaviors. This research examines the language in sexuality-based rules as communicated in four Christian universities' handbooks. Bakhtin & Holquist (1981) demonstrate the innate tension between dialogue and the social context within which it is understood. Therefore, since language is not neutral, the words creating these rules are in themselves a site of tension for the university, its contributors, its students, and the greater society. Based in critical theory with a focus on Bakhtin's perspective on dialogue, this paper will work to show the dialectical tensions that these rules create within these university contexts. Understanding the ways in which schools currently navigate those dialectical tensions, this research hopes to aid Christian universities in order to best serve their LGBTQ students.

Handbooks, Policies, and Power: Discursive Language and LGBTQIA+ Representation in Christian University Handbooks

Title IX began as an initiative to ensure that everyone, no matter their sex, could reap the benefits of government-funded education ("Title IX," 2021). Within the 50 years since its establishment, this law has enabled the equal treatment of women and men in educational spheres ("Title IX," 2021). As it has been continually amended throughout these years, Title IX has now been extended to protect LGBTQ+ students.

This inclusion has evoked unique tensions within religiously-affiliated universities. For these universities, same-sex relationships present a conflict with their belief systems. As a result, their handbooks include rules that require students to refrain from same-sex expression as a part of expected conduct. Title IX respects this right: "Title IX exempts from coverage any educational operation of an entity that is controlled by a religious organization only to the extent Title IX would be inconsistent with the religious tenets of the organization" ("Title IX," 2021).

At the same time, LGBTQ+ students have also stated their beliefs about these policies. In 2022, a large-scale lawsuit was filed against religiously-affiliated schools (REAP, n.d.). Some of the schools mentioned in the report have filed Title IX exemptions, while others have not. Since 2020, this Religious Exemption Accountability Project (REAP) has been working to ensure "the constitutional and basic human rights of LGBTQ+ students, seeking to end the sexual, physical and psychological abuses perpetrated under the religious exemption to Title IX at thousands of federally-funded schools, colleges and universities across America" (REAP, n.d.).

As the Biden administration continues to expand Title IX to cover not only sex, but gender identity and sexual orientation, tensions between religious universities and queer students have heightened (Horrigan, 2022). There are deeper patterns at play, however, than simply a

matter of law or competing ideologies. As these changes in the law reflect a change in language, we can see the innate power that words contain. Within their codes of conduct and handbooks, Christian universities have created ways to regulate the behavior of students, specifically in regards to queer expression, through the use of language. Creating change on this front proves difficult in light of the hierarchical structure of universities, as many religious institutions have boards of trustees and donors who regulate the school's adherence to doctrine. This research seeks to bring to light the tensions within Christian universities when encountering these issues, and to uncover how language plays a part in order to better serve Christian universities and their queer-identifying students.

Literature Review

Dialectics: Language, Power, and Tensions

This paper will apply the theoretical concepts of dialectics and dialectical tensions as understood by Bakhtin and Holquist (1981) as the basis for the handbook analysis. Building on this topic of dialectics, this section also seeks to explain the power dynamics inherent in communication, specifically when it comes to dialogue. The lens of critical theory implies that researchers not only analyze these phenomena, but propose rectifications when inequalities exist.

Language and Dialectics

Mikhail Bakhtin hails as one of the key proponents of the theory of dialectics and dialogue. In his 1981 essay "Discourse in the Novel," he discussed dialectics primarily in a narrative sense. Discourses, he maintains, are socially constructed (Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981). Due to this nature of language, there are different "dialectic orientations" a word may possess in relation to itself and others words (Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981, p. 276). Rather than seeing

language as passive, a mere vehicle with which to convey thought in a singular fashion, Bakhtin and Holquist (1981) point out that words interact with a myriad of factors as they are read, written, or spoken. Each word "is entangled, shot through with shared thoughts, points of view, alien value judgments and accents" (Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981, p. 276). There is no escaping a word's environment when trying to understand its meaning.

In particular, Bakhtin and Holquist (1981) stress that there is an element of pluralism in words; they don't relate to their object in one particular way, which leads to tension. In this case, tension would exist between different meanings and understandings; the push and pull between two different poles. Again, social construction and environmental factors create this phenomenon. There isn't a straightforward line from a word to object that each human can trace. Words also can harmonize or clash against others, enabling a sense of otherness, a dissonance. Bakhtin and Holquist (1981) state that "the word lives, as it were, on the boundary between its own context and another, alien, context" (p. 284).

Words, then, create a living dialogic interaction. They are pushed into existence, into a specific time and place with the implication that a question has been asked (Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981). They are aimed at a specific reader or listener. Bakhtin and Holquist (1981) note that this concrete listener is not a passive observer of words as they float past; this would imply a neutral understanding of the word. In contrast, when dealing with the actual meaning of the word, nuanced by the factors outlined above, listeners, too, are active members in this process of meaning-making (Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981). They carry with themselves these factors, giving a new perspective to the words they speak. Therefore, the listener, upon perceiving the message, crafts a response that creates understanding (Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981). This is the aim of the speaker: to create a sequence of words that the receiver can conceptually understand even with

their own perspectives (Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981). In this way, language seeks not only to create a connection between a word and its object — it is a dialogic, communal process in which one person's words interact with another's world, creating a new environment for the word to inhabit. It can take on new meanings or nuances, as a new perspective is placed on it. It encounters, in short, a new belief system (Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981).

Within a conversation, these belief systems can overlap, and the socially constructed ideas can be shared by particular groups. Due to this function, language can be socially typed and language itself contains genres. Genres come about as a language takes on a particular set of characteristics; "they knit together with specific points of view, specific approaches, forms of thinking, nuances and accents characteristic of the given genre" (Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981, p. 289). The speakers of these languages have a shared viewpoint and understand the objects to which their words point to; "outsiders," on the other hand, will not as easily understand their intentions (Bakhtin and Holquist, 1981). Groups will claim certain forms and words as "theirs" and "in so doing to a certain extent alienating these words and forms from other tendencies, parties, artistic works and persons" (Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981, p. 290). They create one intention for the words that create the language, and essentially can "other" those that are outside of the group.

> Every socially significant verbal performance has the ability— sometimes for a long period of time, and for a wide circle of persons— to infect with its own intention certain aspects of language that had been affected by its semantic and expressive impulse, imposing on them specific semantic nuances and specific axiological overtones; thus, it can create slogan-words, curse-words, praise-words and so forth. (Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981, p. 290)

For the purpose of this essay, Christianity and Christian or Biblical language acts as its own genre or social stratification. Even among a variety of denominations, Christian speakers share a worldview and use specific words that are imbued with a specific meaning and object. Like the subgenres of books, each sect has its own interpretations of the core beliefs that break off from each other; however, they are able to have many dialectic similarities. As an example, the idea of being "saved" has a specific meaning for religious speakers. Though a Baptist and Protestant may interpret the idea of being saved differently, they both can understand the outer context of the word as pertaining to eternal salvation. Those on the outskirts of this community may either not grasp the intended meaning of these words or may simply recognize a certain vernacular as emanating from a Christian community.

In addition to the fact that different language genres interact within dialogue, a variety of languages exist at one time (Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981). They all interact with one another in the present and envelop the languages of the past, creating a heteroglossia (Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981). Each contains differing world views, however, they all must interact and intersect (Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981). Therefore, discourse creates large-scale tension among competing discourses as they have different meanings and values. Within this heteroglossia, we find the Christian and LGBTQ+ interaction and tension.

In summary, language and words are socially constructed; therefore, context and content are both essential to the meaning of things. Next, no words are neutral. All language carries meanings that are on one level societal and on another level subjective. As people communicate, the simple process of sender-receiver understanding is muddled by the meanings that each person attributes to the chosen words. Languages remain connected throughout history through heteroglossia; however, as they are connected, they also are different. Additionally, this tension

is added to by the creation of group attributes and genres: particular people groups grasp onto certain phrases or words, giving them a clear intention that may be foreign to those on the outer groups. In all, these interactions throughout dialectics create a clear tension that researchers must investigate in the context of textual analysis.

Critical Theory: Power and Language

Language and communication imply the use of power, and power requires analysis to determine its social ramifications. Raymie McKerrow's (1989) critical theory employs rhetorical critics as those with the responsibility to "unmask or demystify discourses of power" (p. 91). Understanding the power relations within a society or artifact, the critic then can suggest ways to rectify the imbalance — this process is a continual one, constantly happening as power relationships shift and change (McKerrow, 1989). Therefore, rhetorical criticism must have an aim, a purpose: "it must nonetheless serve to identify the possibilities of future action available to the participants" (McKerrow, 1989, p. 92).

As critical theory is dependent on revealing and righting power imbalances within social contexts, it is important to unpack the role of power in language. Foucault (1982) defines power as "a way in which certain actions modify others" (p. 788). Power is not something that merely exists in the air; it is a conscious effort put into action that determines the ability of others to act in the present or future (Foucault, 1982). There are two elements that Foucault (1982) states must be present in a relationship of power: "the other," the being who the power is exercised upon, must be seen as having the ability to act, and the relationship of power must create the possibility for reaction and response.

Power coordinates with objectivity and communication towards an end (Foucault, 1982). Specifically, "the exercise of power consists in guiding the possibility of conduct and putting in

order the possible outcome" (Foucault, 1982, p. 789). Foucault (1982) sees power as less of a clash between foes and rather a matter of governing: "to structure the possible field of action of others" and direct the conduct of individuals and groups (p. 790). This proves important when looking to create equilibrium between tensions — two poles may not be sparring but each may hold different outlooks on how to reach a goal.

Since power acts as a tension between two entities seeking to reach a goal, we can see that dialogue plays a key part in navigating power imbalances. Dialogues imply reciprocity through interactions that can change their parties (Hammond et al., 2003). Not only communicating to make sense of the world, we also use this tool to manage conflict, bridge marginalized communities, and create organizational change (Hammond et al., 2003). As Bakhtin and Holquist (1981) established, this process involves dialectical tensions, which Hammond et al. (2003) claim are due to power relationships.

Tensions of power are permanent without a clear solution. Instead of framing them as a case of choosing one or the other, Hammond et al. (2003) states that they are "rather persistent contexts that imply decisions of balance" (p. 147). Baxter and Montgomery (1996) demonstrate this in their extrapolation of dialectical tensions to human relationships. Baxter and Montgomery (1996) suggest eight different ways that people handle tensions in their relationships, ranging from denying the tension to integrating the two poles. In this study, I will apply these navigation tactics to religious universities, as their tensions require constant negotiation. In the case of religious universities, the tensions between religious adherence and handbook rules are not inherently antagonistic. The aim is to direct the conduct of individuals while negotiating these ideologies.

Tensions in Religious Institutions

The aim of universities at large is to promote education and identity growth in students (Van Wicklin et al., 1994; Foster & Laforce, 1999). Promoted by mission statements, these universities seek to blend this objective with religiosity and moral reasoning. As young adults go through identity formation during these years, the encouragement and regulation at universities proves important. Religious institutions have the additional requirement of adherence to specific religious beliefs and actualizing those beliefs throughout the organization. Creating an environment supportive of identity and faith formation provides an additional layer of tension within religious universities. Specifically, this integration complicates the queer experience on campus.

The Aim and Effectiveness of Christian Universities

> At their core, universities are tasked with not only education but:
>
> increased self-actualization; expansion of personal, intellectual, cultural, and social horizons and interests; liberation from dogma, prejudice, and narrow-mindedness; development of personal moral and ethical standards; preparation for useful and productive employment and membership in a democratic society; and the general enhancement of the quality of graduates' postcollege lives. (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, p. 162)

Christian and faith-based universities "provide opportunities for students to pursue traditional courses of study, as well as religious and ministry options, in a milieu that is consistent with their religious beliefs" (Foster & Laforce, 1999). Integrating faith and education, they aim to create opportunities for students to make connections between the two, hoping to grow them personally and spiritually.

Religious universities are especially able to complete these goals as seen through research on their mission statements. These statements hold universities accountable, requiring evidence of their success in order to maintain accreditation (Lee et al., 2007). Lee et al. (2007) found that religious schools statements are "heavily character trait and values laden" (p. 102). They discovered that religious universities' mission statements work to produce these intended outcomes — even more so than those of secular schools. One reason for this result is that, while unifying the organization around a common ideal, religious schools provide clear reinforcements for their desired values (Lee et al., 2007). Therefore, Christian universities are able to make a clear impact on their students when it comes to imparting values. Tensions happen, however, when navigating values that are counter to popular religious beliefs, specifically when it comes to LGBTQ issues and the support of queer students' identity formation.

Identity Formation at Christian Universities

Identity formation is a key part of the university experience. Whether it is a product of a university or merely due to the stage of life, this formation tends to take place within the college years (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Marcia's (1966) identity development model has provided the basis for studies into college students' identity formation. Though Van Wicklin et al. (1994) and Foster and Laforce (1999) found no difference between secular and religious schools when it came to producing identity-formed individuals, students tend to feel comfortable in foreclosure and change only happens when students interact with other beliefs. Additionally, there isn't a clear explanation of what parts of students' identities are developed, though there is a clear emphasis on religious development. There is not much research on identity formation when it comes to issues that could potentially conflict with religious beliefs.

The development of sexuality and the formation of attitudes towards homosexuality are just one piece of identity development that takes place in college (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Though there are few studies that clearly connect how this identity development happens, Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) emphasize that "the freedom to explore and experiment at college, as well as the more supportive campus environment, may be more important" (p. 218). Therefore, students may be able to formulate their identity better when given a supportive place to do so, specifically when it comes to sexuality.

With handbook policies that prevent same-sex expression, those at Christian universities may not find themselves in such a supportive environment. Therefore, developing their identity with regards to their sexuality may feel more limited. At the same time, religious universities have clear reasoning and argumentation for their rules. This tension is more than surface level, and we must also look at the trickle-down effects that have come from it.

Christian University Tensions with Regards to LGBTQ Issues

As organizations, Christian universities encounter many types of tensions within their framework. Religious schools oftentimes have a board of directors that determine the university's stances and institutionalize change. Additionally, universities may belong to certain organizations, like the Christian College Consortium (CCC) or the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU). Organizations like these require specific values from the universities or colleges that are members. CCC's mission statement "seeks to encourage member institutions in their commitment to the centrality of Christ, promotion of human flourishing, and the full exploration of the meaning and implications of faithful scholarship" (Christian College Consortium, n.d.). The larger of the two mentioned above, the CCCU has three main tenants:

biblical truth, Christian formation, and gospel witness (CCCU, n.d.a). Adhering to these values is crucial when schools desire to remain within these organizations.

When universities create change within their campuses, they run the risk of expulsion from these types of memberships. For example, and of particular interest to this study, when Eastern University changed their policies to allow for the hiring of LGBTQ professors and added sexual orientation in their nondiscrimination rules, their status as a CCCU school came under review (Shimron, 2022). Putting Eastern under a "hiatus" for the 2022-2023 academic year, the CCCU viewed the university's change, specifically in regards to affirming LGBTQ faculty, as conflicting with their overarching beliefs (Shimron, 2022). In particular, the CCCU website states that "as to intimate sexual relations, they are intended for persons in a marriage between one man and one woman. We believe in the right of Christian institutions to maintain practices that align with this sexual ethic" (CCCU, n.d.b). In cases like these, universities like Eastern undergo a tension that involves weighing the benefits of belonging to Christian organizations, potentially losing funding from donors or alumni, and navigating the needs or wants of their campus.

Looking directly at Christian university campuses continually proves more complicated. As societal norms are changing, so is the landscape of higher education. Wolff et al. (2012) noted this nationwide shift towards a more "liberal" worldview, specifically with perspectives on the LGBTQ community. Though this is true on a larger societal scale, the evangelical and Christian communities remain ambivalent on these issues. Wolff et al. (2012) found that there is a correlation between evangelical beliefs and a predisposed negative attitude towards the LGBTQ community. However, they noted a distinction between more morally-based issues and general issues. On topics with moral implications, like same-sex marriage, Christian students

were more likely to hold negative attitudes; on general beliefs, like equal employment for gay people, they held attitudes similar to that of the public (Wolff et al., 2012). This research suggests that a change in perspective may be occurring when it comes to equal treatment of queer individuals, even on Christian campuses.

In other recent cases, students are campaigning for their schools to make outright changes to policies in acceptance of queer students and faculty. Seattle Pacific University (SPU) is currently experiencing a large amount of these tensions (Molina, 2022). After campaigning for greater equity on campus, a group of students and faculty have sued the school for its anti-LGBTQ hiring policies (Molina, 2022). At the same time, the Free Methodist religion the school originated from has a clear expectation of heterosexuality (Molina, 2022). SPU's board of trustees has made the move to dismiss the lawsuit in favor of their religious denomination's values (Molina, 2022). Therefore, the belief systems at play are changing to a more accepting, though still distanced view of the LGBTQ community. Additionally, the belief systems are giving way to action on behalf of both students and faculty on Christian campuses.

Therefore, Christian universities face different sets of expectations when it comes to their framework, making the issue of queer inclusion more complicated. Due to the ties to denominational stakeholders and religious organizations, money and support become key factors. At the same time, individual students and some religious schools are making movements in the direction of inclusion, which brings these tensions to light, forcing religious schools to re-evaluate their navigation tactics.

Sexuality and Gender at Christian Universities

Sexuality in general is a topic that, though growing, is still under-developed in faith-based institutions. Kieffer (2021) found that while "it is evident that there is an institutional

commitment to caring for students and engaging in whole-person development including sexuality," there is still a need for further collaboration between institutions and the needs of their students (Kieffer, 2021, p. 32). More specifically, creating care for queer students at religious institutions proves difficult. Not all institutions have succeeded in that challenge.

Previous research has shown queer students' negative experiences at religious universities have two overarching categories: use of language and institutional care. Language at large creates a site of struggle for LGBT students. Students found that the language used to describe their identity inside and out of the classroom were harmful. Students felt that they were marginalized: rather than "spirit-filled," "real Christians," they were "different" with a "rebellious spirit" (Craig et al., 2017, p. 10). These feelings of unwelcome cause a trickle-down effect that harms students psychologically and spiritually. Some experience a decline in mental health, resulting in deep depression and even suicide attempts (Craig et al., 2017). Isolation and rejection also create an overall negative atmosphere for students who feel unsafe discussing their identity. Therefore, as we see with regards to dialectical tensions, language is not neutral. It carries power and weight that directly impact these students.

Craig et al. (2017) discovered the isolation and rejection that these students feel goes past an interpersonal level and can come from the institution itself (Snow, 2018). A specific emphasis was the handbook and code of conduct rules (Craig et al., 2017). Students were aware both of these rules and their potential consequences (ie. expulsion, shaming, forced change of behavior, familial involvement) from both their own research and as part of their introduction to campus (Craig et al., 2017). This study noted that student handbooks are meant to be a "document which is supposed to detail and safeguard the rights of students" (Craig et al., 2017, p. 7). This provides an example of friction between a school's institutional aims and their institutional rules, as the

policies in place can be a source of negative harm for students. This is counterintuitive to their purpose.

This research matters, specifically to religious institutions, as these negative experiences can lead students into identity crisis in regards to both their sexuality and spirituality. Many queer students desire the religious aspect of their university. However, that community can become a hostile place and "may represent a loss of identity and self because such support may be difficult to find elsewhere for individuals" (Craig et al., 2017, p. 12). Tatum (2022) and Snow (2018) also noted that, compared to cis-het students, LGBTQ students experience more spiritual struggle. Specifically, these students experienced more hate directed at religious institutions and members and doubted their own faith (Tatum, 2022). As established above, these outcomes are contradictory to the aim and purpose of universities as they attempt to guide students through to a greater understanding of their identity. Religious institutions take on the greater responsibility to form their students' spiritual identity as well. As shown through this research, this desired outcome is not fully realized when it comes to queer students.

As a final note on this topic, Tatum (2022) found that queer students did not score high on the Moral scale — they didn't view their own actions as immoral. Therefore, this combined with the overall feelings of unwelcome seem to imply that it is the institutional environment that is the locus of this harm, not the students' own feelings and shame. In all, there is a disconnect between the goals of religious universities and the outcomes for LGBTQ students. While there has been research on the queer student experience at religious universities, there have not been clear analyses of the handbook and policy language. This research seeks to delve into the handbook policies as a site of tension for these organizations, hoping to better help students and universities to meet their goals. The question guiding my research is:

RQ: “How do Christian universities navigate tensions related to student sexuality and sexual identity within their student handbooks?”

Methods

I conducted this research by way of textual analysis of 4 religious universities’ handbooks and mission statements. I have chosen to protect the identities of the schools chosen. Within this paper, they will be referred to as University A, B, C, and D. These universities were chosen based off of a set of specific attributes. They had to be of a Christian background, actively connecting faith and learning as shown through their mission statements. Along those lines, they are all a part of the CCCU. With a small-to-mid-sized focus, the universities chosen have an undergraduate population ranging from 3,000 to 5,000. They would have to be listed on Campus Pride’s list of the worst universities for LGBTQIA+ students due to their atmosphere and rules. Not only do these schools have to express explicit handbook rules against queer behaviors, they also must have supplemental documentation that elaborates on the reasons or values behind these rules. Lastly, these universities must not currently hold an exemption from Title IX. Therefore, their rules are currently in line with current Title IX rules.

After analyzing and grouping my findings by theme, I discovered three main areas of dialectical tension. Schools may land differently between the two poles of the dialectical tensions; however, adhering to one side implies the other. I also used Baxter and Montgomery’s (1996) navigation tactics in order to determine how the schools handled each tension.

Results

Overview of Commonalities in Handbook Policy

All of the universities studied have policies that prohibit same-sex sexual action. The framing on this issue is that of a behavioral policy. As one discusses the issue, “it is what we do

with these attractions that determines whether we are living within God's will for our lives." In this way, the schools do not explicitly state that it is outside of their policy to identify as queer. However, policy violations happen when action takes place, whether with a partner of the same sex or with the portrayal of one's gender through clothing or pronoun usage. According to these handbook rules, the Bible and tradition provide evidence that homosexuality is sinful. Pulling from Genesis and Paul's letters, they establish that the "holy" and correct expression of sexuality is within a heterosexual marriage between a man and woman. Any actions outside of this are deemed as unaligned with God's will and immoral. Therefore, these schools view their policies as attempts to obtain their goal of helping students develop their Christian identity. While the overarching claims were similar for the four schools studied, each navigated the claim differently, as shown through the dialectical tensions that spring from it.

Christian University Dialectical Tensions within Sexuality Rules

Through my analysis of the schools' handbook policies and supplemental materials regarding sexuality, I found three primary areas of dialectical tension: diversity of beliefs and doctrinal unity, freedom and accountability, and individual-orientation and community-orientation.

Tension One: Diversity of Beliefs and Doctrinal Unity

Throughout the framework of their handbooks, the universities frequently mention the Christian faith and tradition as a key source of their ideology when it comes to both education and social standards. While most of these schools have a particular founding denomination or one that they remain tied to, they frame their community as a cohesive unit on the whole of Christian issues: "the education we provide is grounded in core Christian values." Another school frames it as being "broadly moral." There is a sense that the environment they are seeking

to create through their rules are characteristic of typical Christian communities. At the same time, the schools admit that different perspectives arise, both in the greater global perspective and within Christianity.

I identify this as the tension of diversity of belief and doctrinal unity. As schools that are inherently Christian, imbued with Christian values and morals, there is an obligation to uphold that ideology. I established that fostering spiritual identity is a part of their goals as a university. Additionally, their place in the college market, their position in organizations like the CCCU, their stakeholders and board of trustees, and their prospective audiences depend on adherence to particular values. At the same time, even within Christian circles, there remains diversity. Different interpretations and personal beliefs are inevitable. The schools must balance the need for unity and the celebration of diversity in this regard.

Universities A and B navigated this tension through segmentation, choosing one pole to adhere closest to on this specific topic (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996). Choosing the pole of doctrinal unity, these schools framed differing perspectives as of the outer social world. They emphasized instead that their community is a vastly different place that holds a different set of values from society. Subsequently, “as a Christian community, [the school] seeks to maintain itself by fostering those ideals and standards that are consistent with a Christian worldview.” They frame their rules as “broadly moral; they would be characteristic of any community that was self-consciously Christian.” These segmenting schools also emphasize that their standards are consistent with Christianity’s standards, highlighting “the obligation of Christians to separate themselves from worldliness.” Therefore, they chose to highlight the distinction of their community versus that of the world, rather than holding space for other worldviews.

At the same time, they do acknowledge the other pole of this tension, noting that it is "impossible to create a community whose behavioral norms will be totally acceptable to every Christian." While acknowledging that other viewpoints exist, these schools frame their rules as reflecting the core of Christian values, specifically the truth of what is taught within the Scriptures. Both had sections in their handbooks that laid out explicitly what is and is not condoned by the Bible. They stressed that their standards are based "on basic biblical standards for godly and Christian character and behavior." Stressing that "certain actions are expressly prohibited in Scripture and are, therefore, wrong," these schools frame the issue as black and white: since the Bible is the true standard for how to live our lives, we use it as the framework for our belief system and, therefore, our policies.

Scripture is used as data to uphold the overarching argument that homosexuality is wrong. The schools "seek to ground our understanding of human sexuality firmly in the Scriptures." As they desire to achieve a sense of unity on this issue and other matters, they view only one interpretation of Scripture in regards to their core values. They admit that creating cohesion in a Christian community is difficult, but do not provide a way that students can express opinions outside of what the school believes as an institution. In this way, they only allow for one interpretation of Scripture on particular issues, rather than leaving room for disagreement.

The schools that segmented along the doctrinal unity pole typically used more evaluative, spiritually-charged language within these handbook sections, expressing the prohibited behaviors as "forbidden" "sins of the spirit" that will not be tolerated in their community members' lives. This type of language is socially typed. Christians alike, no matter their denomination, will

recognize these words as having direct implications for their spiritual lives. As words are not neutral, this use of language specifically casts a negative portrayal of the behavior it describes.

The two remaining schools, C and D, frame the issue differently. They attempt balance between the poles, which is "an unstable response because responses to the oppositional poles are diluted at any given point in time" (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996, p. 64). They explicitly acknowledge the presence of other views, not only in the greater society, but within their campus. One school stated on their website that "in all we do, we desire to be non-sectarian in character," seeking to unify "all believers." Immediately from this quote, there is a desire for discussion and individuality, while still having a cohesive core based in their population of believers. Similar to the two previous schools, the balancing schools emphasize the core of Scripture as a source of truth and place an emphasis on the "historic Christian view." Therefore, they provide the same reasoning behind their rules as the segmenting schools: overlapping core values of Christianity.

They attempt to balance the tension, catering both to the differing views on campus and the core values. The schools admit that "Christians inside and outside of [our] community have different interpretations of Scripture on same-sex relationships." Acknowledging those differing views, both of these schools encourage and promise discussions on the topic of "sexuality, same-sex sexual behavior, same-sex attraction, sexual orientation, sexual identity, and gender identity with grace and humility." Promoting discussions on this topic theoretically allows for more diversity of thought and gives students a space to speak about their experiences, helping them grow into their identities.

As Baxter and Montgomery (1996) note, however, true balance is unachievable. Conditions form at these balancing universities as they seek to "create an inclusive environment

for all students — even those that disagree with [our] beliefs — as long as they refrain from sexual activity outside of marriage between a man and woman." Both poles are not fully realized. They are each compromised for this attempted balance. Full doctrinal unity is not achieved, as they promote the discussion and inclusion of LGBTQ issues on their campus. Full diversity of beliefs is not achieved, as queer students are limited in their behaviors and the overall position condemns homosexual behavior. In this way, we are able to see that dialectical tensions are not places where compromise can be realized. Both poles still exist and will still tug at one another in this system, compounding inevitable conflict.

Tension Two: Freedom and Accountability

The second dialectical tension is the allowance of freedom and seeking accountability. The schools acknowledge that college and the coming into adolescence is a time of growth and development for individuals. They seek to provide a place where students can learn how to make decisions for themselves. But while they seek to develop "responsibility for one's own behavior," they also want to establish "accountability for one's own actions." In order to continue promoting Christian values and meet their institutional goals, these schools need to enact accountability measures that may inhibit the actions of students.

By the presence of a handbook or student conduct code, all schools recognize the need for a degree of accountability. This keeps students safe and creates the community they desire to maintain. As Christian schools, they have an additional task of adhering to Christian ideals within this community. As described in the last tension, all schools do admit the presence of particular core values that are at the base of Christianity. Therefore, they highlight that these values are at the base of their conduct rules and the disciplinary actions that may occur after.

Schools A and B in particular highlight “responsible Christian freedom” as an overarching idea in their handbooks. This reflects a segmentation towards the accountability pole in regards to the behaviors prohibited by policy. They seek to have students and faculty live according to Christian standards, which “involves practicing those attitudes and actions the Bible portrays as virtues and avoiding those the Bible portrays as sinful.” We see segmentation in this statement. Students and faculty are free to choose their behaviors in certain situations (when those behaviors align with the Bible), and will face accountability when they choose actions outside of the allowed freedom.

Specifically seeking to prove themselves distinct from society, “a Christian approach to life and conduct seeks to promote freedom without becoming antinomian and to promote responsibility without becoming legalistic.” In this way, schools A and B acknowledge that they do not want to have total control over the individuals in their community; thereby acknowledging the other pole. Further, these schools frame their policies as “voluntarily entering into a social compact.” Again, there is an aspect of trading off their freedom for the college environment. Students that do choose to attend are required to embrace and uphold the community rules; however, “along with the privileges and blessings of membership in such a community come responsibilities.” University A even goes so far as to say that, if a student disagrees with the covenant, they may address it with a staff member before signing. Then, if there are still residual differences, “you may wish to enroll at another institution that more closely matches your convictions.” In order to reap the benefits of living in a Christian community, then, there is a requirement to give up some individual freedoms. If that is not something a student feels they can do, they need not enroll.

Schools C and D again tackle this issue with an attempt to find balance between allowing freedom and ensuring accountability. These schools, too, emphasize that their Christian values impact their behavioral rules. However, they place more emphasis on what happens when the freedom of the individual is enacted. The previous schools frame their policies as "thou shall nots." The implication is that, if you are truly committed to Christian living, you will not commit these actions. Schools A and B frame their sexuality rules in particular with no shades of gray, as shown in the first tension. They do not offer space for differences of opinion on this issue, let alone actions that fall outside of their guidelines. As schools C and D attempt to balance diversity of belief and unity of doctrine, there is more room for gray.

Along these lines, though they have accountability in place in their handbooks, they imply that the rules can and will be broken. Students have the freedom to do so. University C states that "we commit to hold students accountable for disregarding the sexual limits of Scripture, yet we will also work with them to support repentance as well as restoration in their relationship with Christ and others." This implies that students are free to choose their course of action on this behavioral issue. As it is against the policies of the school, there will be accountability. Moreover, the language used in this passage emphasizes wrongness of the action, highlighting the spiritual restoration that must be done afterwards.

University D states that "some will choose to act in ways that do not conform to [our] beliefs. While we do not desire this for our students, our first instinct is not to exclude but to love, include and involve students, allowing them to have a vibrant educational, faith and community experience on our campus." Tying this back to the first tension, this school acknowledges other belief systems on campus. Additionally, they seek that students abide by the prescribed rules, but admit that they cannot fully ensure this due to their freedom to believe and

act differently. A key difference in University D, they slightly minimize the accountability in this passage, reaching out first with love and not disciplinary action. Still, admissions that students can break the rules are built into both of these statements. Both freedom and accountability are acknowledged in each sentence, suggesting both that students are free to act and that the schools are responsible for the disciplinary action that will result. These statements almost emit an apologetic tone for having to outline these rules in the first place. Again, this is contrasted to the direct way the previous schools state their position on this issue.

Therefore, the schools took on different approaches to navigating this tension, some admitting that students will have to give up some freedoms to enter the school, while others admonished students after the rules had been broken. Similar to the first tension, the balancing act Universities C and D try to achieve is not fully met. Through having both diversity and unity of beliefs, they are forced to acknowledge that a variety of actions will be taken in regards to sexuality policies. It becomes a difficult balancing act, as the schools imply or outright state that they know students will act outside of their policies, using their freedom. Then the issue becomes a matter of reactive accountability, whereas Universities A and B have an easier task of proactive accountability, since they have a clear leaning towards one side of the tension in terms of both beliefs and actions.

Tension Three: Individual-Orientation and Community-Orientation

Similar to the freedom and accountability tension, these schools navigate the tension between prioritizing an individual-orientation and a community-orientation. These colleges seek to promote the growth and care of their individual students academically, socially, and spiritually. Especially since college is a time of growing in one's individual identity, providing spaces within the classroom and through additional on-campus resources proves important to

achieving this goal. However, similar to the accountability pole, religious universities have a responsibility to create an environment that promotes the school's ideals on a community level and helps them meet their overarching goals as an institution and organization. Balancing the individual and the community can create tension, specifically when it comes to rules about sexuality.

Before delving into each school's navigation of the tension, I want to first elaborate on the community-orientation pole. Each school touches on this in some capacity. Rather than the more individualistic outlook that defines much of our culture today, encouraging people to do what makes them happy, these schools take a more collectivist approach. They emphasize that each person in their community is interconnected through some degree of common beliefs and common goals as Christians. Therefore, actions of one affect the whole. If each person is working towards the good of the community, upholding the core Christian values, then the community thrives. If individuals do not align with those values, they come into conflict with the community and the overall goal of the community. The community also must then help this member come back to redemption. It is this connection that can create a tension with individuality. This idea goes along with the second tension: there is freedom to act individually, however, your actions affect the community and therefore may have consequences.

University B segments this tension clearly alongside the community-orientation pole. Their handbook states that "attaining common goals and ensuring orderly community life may necessitate the subordination of some individual prerogatives." Again, this ties back to their approach to Tension 2. In certain behaviors, accountability and responsible Christian freedom take precedence over individual desires. This theme overarches all of their policies, voicing that some "behavioral patterns must be sustained in order that the objectives of the College can be

met." This applies specifically to queer students on their campus. Due to their segmentation of the other tensions, they "uniformly" see same-sex sex as not only inconsistent with Biblical teaching, but as "affronts to God's holiness" and examples of "broken sexuality" Therefore, in determining the behavioral standards that seek to benefit the community on campus, they desire that individuals avoid same-sex expression and action. This is framed as something that will benefit the community at large.

They achieve this sanction through implication of the individual completing the action. They do state that homosexual practice "will not be tolerated;" however, in their additional information behind this policy, they do not clearly address queer students. This section frames the issue of sexuality as a community one, using the word "we." It mentions the power of singleness for *all* people, stating that it "offers to each one of us a reminder of our eternal state." They end their section with a vague call for all humans to the "processes of refining, purifying, self-examination, self-control, self-sacrifice, confession, repentance, and renewal" before coming before Christ. They do not acknowledge the queer individual on campus, providing no concrete resources for them. This school does acknowledge the queer individual, but only through implication. Otherwise, it frames the issue of sexuality as a community goal to be worked towards together.

University A also upholds the idea of a collected community. They ask members "take steps to hold one another accountable, confronting one another in love as we work together to live in faithfulness both to God's Word and to our own word." The community and the good of its Christ-centered atmosphere is given precedence, and is expected to be reflected in the individual. University A's recommends that each member of the community pursues "Christ-centered sexuality" by going to church, praying to God, trying to understand his purpose for

sexuality, and ends with obeying "God's plan for human sexuality as celibate single persons, or as persons faithfully married to someone of the opposite sex." As with University B, no concrete resources are offered for queer students, who again are not acknowledged. All students are offered to reflect internally through prayer or externally through a church or friend group that does align with Christian values. Moreover, this college believes "that the desires, attractions, and actions of Jesus' followers are under the authority of God's Word and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, with the prayers and encouragement of God's people in the Church toward Christ-like obedience." Again, the value of a Christian community is emphasized, rather than the individual, their identity, or their struggle. Further, they assert that this community effort towards adhering to holy sexuality can help those that struggle in this area. This school ends their sexuality statement with the following:

> "[We accept] the testimony of Christian brothers and sisters who do not experience a significant shift in their same sex attraction and pray for the help of the Holy Spirit to remain faithful as followers of Christ. The College also accepts the testimony of brothers and sisters who say that by the help of the same Holy Spirit they have experienced sanctifying change in their sexual desires."

All of these provisions for the individual boil down to the school's desire for each person to fit into the community they live and learn in. Even if this is a struggle for queer students, they ask them to repent and struggle, as all members of the community need to repent due to sin.

As in previous tensions, Universities C and D attempt to balance the poles. They acknowledge the important aspects of a Christian community. University C in particular makes sure to note that they "commit to upholding the values of a Christ-centered community, asking

students to adhere to the Community Covenant and policies as set forth in this Student Handbook in order to benefit the entire institution." However, Universities C and D diverge from this segmentation in their sexuality handbook policies. These portions of the handbook begin with a call for love and inclusion, emphasizing that all people are made in God's image. They make a commitment to having conversations around this topic, recognizing that "engaging questions about sexuality and gender is an important part of students' development." They also provide concrete resources that students can speak to about sexuality, like Title IX coordinators, on-campus counselors, and other members of the community. They note that they will not tolerate derogatory language or harassment in regards to sexuality. While they emphasize the importance of adhering to the community standards, they provide the individual with validation, kindness, and care that seeks to ensure safety on campus.

Even between University C and D, there is a difference between how they acknowledge the LGBTQ community. University C still doesn't explicitly acknowledge that their students may be queer. They state instead that "Christian communities should offer kindness to those who experience same-sex attraction or identify with a gender other than their biological sex." There is still a bit of distance placed between queer people and the campus community. However, there is still an implication that queer students reside on campus within their providing for resources and admonishments about harassment.

University D is the only school that directly addresses its queer students, stating "we recognize that there are individuals who identify as LGBTQ or who experience same-sex attraction within our community. We strive to love and welcome all individuals." This acknowledgement through language helps to give these students a presence in the handbook. It helps make queer students more than just a policy, behavior, or group that exists elsewhere in the

world. There are given a place on campus by the affirmation that they are valued members of their community.

At the same time, these universities still uphold the Biblical idea of marriage and have rules that prohibit same-sex individuals from fully expressing themselves. There is still an element of putting the community goals and development before that of students. University C even has rules against pronoun changes and dressing in ways that do not align with one's gender, which none of the other schools address. When the rules are broken, these schools still "support repentance as well as restoration in their relationship with Christ and others." Again, suggesting that homosexual actions affect the whole community, not just the individual's spirituality. They emphasize the core values of Scripture as a backing for this claim. Therefore, they still seek to help the individual by "righting" their place in the community. So, though these queer students are technically included and cared for, especially in University D, they are still asked to give up pieces of their identity in order to be allowed to remain in the community.

In this final tension, only one school acknowledges the presence of queer students on their campus. Otherwise, their identity is placed beneath the greater needs of the community and its members. As with the previous tensions, the balancing of the tensions leads to more contradictions and gray areas, which can be more difficult for students and administrators at these schools.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to gain a greater understanding of how Christian universities are currently balancing the dialectical tensions that arise out of LGBTQIA+ centered rules. After mapping out their arguments, I was able to distinguish three main areas of tension in my sample: diversity of beliefs and doctrinal unity, freedom and accountability, and care of individuals and

the good of the community. Two schools chose to navigate the tensions through segmentation, while the remaining two attempted to balance the tensions.

As the secondary aim of my research was to use this information for the betterment of students, there are a few more ideas to discuss before closing. The navigation of these tensions through language gleans a few observations. Only one school addresses their queer student population on their campuses. The other three either frame queer students as being a presence outside of their community. However, they are acknowledged through implication. The presence of these policies, the disciplinary actions as a result of breaking them, the admonitions to seek Christ-centered sexuality, — these all imply the existence of queer students engaging in this behavior or struggling with their identity on these campuses. Even in the schools that will not tolerate this behavior, they acknowledge that sexual immorality is a struggle for their entire campus community. As they list same-sex expression as a case of sexual immorality, they acknowledge that members may encounter this. Derrida would describe this as a case of différance.

As I established in my literature review, language creates meaning in conjunction with its author and audiences. However, we also create meaning through what is not present in our use of language. Différance says that we know what something is by knowing also what it is not (Derrida & Kamuf, 1991). Every word goes through a chain reaction to create meaning — it is created through reference to other words and the differences between them (Derrida & Kamuf, 1991). Words imply, then, both their intended meaning and their opposite. That which is without, or unstated, is already within. These schools acknowledge queer students in their handbooks by negating their presence.

Along these lines, queer students are being negated through language, as only one of these schools is talking to them. Otherwise, homosexuality is framed as an issue, a policy, a behavioral standard. Not people. And further, when it is discussed, the language surrounding it is negative, specifically spiritual language, regarding same-sex behavior as sinful or immoral. That creates negative meaning associated with homosexuality, especially when contrasted to holy heterosexual marriage.

Wander (1999) would call this negation through language an example of the Third Persona. The Second Persona is that which the audience should identify with; in this case, these schools push students towards holy sexuality within heterosexual marriage. The presence of same-sex relationships is either negated or framed negatively. Same-sex intercourse is not sex between a husband and wife. Therefore, it is one of the behaviors you should avoid, the third persona. Therefore, they are a Third Persona, that which is negated through language, an object, whose non-presence becomes a springboard to bounce negative traits and ideas.

In my analysis, the schools that segmented this issue used more spiritually evaluative language, working to emphasize the sinfulness of one action while glorifying the holiness of the other. Even though the balancing schools used more care-oriented language, they still tried to appease both sides of the pole. This only achieved greater confusion and contradiction. Their environment becomes a place where students can come for acceptance, as long as they remain refrain from same-sex behaviors. This would be what Sumerau et al. (2018) call conditional acceptance: an “increased social tolerance of minority groups by expressing acceptance of such groups in limited or partial ways" (p. 63). These students can belong as long as they limit their identity.

In all, the current ways that the schools in my sample are negotiating these tensions should be reevaluated, as each tactic is not fully effective for the aims of a university or the good of the students. The queer students on these religious campuses are not spoken to in these materials; they are spoken at or about. Further, they are spoken about as a political or religious issue, as a position, but not as people. In order to bring care to these students and help them grow in their identities, these schools must reevaluate the navigation of these tensions in their handbooks. These implications are of great importance for religious universities attempting moving forward on this issue.

Limitations and Further Research

Moving forward, more research should be conducted on this topic. My sample size was overall small. Therefore, the tensions I identified need to be extrapolated to a larger population of schools. Another addition to this study could be comparing the language and tensions of secular schools to religious schools, seeing how these different categories of schools address their student populations. Future studies should also engage with religious schools, seeking to understand if a re-negotiation of the dialectical tensions would help alleviate some of the conflict that persists on these campuses. I would argue that there needs to be a continuing evaluation of how schools balance the tensions in response to changes in the environment and in their student populations. The center of any change on campuses should be a question of what will benefit the students.

Conclusion

While a conversation is happening on the topic of LGBTQ issues at these schools, it is *about* LGBTQ students, not *with* them. The focus remains on the sinfulness of behaviors outside of the ideal, and how those behaviors create a contrast with the grace that is provided through

marriage. Queer students are left as an implication or overall reduced to a sinful action according to these handbooks. This is important because it is hard to care for students if these schools cannot acknowledge that they exist on their campuses. As the two schools sought to segment the issue, they neglect care for queer students. As the other schools sought to balance, they only achieved more confusion and contradiction. It is hard to obtain the overarching goal of a university, to care for its students, when a group of those students is negated. Wander summarizes it best: “the objectification of certain individuals and groups discloses itself through what is and is not said about them and through actual conditions affecting their ability to speak for themselves” (Wander, 1999, p. 370). Allowing greater visibility for queer students at Christian universities and re-navigating the current tensions may help these schools provide care for this group of students.

References

REAP. (n.d.). *About us: Religious exemption accountability project: United States*. Retrieved December 10, 2022, from https://www.thereap.org/lawsuit

Bakhtin, & Holquist, M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: four essays* (Holquist, Ed.). University of Texas Press.

Baxter, L. A. & Montgomery, B. M. (1996) *Relating: Dialogues and dialectics* Guilford Press, New York, ISBN 1-57230-099-X

Christian College Consortium. (n.d.). *About: Mission Statement of the CCC.* Retrieved December 7, 2022, from https://www.ccconsortium.org/about/

CCCU. (n.d.-a). *Council for Christian Colleges & Universities*. Retrieved December 7, 2022, from https://www.cccu.org/

CCCU. (n.d.-b). *Our institutions*. Retrieved December 7, 2022, from https://www.cccu.org/institutions/

Craig, S. L., Austin, A., Rashidi, M., & Adams, M. (2017). Fighting for survival: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning students in religious colleges and universities. Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services: The Quarterly Journal of Community & Clinical Practice, 29(1), 1-24. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10538720.2016.1260512

Derrida, & Kamuf, P. (1991). *A Derrida reader: between the blinds*. Columbia University Press.

Foucault, M. (1982). The Subject and Power. *Critical Inquiry*, 8(4), 777-795. Retrieved April 11, 2021, from http://www.jstor.org/stable/1343197

Foster & Laforce, B. (1999). A Longitudinal Study of Moral, Religious, and Identity Development in a Christian Liberal Arts Environment. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, *27*(1), 52–68. https://doi.org/10.1177/009164719902700105

Daniels, & Gustafson, J. N. (2016). Faith-Based Institutions, Institutional Mission, and the Public Good. *Higher Learning Research Communications*, 6(2), 91–101. https://doi.org/10.18870/hlrc.v6i2.300

Hammond, S. C., Anderson, R., & Cissna, K. N. (2003). The Problematics of Dialogue and Power. *Communication Yearbook*, *27*, 125–157. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15567419cy2701_5

Horrigan, B. (2022, June 23). *Biden admin proposes sweeping changes to title IX to undo Trump-era rules*. NBCNews.com. Retrieved December 10, 2022, from https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/biden-admin-proposes-sweeping-changes-title-ix-undo-trump-era-rules-rcna34915

Kieffer, Kenedy M., "Let's Talk About Sex: Healthy Sexuality Programming at Faith-Based Institutions" (2021). Master of Arts in Higher Education (MAHE) Theses. 187.

Lee, Davis, J., Rajadhyaksha, U., & Ruhe, J. (2007). Mission Possible: Do School Mission Statements Work? *Journal of Business Ethics*, 70(1), 99–110. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-006-9076-7

Marcia, J. E. (1966). Development and validation of ego identity status. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 34,* 551-558.

McKerrow, R. E. (1989). Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis. *Communication Monographs,* 56(2), 91. https://doi- org.ezproxy.messiah.edu/10.1080/03637758909390253

Molina, A. (2022, December 9). *SPU board members seek dismissal of lawsuit over LGBTQ exclusion*. Religion News Service. Retrieved December 13, 2022, from https://religionnews.com/2022/12/09/spu-board-members-seek-dismissal-of-lawsuit-over-lgbtq-exclusion/

Pascarella, & Terenzini, P. T. (2005). *How college affects students: a third decade of research* (1st ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Shimron, Y. (2022, November 14). *Eastern University on hold from CCCU after dropping ban on LGBTQ faculty*. Religion News Service. Retrieved December 7, 2022, from https://religionnews.com/2022/11/14/eastern-university-drops-ban-on-lgbtq-faculty/

Snow, K. C. (2018). Experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning or queer students at evangelical Christian colleges as described in personal blogs. *Journal of College Counseling*, 21(1), 58-72. http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.messiah.edu/10.1002/jocc.12087

Sumerau, J. E., Grollman, E. A., & Cragun, R. T. (2018). 'Oh my God, I sound like a horrible person': Generic processes in the conditional acceptance of sexual and gender diversity. Symbolic Interaction, 41(1), 62-82. http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.messiah.edu/10.1002/symb.326

Tatum, M. (2022). Spiritual Struggle in Cisgender Heterosexual and LGBTQ+ Students at a Conditionally Accepting Christian University. Pennsylvania, United States: Messiah University, Department of Psychology, Criminal Justice, and Sociology.

Title IX. The United States Department of Justice. (2021, August 12). Retrieved December 10, 2022, from https://www.justice.gov/crt/title-ix#Introduction

Van Wicklin, J., Burwell, R., & Butman, R. (1994). Squandered years: Identity foreclosed students and the liberal education they avoid. In D.J. Lee & G.G. Stronks (Eds.) *Assessment in Christian higher education* (pp. 75-97). New York: University Press.

Wander, P. (1999). The Third Persona: An Ideological Turn in Rhetorical Theory. In J.L. Lucaites, C. M. Condit, & S. Caudill (Eds.), *Contemporary rhetorical theory: a reader*. (pp. 357-379). Guilford Press.

Wolff, J. R., Himes, H. L., Miller Kwon, E., & Bollinger, R. A. (2012). Evangelical Christian college students and attitudes toward gay rights: A California university sample. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 9(3), 200-224. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19361653.2012.652892