

LGBT Climate in Physics

BUILDING AN
INCLUSIVE
COMMUNITY



AMERICAN PHYSICAL SOCIETY

APS Ad-Hoc Committee on LGBT Issues

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Charge to APS Ad-Hoc Committee on LGBT Issues

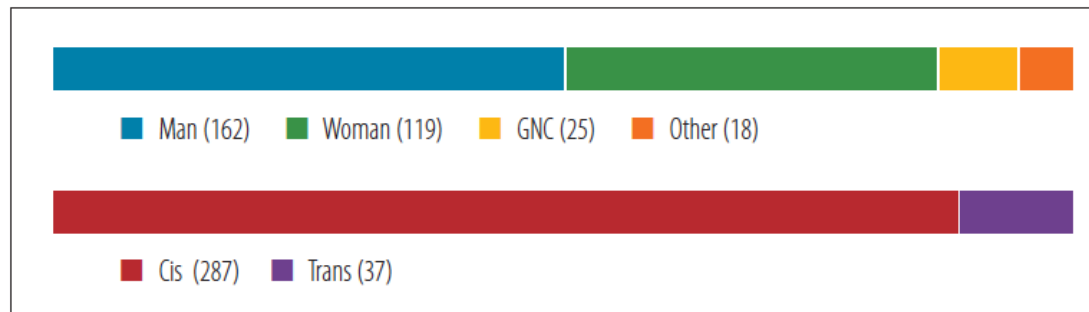
"...advise the APS on the current status of LGBT issues in physics, provide recommendations for greater inclusion, and engage physicists in laying the foundation for a more inclusive physics community."



*Kate Kirby,
Executive Officer of the APS*

Information Gathering

- Focus Groups at APS Meetings
 - 2014 and 2015 at both March and April Meetings
- Climate Survey of LGBT Physicists (May-June 2015)
 - Surveyed 324 individuals through snowball sampling.
 - Follow up interviews with 5 survey participants.

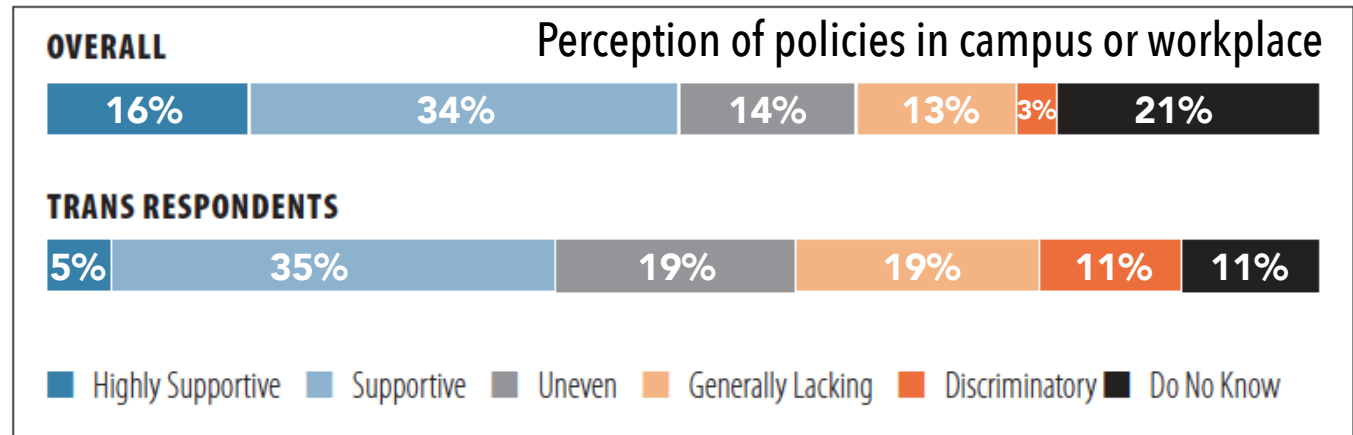


- APS Membership Survey Question (October 2015)
 - 2,596 responses of which 2.5% identified as LGBT and 14% preferred not to provide this information.
 - Notably, 16.3% of those 18-25 identified as LGBT.

Background and Findings 1

LGBT physicists have faced uneven protection and support from legislation and policies.

Protest against Section 377 in India that criminalizes gay and lesbian sexual relations



U.S.

South Dakota Bill on Transgender Students' Bathroom Access Draws Ire

By MITCH SMITH FEB. 25, 2016

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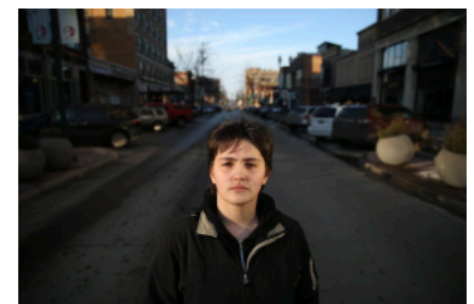
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SIOUX FALLS, S.D. — For Thomas Lewis, a high school senior who plays trumpet in the marching band and works evenings at a grocery store, South Dakota's contentious debate over transgender rights is personal.

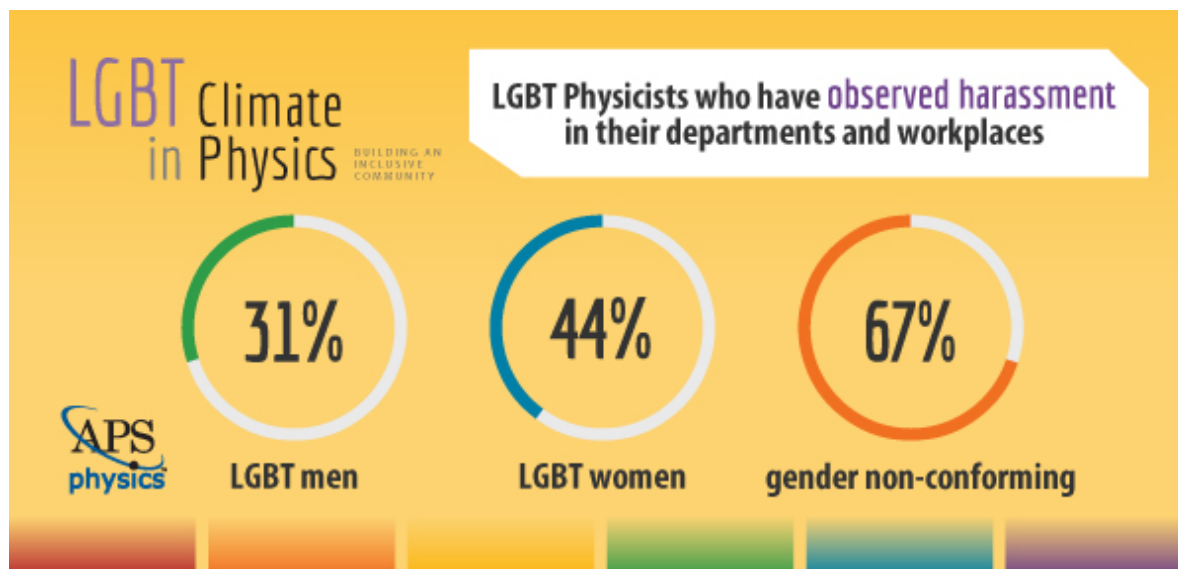
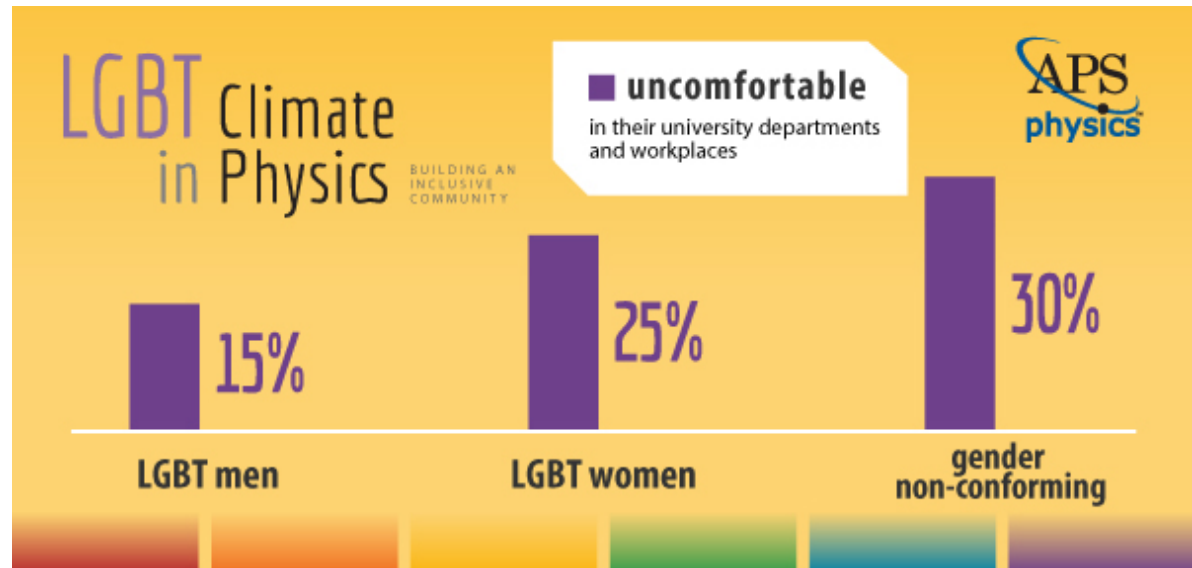
Mr. Lewis, 18, who came out as transgender last year, has been



Thomas Lewis, 18, a transgender man. in

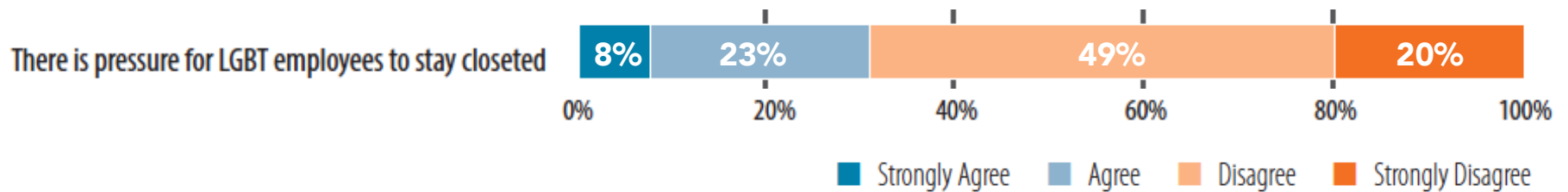
Background and Findings 2

The overall climate experienced by LGBT physicists was highly variable.



Background and Findings 3

In many physics environments, social norms establish expectations of closeted behavior.



"In the last lab I worked with, I was afraid to even mention that I might be gay. They were all very traditional sort of people."

Background and Findings 4

Isolation was a common theme for many LGBT physicists.

"I am not really out at work because I don't feel comfortable outing myself in the environment. There are no other out LGBT+ individuals in my department."

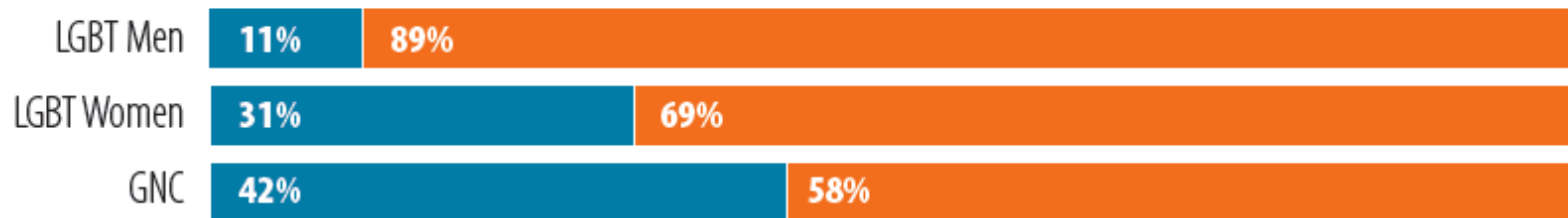
Background and Findings 5

A significant fraction of LGBT physicists have experienced or observed exclusionary behavior.

Experience of exclusionary behavior broken down by gender and separately for trans respondents.

EXPERIENCE OF HARASSMENT

■ Yes ■ No



LGBT = lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender as well as other sexual and gender minorities

GNC = gender-nonconforming

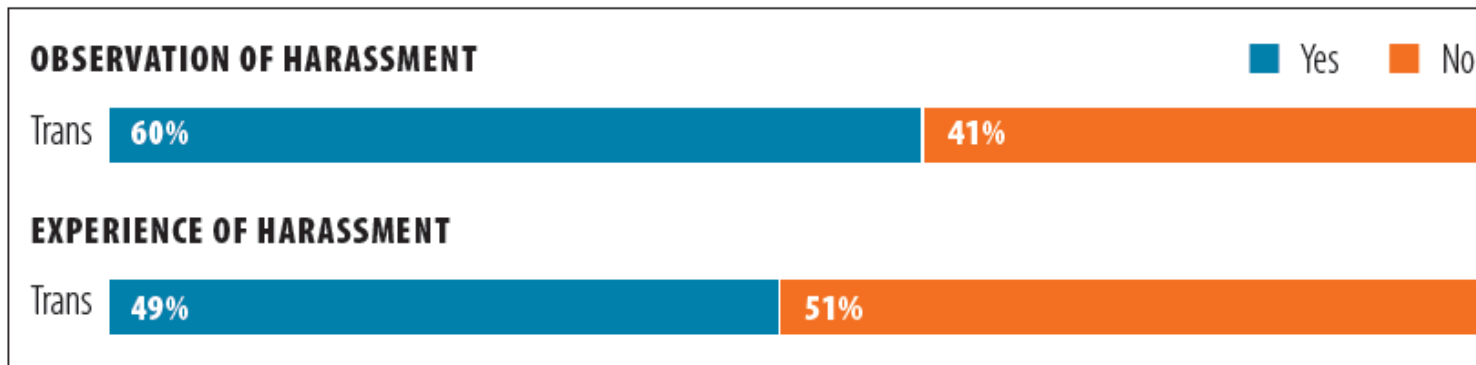
Background and Findings 6

LGBT physicists with additional marginalized identities faced greater levels of discrimination.

"It is my impression that faculty are intolerant and silent bystanders towards LGBTQ students. Upon hearing comments made by faculty I know there are negative attitudes and stereotypes towards LGBTQ people and people of color."

Background and Findings 7

Transgender and gender-nonconforming physicists encountered the most hostile environments



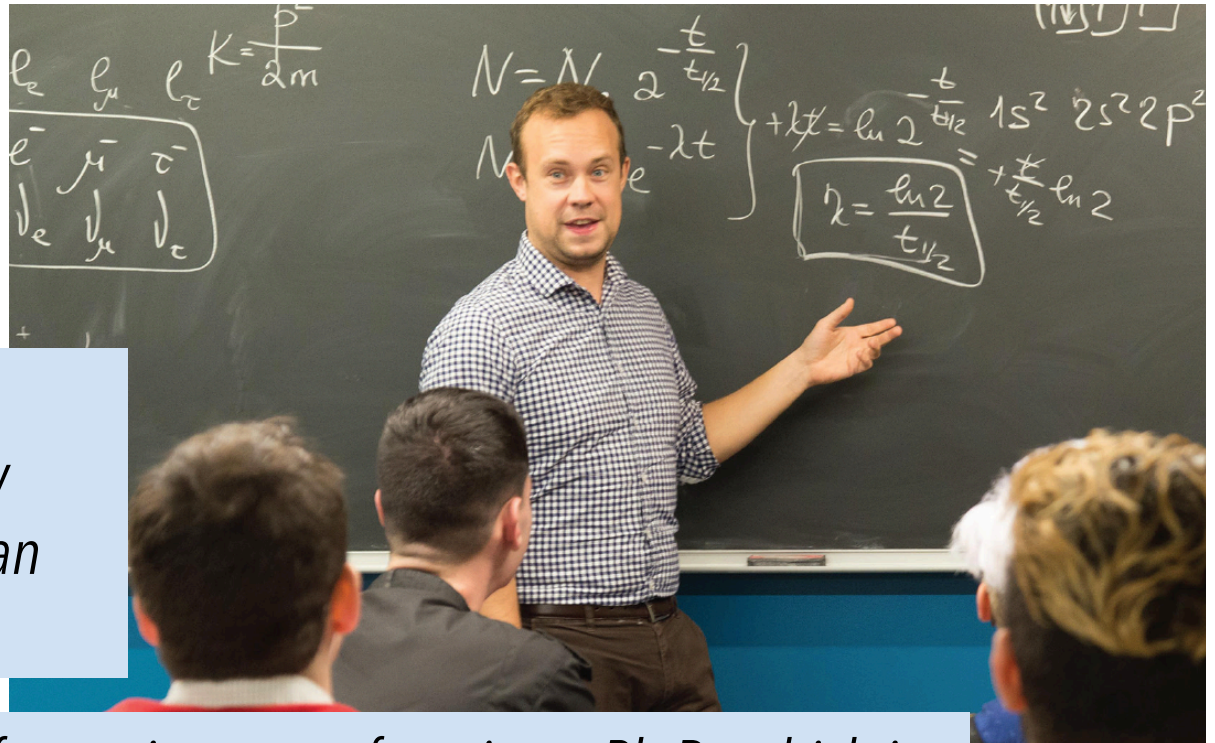
"I was harassed by a professor while going into the bathroom the first week that I was on campus."

Background and Findings 8

Many LGBT physicists are at risk for leaving their workplace or school.

36%

Considered leaving their workplace or school in the prior year



"Just you not being able to figure me out doesn't really need to qualify whether I can be educated here.."

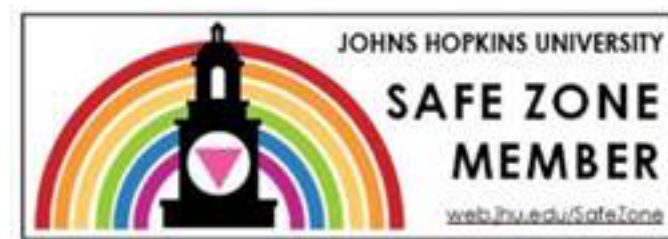
"... And the outlook for me in terms of getting a Ph.D., which is what I'm kind of debating whether or not I want to do, is really contingent upon whether or not I have the right type of support system around me to be able to facilitate my success."

Background and Findings 9

LGBT physicists report trouble identifying allies to help mitigate isolation, exclusion or marginalization.



"I've identified two professors at [University] who are okay working with queer, LGBTQ people and one of them was actually my thesis advisor. And the reason I was able to identify him was because he had a little rainbow sticker on his window. And I would kind of see some of these... and that was kind of a cue for me to be a little more comfortable around him in terms of just talking about my family life or just opening up in general..."





Recommendations

- ① Ensure a safe and welcoming environment at APS meetings.
- ② Address the need to systematically accommodate name changes in publication records.
- ③ Develop advocacy efforts that support LGBT equity and inclusion.
- ④ Promote LGBT-inclusive practices in academia, national labs, and industry.
- ⑤ Implement LGBT-inclusive mentoring programs
- ⑥ Support the establishment of a Forum on Diversity and Inclusion.

go.aps.org/lgbtphysics

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