



An Affirmation of Trans Livelihood In and Beyond Postsecondary Education

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Executive Summary

In the Foreword to the *Transgender Studies Reader*, Stephen Whittle wrote, “Trans identities were one of the most written about subjects of the late twentieth century. New communities of transgender and transsexual people have created new industries, a new academic discipline, [and] new forms of entertainment. ...Any Internet search, whether of Web sites, news articles, or academic papers will produce thousands of results” (p. xi).² Indeed, there has been a similar increase in academic publishing regarding trans identities, including in postsecondary education. And yet, despite this increasingly rich and diverse scholarship, trans people, particularly trans women and trans women of color, are cast as nonhuman, being used as foils for suggestions that gender identity is solely “a hotly contested matter of public concern” (p. 15),³ and, as such, is separated

¹ We wish to acknowledge that all authors contributed equally to this brief, and are listed alphabetically by last name. We ask people who cite this to list all author names in recognition of this shared effort rather than using “et al.” to indicate co-authors.

² Whittle, S. (2006). Foreword. In S. Stryker & S. Whittle (Eds.), *Transgender Studies Reader* (pp. xi-xvi). Routledge.

³ Brief for Meriwether v. Hartop, et al. (2021) (no. 20-3289).

from the actual lived reality of trans people. In other words, despite a rich set of empirical research in and beyond postsecondary education, trans people continue to be rendered as nonhuman, their lived realities subject to public opinion and debate, and their agency stripped due to their supposed false claims of gendered selfhood.

Trans peoples' humanity being routinely scrutinized and harmfully called into question is far from being a partisan issue, with both Democratic and Republican administrations and politicians failing to adequately do the work of creating trans-affirmative legislative protections. Additionally, hardly any field of practice, policy, or study is immune from transmisogyny, transmisogynoir, and/or trans oppression, including fields of (postsecondary) education.⁴ As a body of postsecondary educators, scholars, and policy-makers dedicated to the furthering of evidence-based praxis, the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) community should be invested in addressing the ongoing attacks levied against trans people. Not only should this be of concern because of the Association's ongoing commitment toward diversity,⁵ but also due to the need to confront and rectify our own complicity in furthering gender-based harm through and beyond the Association.⁶

In the following white paper, we focus on a specific, recent site of trans oppression within postsecondary education: intercollegiate athletics. We do so as a way of amplifying, analyzing, and extending those concerns raised by various scholars about

⁴ See, for example, Jourian, T.J., Simmons, S. L., & Devaney, K. (2015). "We are not expected": Trans* educators (re)claiming space and voice in higher education and student affairs. *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, 2(3), 431-446; Nicolazzo, Z. (In review). Ghost stories from the academy: A transfeminine reckoning.; Pitcher, E. N. (2018). *Being and becoming professionally other: Identities, voices, and experiences of U.S. trans* academics*. Peter Lang Press.; Simmons, S. L. (2017). A thousand words are worth a picture: A snapshot of trans* postsecondary educators in higher education. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 30(3), 266-284; Stryker, S. (2020). Institutionalizing Trans* Studies at the University of Arizona. *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, 7(3), 354-366.

⁵ Association for the Study of Higher Education. (n.d.). Association for the Study of Higher Education bylaws. Retrieved from <https://www.ashe.ws//Files/Bylaws/2021.01.15%20ASHE%20Bylaws.pdf>.

⁶ Nicolazzo, Z., & Jourian, T.J. (2020). "I am looking for people who want to do disruption work": Trans* academics respond to discourses of power in academic spaces. *Gender and Education*, 32(1), 56-69. DOI: 10.1080/09540253.2019.1633461

higher education as a site and scene of trans violence, as well as addressing the recent increase of state-based legislation seeking to curtail life chances for trans students across the United States and some of its territories. That is, we focus on intercollegiate athletics both as a specific site of necessary inquiry and intervention related to institutional trans oppression and as a reminder that we all, as individuals invested in ASHE, and thereby, the betterment of postsecondary educational outcomes, must do all we can to address and correct the profuse manifestations of trans oppression. To that end, we conclude this white paper by giving a detailed list of calls for action. These calls address both scholarly and pedagogical praxis, as well as policy-based initiatives. It is our ardent hope that, in sharing this white paper, we as members of ASHE can (re)commit ourselves to the necessary and ongoing practice of being in right relation alongside trans people in and beyond postsecondary education.

Introduction

Despite recent public declarations of support from the Biden administration, trans life has become increasingly perilous in the United States and some of its territories. While the ongoing sociopolitical threat and violence negatively influences life chances for all transgender people, there can be little doubt that much of proposed legislation, passed law, and public ire focuses on trans girls and women.⁷ That is, transmisogyny, or the hatred of transfemininity, is the bedrock for what in mainstream media has been widely discussed as “anti-trans legislation.” Much of the coordination of this legislation ran through the Alliance Defending Freedom, which has a history of furthering anti-trans legislation across the United States, and the Southern Poverty Law Center designated as a hate group.⁸

⁷ Kumashiro, K. (2021). *17,300+ educators to President Biden: Support trans youth*. KevinKumashiro.com <https://www.kevinkumashiro.com/supporttransyouth>.

⁸ Southern Poverty Law Center. (n.d.). *Alliance Defending Freedom*. splcenter.org. <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/alliance-defending-freedom>.

The field of postsecondary education remains an active site for the continuation of transmisogyny and, by extension, trans oppression.⁹ Furthermore, a rich body of empirical research has been done by numerous scholars (including those who are members of this association) demonstrating how institutions of higher education further this harm via administrative violence (i.e., the production of policies and laws that regulate and restrict access to resources, safety, and services),¹⁰ gender binary discourse¹¹ and compulsory heterogenderism,¹² and the cultivation of environments whereby trans people are considered unexpected and unwanted intruders to the project of the University.¹³ Even the Association for the Study of Higher Education, of which we

⁹ Catalano, D. C. J., & Griffin, P. (2016). Sexism, heterosexism, and trans* oppression. In M. Adams, L. A. Bell, D. J. Goodman, & K. Y. Joshi (Eds.), *Teaching for diversity and social justice* (3rd ed., pp. 183–211). Routledge; Nicolazzo, Z. (2021). The specter of the tranny: Pedagogical (im)possibilities. *International Journal of Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, DOI: 10.1080/14681366.2021.1912163

¹⁰ Spade, D. (2015). *Normal life: Administrative violence, critical trans politics, and the limits of law*. (2nd ed.). Duke University Press.

¹¹ Nicolazzo, Z. (2017). *Trans* in college: Transgender students' strategies for navigating campus life and the institutional politics of inclusion*. Stylus.

¹² Nicolazzo, Z. (2017). Compulsory heterogenderism: A collective case study. *NASPA Journal About Women in Higher Education*, 10(3), 245-261. DOI: 10.1080/19407882.2017.1351376

¹³ e.g., Catalano, D. C. J. (2014). *Welcome to guyland: Experiences of trans* men in college* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from http://scholarworks.umass.edu/dissertations_2/60/; Catalano, D. C. (2015). Beyond virtual equality: Liberatory consciousness as a path to achieve trans* inclusion in higher education. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 48(3), 418-435; Dockendorff, K. J. (2019). Measuring and predicting trans* inclusivity in higher education: Understanding the behavior of key institutional agents. (Unpublished dissertation). University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT.; Jaekel, K. S., & Nicolazzo, Z. (2017). Teaching trans*: Strategies and tensions of teaching gender in student affairs preparation programs. *Journal for the Study of Postsecondary and Tertiary Education*, 2, 165-179. DOI: 10.28945/3859; Jaekel, K., & Nicolazzo, Z. (2020). Institutional commitments to unknowing gender: Trans* and gender non-conforming educators' experiences in higher education. *Journal of Homosexuality*. DOI: 10.1080/00918369.2020.1848146; Jones, A. (2020). Can you see me?: Black trans women and femmes experiences in high education. [Dissertation]. University of Texas at Austin; Jourian, T.J., & McCloud, L. (2020). "I don't know where I stand": Black trans masculine students' re/de/constructions of Black masculinity. *Journal of College Student Development*, 61(6), 733-749; Jourian, T.J., Simmons, S. L., & Devaney, K. (2015). "We are not expected": Trans* educators (re)claiming space and voice in higher education and student affairs. *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, 2(3), 431-446; Marine, S. B. (2011). "Our college is changing": Women's college student affairs administrators and transgender students. *Journal of homosexuality*, 58, 1165–1186. DOI:10.1080/00918369.2011.605730; Pitcher, E. N. (2017). "There's stuff that comes with being an unexpected guest": Experiences of trans* academics with microaggressions. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 30(7), 688-703; Simmons, S. L. (2017). A thousand words are worth a picture: A snapshot of trans* postsecondary educators in higher education. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 30(3), 266-284; Simms, S., Nicolazzo, Z., & Jones, A. (In press). "Don't say sorry, do better": Trans students of color, disidentification, and internet futures. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*; Wagner, R., Marine, S. B., & Nicolazzo, Z. (2018). Better than most: Trans* perspectives on gender-inclusive housing. *Journal of College and University Student Housing*, 45(1), 26-43.

are all members, and therefore must also take responsibility for our (in)actions, is complicit in furthering harm toward trans communities.¹⁴

To this end, we next elucidate a current pressing site of gender binary discourse and administrative violence with which we as higher education researchers and scholars are entangled: intercollegiate athletics. We focus on intercollegiate athletics due to the current wave of ongoing anti-trans (which is to say, transmisogynist) violence facing higher education that we have previously detailed. We next detail specific calls for action for higher education scholars and practitioners. Because the membership of ASHE includes, and yet is broader than, those who focus on sport studies, our calls for action move in, through, and beyond the confines of intercollegiate athletics. In other words, while intercollegiate athletics is yet a(nother) current flashpoint of violence for trans people in higher education, the calls for action we detail are, as they necessarily must be, for all of us who are in(vested in) higher education.

Intercollegiate Athletics and the Role of the NCAA in Maintaining Gender Binary Discourse

In this specific moment, to fully address trans oppression within higher education, we must give explicit attention to the role of sport in collegiate institutions. College sport is fundamentally a product of the University, regardless of the frequently oppositional way we position it.¹⁵ This is evident in the structure of the NCAA, which is a voluntary membership organization comprised of institutions of higher education. When we critique the NCAA as though it is an organization separate from higher education, we are ultimately abdicating the power and responsibility that our institutions hold within leadership of the organization. This speaks to the need for ASHE to support the

¹⁴ Nicolazzo, Z., & Jourian, T.J. (2020). "I am looking for people who want to do disruption work": Trans* academics respond to discourses of power in academic spaces. *Gender and Education*, 32(1), 56-69. DOI: 10.1080/09540253.2019.1633461

¹⁵ Hextrum, K. (2021). *Special Admission: How college sports recruitment favors white suburban athletes*. Rutgers University Press; Southall, R. M., & Staurowsky, E. J. (2013). Cheering on the collegiate model: Creating, disseminating, and imbedding the NCAA's redefinition of amateurism. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 37(4), 403-429.

development and inclusion of robust literatures regarding the subdiscipline of sport studies, especially as it relates to expansive explorations of gender.

These trans sport bans, specifically, are:

1. a direct extension of the ways sport has historically been constitutive of gender and heteronormativity, as well as used to codify and uphold the gender binary;¹⁶
2. a weaponization of sport to further those harms, creating a highly visible and normalizing (and therefore dangerous) rejection of transness;¹⁷
3. explicitly targeted at trans women and girls and rooted in transmisogyny,¹⁸ yet are also built on a history of discounting transmasculinity and the inherently false and transphobic assumption that trans men and boys are not competitive in sport;¹⁹
4. decidedly unscientific and illogical;²⁰

¹⁶ Anderson, E., & Travers, A. (Eds.). (2017). *Transgender athletes in competitive sport*. Routledge; De la Cretaz, B. (2021, April 16). Living Nonbinary in a Binary Sports World: While many trans athletes have become political lightning rods, nonbinary people like the WNBA's Layshia Clarendon are left out of the conversation. In a sex-segregated sports world, where do they fit in? *Sports Illustrated*. <https://www.si.com/wnba/2021/04/16/nonbinary-athletes-transgender-layshia-clarendon-quinn-rach-mcbride-daily-cover>; Gray, A., Crandall, R. E., & Tongsri, J. (2018). Transgender student-athletes and their inclusion in intercollegiate athletics. *New Directions for Student Services*, 2018(163), 43-53; Hextrum, K. (2017). Segregated bodies: Gender reproduction within college sport. In A. Milner & J. Braddock II (Eds.), *Women in sport: Breaking barriers, facing obstacles, Vol. 2* (pp. 169-185). Praeger; Messner, M. A. (1992). *Power at play: Sports and the problem of masculinity*. Beacon Press; Stewart, D. L. (2018). Using intersectionality to study and understand LGBTIQ people in sport. In V. Krane (Ed.). *Sex, Gender, and Sexuality in Sport: Queer Inquiries* (pp. 33-48). Routledge; Travers, A. (2008). The sport nexus and gender injustice. *Studies in Social Justice*, 2(1), 79-101.

¹⁷ Goldberg, S. K. (2021). Fair play: The importance of sports participation for transgender youth. *Center for American Progress, Washington DC*. Zirin, D. (2019, March 5). Transphobia's new target is the world of sports: First it was bathrooms, now it's athletics. *The Nation*. <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/trans-runner-daily-caller-terry-miller-andraya-yearwood-martina-navratilova/>

¹⁸ Medley, S. (2021). (Mis) Interpreting Title IX: How Opponents of Transgender Equality Are Twisting the Meaning of Sex Discrimination in School Sports. *New York University Review of Law & Social Change, Forthcoming*.

¹⁹ De la Cretaz, B. (2021, January 20). What About the Trans Athletes Who Compete — And Win — in Men's Sports? On the oft-overlooked case of America's supposedly "disadvantaged" transmasculine athletes. *Inside Hook*. <https://www.insidehook.com/article/sports/trans-athletes-win-boys-sports>

²⁰ Anderson, E., & Travers, A. (Eds.). (2017). *Transgender athletes in competitive sport*. Routledge; Ivy, V. (2021). If "Ifs" and "Buts" Were Candy and Nuts: The Failure of Arguments Against Trans and Intersex Women's Full and Equal Inclusion in Women's Sport. *Feminist Philosophy Quarterly*, 7(2); Jones, B.A., Arcelus, J., Bouman, W.P., &

5. intentional in asserting that these bills will protect white women/women's sport, specifically (regardless of the myriad other, substantive and unaddressed, ways women's sport lacks support);²¹ and,
6. in framing white women as 'at risk,' are a continuation of other successful scare tactics/discursive moves to stigmatize minoritized groups. These well-worn tactics are both highly racialized and increasingly transphobic, as evident in the progression from *Birth of a Nation's* imagined libidinal threats of Black men to white womanhood to anti-trans—especially transmisogynist—bathroom bills, to which particular athletes (e.g., Black women who are always already perceived as 'too masculine') have been most prominently targeted by anti-trans sport laws and rules.²²

Further, the sweeping breadth of the sport bans are made palatable by the intrusive surveillance that is already normalized throughout college athletics, in terms of: a hyper focus on bodies, the denial of bodily autonomy, routinized yet discretionary drug and other medicalized testing and monitoring, and lack of athlete agency, writ large.²³

Haycraft, E. (2017). Sport and transgender people: a systematic review of the literature relating to sport participation and competitive sport policies. *Sports Medicine*. 47, 701-716. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40279-016-0621-y>; Turban, J. (2021, March 16). Trans girls belong on girls' sports teams: There is no scientific case for excluding them. *Scientific American*. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/trans-girls-belong-on-girls-sports-teams/>

²¹ Crouse, L. (2021, March 24). So you want to 'save women's sports'? *New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/24/opinion/trans-athletes-womens-sports.html>; Medley, S. (2021). (Mis) Interpreting Title IX: How Opponents of Transgender Equality Are Twisting the Meaning of Sex Discrimination in School Sports. *New York University Review of Law & Social Change*, Forthcoming.

²² Clifton, D. (March, 2021). Anti-trans sports bills aren't just transphobic — They're racist, too. *them*. <https://www.them.us/story/anti-trans-sports-bills-transphobic-racist>; Douglas, D. D. (2019). Dis'qualified! Serena Williams and Brittney Griner: Black Female Athletes and the Politics of the Im/Possible. In P. Essed, K. Farquharson, K. Pillay & E. J. White (Eds.). *Relating worlds of racism: Dehumanisation, Belonging, and the Normativity of European Whiteness* (pp. 329-355). Palgrave Macmillan; Zirin, D. (2019, March 5). Transphobia's new target is the world of sports: First it was bathrooms, now it's athletics. *The Nation*. <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/trans-runner-daily-caller-terry-miller-andraya-yearwood-martina-navratilova/>

²³ Albrecht, R. R., Anderson, W. A., & McKeag, D. B. (2001). Drug testing of college athletes: the issues. *Ethics in sport*, 181-187; Grummert, S. E. 2021. Carcerality and college athletics: State methods of enclosure within and through college sport. Doctoral dissertation; Hatteberg, S. J. (2018). Under surveillance: Collegiate athletics as a total institution. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 35(2), 149-158.

The Imperative to Act: Calls to Action for Scholars and Practitioners in ASHE

The recent barrage of legislative harms facing trans girls, women, and people through all levels of education serve as a clarion call to action. We find it imperative to address how we can be active in redressing this harm through our work as scholars, educators, and policy-makers in postsecondary education. Below are calls to action that address what educators can do through scholarly and pedagogical praxis, as well as policy-based initiatives:

Calls for Scholarly and Pedagogical Praxis

- **Stop using male/female language.** Notwithstanding explorations of how the Middle Passage mediated the process of ungendering,²⁴ thereby marking black and endarkened life as chattel, there is no good reason for scholars in education to use male/female language. That is, perhaps the *only time* one may need to refer to sexed language would be in reference to chattel slavery as a violent mode of ungendering. That said, the field of higher education largely does not study sex (i.e., ‘biological sex’ or, more aptly, sex assigned at birth). Inadequately common biology education limits the definition of assigned sex as a physical category (chromosomes, internal and external genitalia, and hormone levels), but the criteria are “social decisions for which scientists offer no absolute guidelines.”²⁵ Further, as the vast majority of us interact with the world and others with our clothes on, sans any chromosomal testing, we experience and do gender.²⁶ Scholars, researchers, and practitioners must stop conflating sex and gender because we are not studying, exploring, or examining the impact of assigned sex. This equating of sex with gender only serves to falsely perpetuate sex as dimorphic and gender as a natural phenomenon; assertions that cause the erasure of trans, nonbinary, and intersex people, to say nothing of the rich

²⁴ Spillers, H. J. (1987). Mama’s baby, papa’s maybe: An American grammar book. *Diacritics*, 17(2), 64-81.

²⁵ Fausto-Sterling, A. (2000). *Sexing the body: Gender politics and the construction of sexuality*. Basic Books.

²⁶ West, C., & Zimmerman. (1987). Doing gender. *Gender & Society*, 1(2), 125-151.

diversity of how gender operates with/in/through nontrans populations.²⁷ For instance, researchers should take the extra time to allow participants to self-identify their gender and use that language in participant descriptions. For quantitative research, care should be taken to provide adequate and non-othering (i.e., use “another” rather than “other” and provide participants the opportunity to write-in) options to select from.²⁸ Additionally, if researchers want to address gendered implications of findings, then they should use gender, not sex, as an axis of analysis throughout the manuscript.

- ***Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) work must integrate trans content.***

Dominant narratives about marginalized people’s histories frame trans liberation in isolation from other social movements.²⁹ In higher education, the labors of marginalized communities resulted in the establishment of various cultural centers, which implies (but does not accurately describe) singular social movements to create more inclusive campus environments.³⁰ We must avoid perpetuating singular narratives that create tensions across marginalized groups and silo trans identities and experiences; the separation of transness from DEI work only amplifies the already persistent belief that trans people are white, middle class, and able-bodied or otherwise entirely invisible and nonexistent. We must seek work that reflects a coalitional politic that reinforces liberation as a cooperative project.³¹

²⁷ Enke, A. F. (2012). The education of little cis: Cisgender and the discipline of opposing bodies. In A. Enke (Ed.), *Transfeminist perspectives in and beyond transgender and gender studies* (pp. 60–77). Temple University Press.

²⁸ Badgett, M. V. L., Baker, K. E., Conron, K. J., Gates, G. J., Gill, A., Greytak, E., & Herman, J. L. (2014, September). *Best Practices for Asking Questions to Identify Transgender and Other Gender Minority Respondents on Population-Based Surveys (GenIUSS)* [Report]. UCLA Williams Institute. Retrieved from <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/geniuss-trans-pop-based-survey/>.

²⁹ Ferguson, R. A. (2019). *One-dimensional queer*. Polity.

³⁰ Rojas, F. (2010). *From Black Power to Black Studies: How a radical social movement became an academic discipline*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

³¹ Love, B. (2018). Developing a liberatory consciousness. In M. Adams, W. J. Blumenfeld, D. C. J. Catalano, K. DeJong, H. W. Hackman, L. E. Hopkins, B. J. Love, M. L. Peters, D. Shlasko, & X. Zúñiga (Eds.), *Readings for diversity and social justice* (4th ed, pp. 610-615). Routledge.

- **Enhance the skills of student-facing professionals to be more attuned to and resistant to the gender binary discourse on campus.** Based on current (and past) legislative pushes and outcomes, many trans people,³² including students, will have (necessary) practice with stealthing their transness to ascertain who they can question, who they must placate, and who they may find as accomplices in navigating bureaucracies and negotiating material realities (e.g., living and classroom dynamics).³³ Professionals with advisory responsibilities in particular—including academic advisors, counselors, housing staff, and those in admissions, financial aid, student activities and leadership, and identity-based centers—need the skills and attenuation that sets them up to be accomplices.³⁴ For instance, individuals in these roles ought to practice engaging in conversation that does not assign genders to individuals and groups.
- **Formal and informal teaching must include critical self-awareness about gender.** Calls for critically-informed pedagogical praxis have remained consistent across various overarching structures of oppression and domination for some time,³⁵ including the various effects of trans oppression in and beyond the classroom for trans students, faculty, and staff.³⁶ Educators must do the work for

³² Beauchamp, T. (2019). *Going stealth: Transgender politics and U.S. surveillance practices*. Duke University Press.; Gossett, R., Stanley, E. A., & Burton, J. (Eds.). (2017). *Trap door: Trans cultural production and the politics of visibility*. MIT Press.

³³ Nicolazzo, Z. (2017). *Trans* in college: Transgender students' strategies for navigating campus life and the institutional politics of inclusion*. Stylus.

³⁴ Dockendorff, K. J. (2019). Measuring and predicting trans* inclusivity in higher education: Understanding the behavior of key institutional agents. (Unpublished dissertation). University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT.; Marine, S. B. (2011). "Our college is changing": Women's college student affairs administrators and transgender students. *Journal of homosexuality*, 58, 1165–1186. DOI:10.1080/00918369.2011.605730; Simms, S., Nicolazzo, Z., & Jones, A. (In press). "Don't say sorry, do better": Trans students of color, disidentification, and internet futures. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*; Wagner, R., Marine, S. B., & Nicolazzo, Z. (2018). Better than most: Trans* perspectives on gender-inclusive housing. *Journal of College and University Student Housing*, 45(1), 26-43.

³⁵ See, for example, Adams, M., Bell, L. A., Goodman, D. J., & Joshi, K. Y. (Eds.). (2016). *Teaching for diversity and social justice (3rd ed.)*. Routledge.

³⁶ See references listed in footnote 8.

themselves, then show their work through syllabi, practices, and materials.³⁷ For example, postsecondary educators should avail themselves of the resources in the Trans Studies in Higher Education Syllabus,³⁸ as well as add to the syllabus so it can remain up-to-date.

- **Give direct and focused attention to institutional areas of schools of medicine³⁹ and public health, health and mental services,⁴⁰ sports, law, and teacher education.⁴¹** These academic fields, institutional services, and areas of campus require a significant level of trans awareness for sustainable change. This is particularly salient as the current legal and legislative push concentrates on targeting trans people, and in particular trans women. Curricular change can be a lengthy process and thus existing gaps ought to be addressed through visiting scholars, trans practitioners and scholars in these fields as speakers and consultants, and trans-centered and created media. For example, the documentary *Diagnosing Difference* features 13 diverse trans scholars, activists, and artists discussing their varied experiences in the healthcare system.
- **Hire trans faculty, and also, do not expect them/wait for them to shift research and program curricula.** There are too few trans faculty in

³⁷ Wagner, R. & Catalano, C. (In press). A reflexive self-awareness framework for advising and supporting. *Advising and supporting in student affairs* (n.p.). Charles C Thomas, Publisher.

³⁸ Nicolazzo, Z. (2017, June 30). Trans* studies in higher education syllabus. Retrieved from goo.gl/NdVMe7.

³⁹ Dubin, S. N., Nolan, I. T., Steed, C. G., Greene, R. E., Radix, A. E. & Morrison, S. D. (2018). Transgender health care: improving medical students' and residents' training and awareness. *Advances in Medical Practice and Education*, 9, 377-391. doi: 10.2147/AMEP.S147183.

⁴⁰ Austin, A., Craig, S. L. & McInroy, L. B. (2016) Toward transgender affirmative social work education. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 52(3), 297-310, DOI: 10.1080/10437797.2016.1174637; Kattari, S. K., Kinney, M. K., Kattari, L., & Walls, N. E. (2021). *Social Work and Health Care Practice with Transgender and Nonbinary Individuals and Communities: Voices for Equity, Inclusion, and Resilience*. Routledge.

⁴¹ Kean, M. E. (2017). *Conceptualizing Gender, Contextualizing Curriculum: A Case Study of Teacher Education Coursework* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Michigan State University.

postsecondary education,⁴² especially trans women.⁴³ Indeed, at the writing of this statement, *there are currently no openly trans women of color in tenure track faculty positions in higher education/postsecondary education*. Hiring trans people is important. Also, waiting for trans people to shift research and curricula and/or expecting trans people to do the work of gender-expansive pedagogy (be it tacitly or otherwise) is to distance oneself from the perpetuation of structural transmisogyny and trans oppression. We have the tools and resources to do better, and so we must not wait, nor must we continually position the few trans faculty—especially trans women and trans women of color—in postsecondary education as gender saviors.⁴⁴ Placing the burden of transforming scholarship and curriculum to be gender-expansive on trans faculty also removes the perspectives of trans faculty from other matters of significance in higher education, such as access and admissions, financial aid and student loans, food and housing insecurity, and federal and state funding, to name a few.

Calls for Policy-Based Initiatives

- ***Move beyond mere inclusion, and toward institutional transformation.*** As Stewart noted,⁴⁵ inclusion is not synonymous with affirmation or change. We must move beyond merely inviting trans people/transness “to the table” (a gesture toward inclusion). Yes, there may well be an importance to increasing representative and structural diversity, especially for trans women of color, who we continue to frame out of dialogue, positions, and resources. At the same time,

⁴² Pitcher, E. N. (2017). “There’s stuff that comes with being an unexpected guest”: Experiences of trans* academics with microaggressions. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 30(7), 688-703.; Pitcher, E. N. (2018). *Being and becoming professionally other: Identities, voices, and experiences of U.S. trans* academics*. Peter Lang Press.

⁴³ Nicolazzo, Z. (2021). The specter of the tranny: Pedagogical (im)possibilities. *International Journal of Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, DOI: 10.1080/14681366.2021.1912163; Nicolazzo, Z. (In review). Ghost stories from the academy: A transfeminine reckoning.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Stewart, D-L. (2017). The language of appeasement. *Inside Higher Ed*. Retrieved from <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2017/03/30/colleges-need-language-shift-not-one-you-think-essay>.

we propose that everyone invested in postsecondary education should have serious conversations about embracing a praxis rooted in institutional transformation. For example, how is it that the work and scholarship many of us do reifies gender binary discourse (e.g., athletics, fraternity and sorority life, residential life), and what are we willing to do about this?

- **Confront uncomfortable paradoxes of gender.** We assert that educators and scholars alike must confront the uncomfortable realities of the paradoxes of gender, paradoxes that allow connection for marginalized communities in some ways and create barriers for inclusion in other ways. There are good reasons to have population-specific spaces, resources, and opportunities. Simultaneously, these efforts might work at cross-purposes or as redundancies, because we know not all students access or feel welcome to access all areas of campus. What looks like inclusion to some, might read or feel like exclusion to others as population-specific resources, and that is okay because maybe we need to stop using a scarcity model for resources to serve minoritized populations.
- **Address bureaucratic barriers.** We must have honest and actionable conversations about how documentation is a cross-population barrier for many students, staff, and faculty. Requiring medical documentation to access resources or to change rosters or select a room in housing is also a barrier for students with disabilities, undocumented students, low income students, and international students. The United States still does not provide access to the medical industrial complex in a way that is available and safe, yet colleges and universities require the kind of documentation we already recognize they cannot access. There are ample opportunities and resources for institutions of higher education to remove these types of barriers,⁴⁶ which would diminish

⁴⁶ For example, see scholarship in the following edited collections: Agid, S., & Rand, E. (Eds.) (2011). Not another special guest: Teaching trans now. *Radical Teacher*, 92(Winter).; Nicolazzo, Z. (Ed.). (2018). *What's transgressive about trans* studies in education now?* Routledge Special Issues as Books. Routledge; Nicolazzo, Z, Marine, S. B., & Galarte, F. (Eds.). (2015). Trans*pedagogies. *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, 2(3).

administrative burdens and violence perpetrated against multiple marginalized populations and benefitting *all* students.

- ***Organize and collaborate with campus-based and local communities, organizations, and schools to advocate with trans populations.*** Trans students bring with them educational legacies and histories from P-12 schools that influence their expectations of access, resources, and support available. Trans youth may view higher education as a refuge, only to find it to be another site of disappointment and administrative violence,⁴⁷ or opt out of higher education entirely because of their P-12 experiences. Further inhibiting consideration of or access to higher education may be the result of practices and policies that extend barriers; barriers that may be similar to or aligned with disabled students, first generation students, and students of color, calling for a coalitional perspective on access and retention.
- ***Amplify and fund scholarship, particularly led by trans scholars, and especially trans scholars of color.*** Support fellowships, post-docs, and grant applications focused on gender in sports, medicine, education, and the law. Foundations and other funding sources often lack the experience and knowledge necessary to appropriately evaluate trans research proposed and led by trans scholars, opting instead to fund those led by cisgender scholars. Efforts must be undertaken to infuse trans knowledge into these decision-making bodies and processes, while simultaneously supporting the grant-writing efforts of trans scholars. Much like institutional review board members, cisgender reviewers often act as gatekeepers of what is and is not acceptable trans scholarship, shifting the work to center cisgender people's priorities and needs *from* trans scholars rather than the priorities and needs of trans scholars and populations.

⁴⁷ Spade, D. (2015). *Normal life: Administrative violence, critical trans politics, and the limits of law*. (2nd ed.). Duke University Press.

- **Address the long overdue evaluation of institutional forms, specifically whether and when gender is a necessary question and how forms ask it.**

Form consistency at an institution is a small way to signal an institution anticipates the arrival and staying power of all who may show up. There is a dire need to develop practices and policies that ensure alignment of forms so that information is translatable across platforms and divisions (e.g., the use of FAFSA data in the housing assignment process). Institutional agents must also reckon with the ways forms function as unnecessary surveillance.

- **Pressure the NCAA to shift policies and practices that enable, invite, and/or foment transphobic and transmisogynist beliefs and outcomes.** As member institutions who comprise the major governing bodies of the NCAA, higher education institutions and their leadership have considerable (underutilized) power and are complicit in and culpable for the harms produced. We must hold institutions and the NCAA accountable to not furthering harm. This includes the need to: 1) shift from male/female language, as described above, and in recognition that its continuance through the NCAA invites college sport to be a site for waging attacks on trans people; 2) address gender in sport, particularly in regards to how sport organizations codify binary understandings of gender and reaffirm attendant stereotypes; and 3) hold organizations accountable to their professed values, rather than letting them off the proverbial hook. This last point is especially salient given that the NCAA on May 16th announced softball regional sites in three states with transgender sport bans, in direct contravention of the widespread understanding of their April 12, 2021 Board of Governors statement that the NCAA “unequivocally supports the opportunity for transgender student-athletes to compete in college sports” and would only hold championships at sites that were “safe, healthy, and free of discrimination.”⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Anderson, G. (April, 2021). A warning and a price tag. *Inside Higher Ed*. Retrieved from <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2021/04/14/ncaa-threatens-move-events-out-states-anti-transgender-athlete-legislation>.

Conclusion

Higher education, both as a field and as all those who serve as institutional agents, has a responsibility and opportunity to leverage the power and purpose of education towards liberatory ends. The focus of this statement necessarily centers trans students, *and* it also calls for attention to the implications of these anti-trans legislative attacks on the livelihoods of trans staff and faculty. Trans staff and faculty already contend with existing structural barriers and pushbacks that limit professional access, retention, and advancement through forced daily negotiations with institutional gender binary discourses and enactments. Again, we emphasize that it is especially multiply marginalized trans people, particularly (multiply marginalized) trans women and femmes, for and with whom we ought to listen to, amplify, advocate and be in community.

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