

# Journal of Diversity in Higher Education

## Structural Challenges Affecting the Experiences of Public University LGBT Services Graduate Assistants

Daniel Tillapaugh and D. Chase J. Catalano

Online First Publication, July 23, 2018. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/dhe0000079>

### CITATION

Tillapaugh, D., & Catalano, D. C. J. (2018, July 23). Structural Challenges Affecting the Experiences of Public University LGBT Services Graduate Assistants. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*. Advance online publication. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/dhe0000079>

# Structural Challenges Affecting the Experiences of Public University LGBT Services Graduate Assistants

Daniel Tillapaugh  
California Lutheran University

D. Chase J. Catalano  
Western Illinois University

In this narrative inquiry study, we interviewed 5 graduate assistants who served as the primary point of contact for their public university's lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) student services. We were interested in understanding the structural challenges that affected these employees' experiences in their roles. Participants were interviewed 3 times over 1 academic year to better understand their job roles and expectations in-depth. From the data, 1 major theme experienced across the participants was a feeling of being set up to fail within their positions. The participants also discussed 4 subthemes that focused on external structural challenges; these included (a) the institutional geography of the LGBT center; (b) inconsistent supervisor support and content knowledge; (c) lack of formal training and professional development; and (d) limited resources of time and money.

*Keywords:* LGBT Resource Centers, graduate assistants, structural challenges, narrative inquiry, higher education

In 1971, the University of Michigan established the first-of-its-kind Lesbian and Gay Male Programs Office that served sexual minority students who often experienced discrimination and harassment on campus (D'Emilio, 1992; Fine, 2012). In the 1990s, the number of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) resource centers had climbed to more than 50 (Beemyn, 2002). The national exposure created by Matthew Shepard's murder in 1997 while he was a student at the University of Wyoming created a boom in colleges and universities establishing LGBT resource centers of their own (Bazarsky & Sanlo, 2011; Fine, 2012). Most of these centers were designed to serve sexual and later gender minority students in light of the hostile campus environments of which they were a part (Evans & Rankin, 1998; Liddell & Douvanis, 1994; Lopez & Chims, 1993).

Today, there are over 215 LGBT Resource Centers housed on college and university campuses across the United States and Canada (The Consortium, n.d.). Additionally, some models have LGBT services being housed within other offices, such as the Women's Center, Multicultural Affairs, or Student Activities (Beemyn, 2002). While full-time staff oversee most centers (Bazarsky & Sanlo, 2011; Beemyn, 2002; The Consortium, n.d.), some are staffed solely by graduate students hired to staff these offices. These graduate assistants typically work 20 h per week on 9 or 10 month contracts (Sanlo, 1998); additionally, they are

usually Master's degree students enrolled in 1 or 2 year programs, leading to frequent turnover and higher rates of burnout (Sanlo, Rankin, & Schoenberg, 2002). Sanlo et al. (2002) highlight the financial benefits that this model may have for institutions, but also outline the challenge of "inconsistency of hours, programs, and services for existing staff and a reinvention of the wheel each time a new person assumes the position" (p. 48). However, there is little research that explores the efficacy of staffing patterns of LGBT resource centers, and there is even less research on the experiences of graduate assistants who are the sole professional staff member supervising the work of outreach to LGBTQ+ students.<sup>1</sup>

## LGBT Resource Center Staffing

Since the 1960s and 1970s, an increasing number of higher education campuses in the United States established cultural centers for historically underserved students, including women's centers, cross-cultural or multicultural centers, and LGBTQ resource centers (Fine, 2012; Patton, 2010; Sanlo et al., 2002; Stewart, 2011). LGBT resource centers are a cultural center on campus with staff serving a complex role for the campus and student populations. "Cultural practitioners have dual roles as educators and programmers. They do more than educate audiences on culture—they critically understand the architecture of various cultures and replicate, enact, and engage these experiences on campus" (Jenkins & Walton, 2008, p. 89). Specifically focusing on directors of campus cultural centers, Travers, Welch, and dela Peña (2016) noted that these staff members "... lead through their positions

---

Daniel Tillapaugh, Department of Counselor Education, California Lutheran University; D. Chase J. Catalano, Department of Educational Studies, Western Illinois University.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Daniel Tillapaugh, Department of Counselor Education, California Lutheran University, 60 W. Olsen Road, MC #4100, Thousand Oaks, CA 91360. E-mail: dtillapaugh@callutheran.edu

---

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this article, we use LGBTQ+ as an umbrella term to signify anyone who identifies as a historically marginalized sexual and/or gender minority. Additionally, we use the term LGBT Resource Center given its historical use in the field and in scholarship while acknowledging that some institutions may name these centers differently.

within these organizations, often acting as the voice and face of the community within the organization and outside to communities at large” (p. 195). These same expectations are true for graduate students who fill the role as the sole staff member doing LGBTQ+ work on a campus. LGBT resource centers and the staff members working in these spaces play a significant role in educating about and supporting LGBTQ+ students in an attempt to positively affect LGBTQ+ campus climate.

Outlining the state of LGBT research in higher education, Renn (2010) offered areas for research needed to advance LGBT issues higher education. Absent from Renn’s (2010) call for future research was any mention of LGBT resource centers and their staff. LGBT resource centers might fall within the realm of campus climate, as it connects to research on the “status of policies and programs designed to improve the academic, living, and work experiences of LGBT people on campus” (Renn, 2010, p. 134). We believe campus climate *could* and *should* include LGBT resource center staffing patterns, even if it is not explicitly named.

There are significant and positive outcomes for a campus with an LGBT resource center, and still the presence of an LGBT resource center does not ensure all needs are met (Pitcher, Camacho, Renn, & Woodford, 2018). Research has demonstrated the contributions of LGBT resource centers for their physical space, support, and signifier of LGBTQ+ student inclusion (Tillapaugh, 2015; [author redacted]). “The physical spaces, and the people (peers, professionals) within them, can facilitate support processes for college students’ success” (Pitcher et al., 2018, p. 7).

Of the research on LGBT resource centers, there is a focus on narratives about the creation of LGBT resource centers (Marine, McLoughlin, & McCarthy, 2015; Ryan, 2011) or the persistence of those offices (Ritchie & Banning, 2001). Marine (2011) offered a historical overview of LGBT resource centers, but did not delve into the depths of staffing dynamics. Self and Hudson (2015) determined previous literature on LGBT resource centers served to offer “empirical support for the development and implementation of LGBTQ campus centers” (p. 217). Yet, in the articles cited by Self and Hudson (2015), only Sanlo (1998) directly attended to the topic of LGBT resource center staffing patterns, which focused on the experiences of full-time directors. In their work, Pitcher et al. (2018) affirmed the purpose and benefits of an LGBT resource center, but did not directly address staffing patterns. At the same time, within their research there was evidence of the impact of the full-time director of the LGBT Center, and value of long-term sustained efforts (Pitcher et al., 2018). Travers et al. (2016) specifically focused on individual directors of cultural centers who were full-time employees, and this visibility and voice issue raises questions and potential concerns when graduate students hold such positions. As Marine and Nicolazzo (2014) point out, “. . . [T]here is little denying [undergraduate and graduate student employees/interns] hold less power and institutional influence than full-time employees on college campuses” (p. 273). Our concerns center on this lack of power and authority (perceived and actual) by graduate assistants who serve as the sole LGBT resource center staff on a campus, such as their success or frustrations when asked to do a great deal of political work on their campus around LGBTQ+ campus climate. Additionally, in many cases, these graduate assistants are full-time students, which can place an unfair demand on their time that graduate assistants with different staffing patterns can mitigate via a supervisor.

## Graduate Student Preparation in Student Affairs and Higher Education

Given the emphasis within the field of student affairs in higher education on a theory-to-practice philosophy (Schuh, Jones, & Torres, 2016), it is to be expected that graduate students in higher education and student affairs (HESA) programs have a clear understanding of how the theoretical concepts taught have a direct influence on professional practice in the field. Often times, many of these graduate programs provide graduate assistantships, typically classified as part-time employment positions, for students to learn on-the-job training to integrate and synthesize their in-the-classroom knowledge to benefit their actual practice.

Yet, some of the research in the field has indicated that there often is a lack of connection between classroom learning and assistantship experience. For example, Renn and Jessup-Anger (2008) found that formal coursework had a relative lack of impact—or much lower salience—in the lives of new professionals. One reason for this low salience may be that new professionals do not see intellectual preparation for the field as particularly well connected to the work of the field (Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008).

The disconnection between coursework and practice adds concern about how graduate student development, especially for assistantship sites that are absent from the curriculum. Renn and Jessup-Anger (2008) focused on curriculum, and there remains a need for research on coordination between academic curriculum and graduate assistantship partnerships. For graduate students who are the sole staff member in an LGBT resource center there might be a greater need to understand their development of professional skills and application of theory to practice. Talbot and Viento (2005) support this notion, by challenging “student affairs professionals and faculty to examine our curricula and make revisions if necessary in order to provide training for future practitioners who will be working with LGBT students across campus” (p. 75). While this particular challenge stems from a research study completed over 12 years ago, recent work (e.g., Pryor, Garvey, & Johnson, 2017) suggests that this may still hold true.

Focusing on professional practice presentations at American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and National Association for Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) conferences over the past 30 years, Pryor et al. (2017) found a focus on “LGBTQ staff mostly concentrated on professional staff working in LGBTQ resource centers or recommendations for new LGBTQ professionals entering the job market” (p. 132). Yet, Pryor and his colleagues (2017) pointed out that much of the scholarship about LGBTQ staff working in student affairs is outdated, “reflecting a decreased focus on LGBTQ faculty and staff in higher education literature” (p. 132). The lack of research focused on staffing and LGBT resource center internal dynamics is troubling considering the role they place on a campus.

## Conceptual Framework

For this study, we used organizational culture as a conceptual framework. “The term organizational culture is used as an umbrella concept for a way of thinking that takes a serious interest in cultural and symbolic phenomena or aspects in organizations” (Alvesson, 2011, p. 14). Organizational culture is shaped by human interactions within a particular environment, as well as de-

terminated norms and guidelines established to oversee individual and group behaviors within an organization (Schein, 2004). Schein (2004) argued that analysis of organizational culture occurs on multiple levels and is informed by three main components: artifacts (defined organizational processes); espoused values (specific goals and strategies named directly within the organization); and underlying assumptions (often unspoken, but commonly held beliefs, thoughts, and feelings within the organization). Given that higher education institutions are highly complex and bureaucratic organizations, higher education professionals are required to learn the ways of knowing, being, and doing within their specific institutions to ensure that they are aligning with their organization's mission, vision, and values (Manning, 2017).

Tautologically, just as individuals are shaped by organizational culture, the identities of individuals within an organization have an impact on organizational culture. For example, Alvesson (2011) asked, "To what extent do individuals shape themselves through constructions of their organizational identity—that is, how far is their personal identity defined through identification with the organization" (p. 21)? To this, scholars, such as Hardiman, Jackson, and Griffin (2007), have argued that institutional and cultural forms of oppression influence how institutions are organized, staffed, and provided resources; all of these issues play a significant role in an organizational culture. LGBT Resource Centers, for this research, allow for an analysis of organizational culture based on artifacts, espoused values, and underlying assumptions of the institutions where they are housed, and student affairs in general.

### Purpose of Study

The purpose of this qualitative study aimed to understand the structural challenges affecting the experiences of graduate assistants who are the only professional staff member overseeing LGBT services on their specific public university campus. Unfortunately, there is a dearth of research on the experiences of professional staff working in LGBT resource centers, particularly those who are graduate assistants. As a result, there is a need to understand how the staffing structures chosen by institutions connect to the overall level of support provided to LGBTQ+ students.

The research questions guiding this study are:

1. What are the experiences of graduate assistants who are the single professional staff member of their public university's LGBT student services?
2. What are the structural challenges that affect these employees' experiences?

### Methodology

We approached our work on this study from a constructivist theoretical paradigm, which emphasizes the connection between participants and researchers resulting in co-constructed knowledge (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Given that we were interested in the participants' meaning-making of their positional roles, we framed our work through dialogue and storytelling to understand their experiences better. As a result, we chose to use narrative inquiry as our methodology. Narrative inquiry emphasizes patterns and themes that emerge through collective storytelling (Clandinin, 2007; Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998). By using narrative inquiry from a constructivist perspective, we were able to understand the ways in which participants' stories both provide insights on their experiences, but also shape their own perceptions, worldviews, and sense of identity (Lieblich et al., 1998).

Our focus on public institutions was the result of our scan of models of LGBT student services. We noted the model of having graduate assistants serving as the primary point of contact was implemented more often at public universities compared with private 4-year institutions. Before data collection, we identified 10 public 4-year universities that used graduate students as the primary point of contact for providing LGBT student services at that time via data from the Consortium of LGBT Resource Professionals in Higher Education, a list-serve of higher education and student affairs graduate professional preparation program faculty, and a Web search of LGBT resource centers. Using purposeful sampling to allow for information-rich cases (Patton, 2002), we e-mailed individuals who fit the study's criteria after receiving approval to conduct the study from both of our campus's Institutional Review Boards. The criteria outlined that participants must be employed in graduate assistantships at public universities in the United States where they served as the primary point-of-contact for LGBT student services on their campus. We found that there were some campuses that had a graduate assistant who was the primary point-person for LGBT student services, but supervision came via a full-time professional who was broadly responsible to support all historically underrepresented students, including LGBTQ+ students. These individuals were not included in this study.

Five graduate students agreed to participate in the study, which included participating in three interviews conducted over the span of 1 year (see Table 1). Four of the participants in this study identified as White; one participant identified as Black. All of the participants identified as cisgender. All of the men identified as sexual minorities while Paula, the only woman in the study, identified as heterosexual. At the end of the Fall semester, one

Table 1  
*Participant Demographics*

Name	Institution	Race	Sexual orientation	Gender	Focus of center	Years in position
Aaron	Rocky Mountain University	Black	Gay	Cisgender man	Student and off-campus focused	.5
Chad	Midwestern University	White	Homoflexible	Cisgender man	Student focused	2
Seth	Great Lakes University	White	Gay	Cisgender man	Student focused	1
Paula	Great Plains University	White	Heterosexual	Cisgender woman	Student and off-campus focused	2
Nick	University of the Midwest	White	Gay	Cisgender man	Student focused	1

participant (Aaron) transferred to a new graduate assistantship in the middle of the academic year and only completed two interviews. The remaining four participants completed all three interviews.

The first interview took place in Fall, 2014, and included questions about their training and preparation for their position and their initial experiences on the job. The second interview, held in Winter, 2015, explored their experiences within the position, particularly the organizational structure of their college and/or university and their thoughts on their formal and informal authority within their role. The final interview, conducted in Spring, 2015, served as a reflective interview about their experiences, any challenges they faced, and their thoughts about how their experience might have been better. These interviews were each 45 min to an hour in length by phone and were transcribed verbatim. In two cases, the interview recordings were corrupted and unable to be preserved. The researchers reached out to the participants to redo their final interviews and followed up by e-mail with additional questions for the participants' responses. Interview transcripts were provided to the participants for their review for member checking to triangulate the data and to work toward trustworthiness.

In completing the data analysis together using a constructivist paradigm, we were aware of the fact that we were engaging in the process of reviewing the collected narratives in concert with our own worldviews and perspectives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). This process discussed by some scholars as "narratives-under-analysis" rather than narrative analysis because it recognizes that the ". . . text that is fashioned for analysis results from decisions by researchers about what they will examine and in what ways it will be interpreted and contextualized" (Bochner & Riggs, 2014, p. 213). In an attempt to share our process, we outline the steps we followed. First, we began by reflecting together about our experiences conducting our respective interviews; this included sharing some of the initial thoughts we were having about our participants' stories, the feelings and emotions conjured up by hearing the participants' stories, and discussions of the relationships we had established with the graduate students. These steps connect with Clandinin's (2007) discussions of four turns of narrative inquiry analysis. In an attempt to familiarize ourselves with the participants' narratives we had not interviewed, we swapped our transcripts for an initial review. During this review, each of the researchers engaged in *in vivo* coding to gain a sense for the participants' words that connected to their larger stories (Saldaña, 2009). From there, we collaboratively began to categorize our initial codes into larger categories. During this point, in conversations with one another about our data, we highlighted aspects of the narratives that we determined coalesced around particular themes. At that point, we began to explore the ways that these categories related (or did not) to one another, leading to an overarching narrative for the data.

### Positionality Statement

As scholar-practitioners, both of us identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community (one as a queer cisgender man and one as a queer transgender man). One of us served as the director of a campus LGBT Resource Center for several years, and the other served for 3 years as his campus's LGBT student services liaison

as a collateral assignment from his full-time position several years ago. These roles were what drew us to ask how graduate students manage these roles when they were not easy as full-time professionals.

Our previous professional roles and personal experiences mean we approach the philosophical ideas of LGBTQ+ services work as necessary and significant in the lives of students, faculty, and staff on campus. The goal of our work is to find ways to explain the necessity and impact of LGBTQ+ service work in higher education. Yet, we do hold concerns about how aligning our work with a neoliberal agenda of data-driven decision making in higher education will reinforce a dangerous trend that requires an accounting of LGBTQ+ work focused on the number of LGBTQ+ students, faculty, and staff on-campus as a measure of campus needs. Instead we believe LGBTQ+ service work retains its roots in social justice work to name and manage heterosexism and trans oppression intersect with other forms of oppression to isolate, marginalize, and harm everyone on campus. We remain skeptical of the proliferation of establishing LGBT resource centers without adequate resources or conceptualization, including staffing patterns and philosophical foundations.

### Findings

In analyzing the data from the participants, two major themes emerged as it pertains to structural challenges faced within these graduate assistant positions. From the data, the overarching narrative that emerged was graduate assistants in their positions coordinating LGBT resource centers felt set-up for failure. In fact, the structural challenges they faced in their roles reiterated that feeling and only intensified throughout the year. In particular, four sub-themes were particularly salient among the participants: (a) the institutional geography of the LGBT center; (b) inconsistent supervisor support and content knowledge; (c) lack of formal training and professional development; and (d) limited resources of time and money.

#### Feeling Set Up for Failure

Generally, each of the participants shared stories and examples of how they felt overworked and overstressed given their specific positions. Each graduate student's position was supposed to be a 20 h a week position, but most outlined that they often spent between 30 and 40 h a week engaged in their work instead. Given the high impact of their roles to support historically underrepresented students in higher education, the participants named feeling a strong need to be present in their offices as well as the local communities where they were brought in on LGBTQ+ concerns. This led to the graduate students taking on a great deal of responsibility, often above and beyond what was stated in their job description and typically named as "unsustainable." As Paula stated, "I start the conversations, but they never finish." These challenges often progressed over the academic year as the graduate students got further along in their work.

For each of the graduate students, their attitudes toward their roles were generally very idealistic and positive in our first interviews with them, but gradually became more pessimistic and often jaded over time. Their frustrations largely centered on feeling "set up to fail" given the demands of the position and the lack of

support and resources needed to be effective for LGBTQ+ students on their campus. For example, when asked what his major accomplishment was in his position, Seth stated, “surviving.” Many of the participants named their eventual realization that the positions they were in at other colleges and universities were often full-time professional positions and how that was challenging. Chad remarked,

Looking back on it, I definitely realize that there were a lot of things that I was not prepared to do. I didn’t have the adequate resources or support, but it was one of things where I didn’t know what I didn’t know.

He continued, “The fact that we’re having an GA as the sole point of contact for LGBT student services is, for lack of a better word, kind of a joke.” These feelings of being “set up” were often experienced because of specific factors and conditions that will be explored next.

**Institutional geography of LGBT centers.** The institutional geography of where LGBT student services were physically housed, but also which divisions of the institution they were embedded proved to pose unique challenges for the participants. Out of the five participants, four of the participants initially worked within their university’s division of student affairs at the start of the project, but by that spring semester, only three centers were still within the division of student affairs’ organization chart. For those who moved divisions, they were instead moved within a division focused on multiculturalism, equity, and inclusion within their university, often directly reporting to the vice president or chief diversity officer. Yet, this presented challenges because these professionals often were not used to having to work to support graduate assistants rather than full-time professionals. These feelings of constant upheaval contributed to the graduate assistants’ awareness of their work as important to the institution, but set up for failure because of a lack of consistency and proper supervision.

For those within divisions of student affairs, often their work was embedded into specific offices within the division rather than being a stand-alone office. For example, Nick was embedded in an office created to oversee “. . . students in crisis, students who are missing class, and that kind of thing.” Nick discussed how on his university’s campus there was a multicultural center that housed African American, Latino, and women’s center spaces, and he questioned why the LGBTQ+ students were not included in that space. On Aaron’s campus, his work with LGBTQ+ students was placed in the Student Activities Office where he was supposed to serve the LGBTQ+ community, but also assist with campus-wide large-scale programming as well. He felt challenged by this placement and dual role though, saying:

Sometimes the work that the GLBTA office wants to and needs to do is clouded by the conflict of values and focused of being within a student activities office. I’m at a table with other people that are talking about how to come up with these fun activities or how to recruit folks to a fraternity or sorority . . . while I’m trying to find a form to change your gender marker and make it more easily accessible. Like, it’s different work and sometimes that presents itself as a challenge when you are trying to act—when you’re trying to articulate to people why that work is important and their focus is elsewhere.

These challenges were difficult for the participants to navigate given their identities as graduate students with little authority and

political capital on their campus. They often lacked the skills or clout to challenge these concerns.

For Seth and Paula, their spaces were indeed standalone centers, yet they were in secluded areas on their respective campuses and isolated away from their direct supervisors. For example, Paula discussed how her direct supervisor, who was the Dean of Students at the time, worked a building away from her; this limited their interactions to their regular one-on-one supervision meetings. Similarly, Seth’s supervisor very rarely entered the LGBT resource center on his campus and they did not have much interaction. The proximity of a supervisor in a separate building or even across campus makes sense for a full-time professional who is a director (midlevel manager), but the same kind of distance for a graduate student in a professional role might be an unethical amount of autonomy. While these were different challenges than those embedded in other offices, the physical proximity to supervisors and high traffic areas of campus were of concern. This was also connected to the next subtheme of inconsistent support and content knowledge by one’s supervisor.

**Inconsistent supervisor support and content knowledge.** For almost all of the participants, their interactions with their supervisors were often irregular and inconsistent. For many, they are in charge of other units and a sizable number of direct reports. Yet, the ways that the participants spoke about this was often in a sympathetic tone, which sounded as if they were attempting to make excuses for them. As an example, Paula stated how her supervisor often was not present at programs or functions of the office, saying, “It could be due to her job . . . She has a lot of other students who need her assistance.” Likewise, Chad remarked, “Because I perceived my supervisor to be very busy, I had this, I guess this underlying kind of feeling of well, I don’t want to bother you. I don’t want to be very bothersome.” As a result, the graduate students often took on their responsibilities, carried stress of addressing student issues, and bore the brunt of difficulties because they did not feel as though they could easily reach out to supervisors for quick answers.

Perhaps Seth’s story exemplifies this best when he recounted how he moved to his new division and his direct supervisor who was the vice president of multicultural affairs never introduced him to the rest of the staff within the division. Over the course of a semester, the vice president only met with Seth three or four times for supervision meetings, and Seth felt as though she really did not know what to do to adequately support and supervise a graduate student. In addition to these issues and challenges of inconsistent contact with one’s supervisor, some of the participants also spoke about how their supervisors really did not have much knowledge about LGBTQ+ students, topics, or issues in general.

With a lack of content knowledge about LGBTQ+ content by their supervisors, the graduate students were forced to play a more significant role in being the educators within their offices and departments. Nick shared how he wanted his supervisor to “take a more active part in the community.” He elaborated, “I know he’s very, very busy, and he has a lot of other things on his plate, but something I would like to see is for him to come to programs maybe once or twice a semester.” Again, the expectation that a supervisor attends programs for a midlevel professional who serves as a director is not necessarily noteworthy. However, a supervisor of a graduate assistant who is developing professional skills might want to attend programs to both ensure job compe-

tency and community connections. The lack of presence of a supervisor was not the only form of challenge participants experienced in the realm of supervision.

At his campus, Aaron outlined how he experienced an office structure in transition. His position was moving from being supervised by the Director of Student Activities to the Associate Director. However, neither of these supervisors were actively involved in the day-to-day running of the campus's LGBT resource office. Aaron commented, "They don't really make decisions on what the office does. They sort of just support me and mine." Their lack of involvement thrust Aaron to be making decisions without much oversight or assistance. This disconnection and lack of expertise by their supervisors furthered this sense of feeling set up for failure. This issue went hand-in-hand with another challenge of the graduate students not receiving any formal training or professional development for their specific role on campus.

**Lack of formal training and professional development.** Out of the five participants, the formal training to succeed in their roles of supporting LGBTQ+ students was minimal at best and nonexistent at worst. Some of the participants, including Aaron and Paula, reached out to other professionals who worked in LGBT resource centers or were trained by the previous GA in their position. Others, such as Seth and Nick, reviewed files left by those who previously held the role. Chad received no training at all. He stated:

Initially, my training only included a very brief (about 25 min) meeting that only covered my contract, HR paperwork, and the stipend. As far as day-to-day duties, my training was all on-the-job and the only formal training I received was on using the BANNER system to look up student information. There was no formal training on what was expected of my position.

Across the board, there were no discussions of LGBTQ+ student development or specific concerns and issues that LGBTQ+ students faced on their specific campus. Very few had any training on how to supervise student staff, budget for operational items or programs, or engage in active listening skills for counseling students in distress. This last issue was particularly challenging for Paula, who remarked:

One of the things that I've struggled with is dealing with students of concern. I would have liked some kind of—not really counseling training, but just signs to look for when working with students who are depressed or suicidal. That was really hard for me to deal with without having training with that.

This lack of on-boarding and training for graduate assistants seemed to be counterintuitive given the sensitive and critical nature of their work. Given that these institutions, as public universities are large bureaucratic organizations, there was an assumption, by the researchers, that systems and processes would have prevented such an experience, but this was not the case.

In the end, there was an underlying assumption by the graduate assistants' supervisors that because of having identities of being sexual minorities (Aaron, Chad, Nick, and Seth) or a straight ally (Paula) that they were equipped to handle their roles. Seth mentioned, "They may have showed me a little bit about maybe where the stapler was and the office work, but as far as training for my content area, there was none." Instead, he drew on his experience as an undergraduate student leader of his campus's LGBTQ+

group. Likewise, many of his fellow participants discussed drawing on other undergraduate leadership experiences, such as resident assistant positions for programming skills and LGBTQ+ student organizations for some content expertise, to have ideas about how to do their work. For the four sexual minority identified graduate assistants, they were often direct in saying that their sexual identity played a direct role in why they were hired for the position. In fact, Seth spoke directly about the fact that his graduate assistantship position was kept as an open vacancy when he applied because no one had been accepted into his campus's HESA program who identified as an out sexual or gender minority before he applied for the program. This seems to indicate that those in leadership positions had embedded issues of tokenization around identity into the recruitment and selection process for these positions. However, the graduate assistants often felt ill-prepared and uncomfortable with particular situations where they experienced microaggressions around LGBTQ+ issues or when faced with challenges navigating campus politics around their centers and the work stemming from them. These feelings of being tokenized furthered the intense feelings of being set up for failure. Yet, these feelings could have been assuaged or mitigated had proper professional development have been offered to help these individuals more effectively engage in their work.

For most of the participants, professional development was varied. Often funding was available for regional conferences, particularly if they were chaperoning undergraduate students attending. Yet, most of the participants outlined that the funding for any professional development was typically taken out of their office's operating budgets, which were already small. For those who were able to attend conferences and professional development trainings, these opportunities became eye opening. In particular, the graduate assistants felt as though they walked away with new insights on how to support their students. Nick, who attended the Creating Change conference, a national annual conference sponsored by the National LGBTQ Task Force, commented, "I learned a lot, specifically regarding trans students and how to help them better." At the same time, attending these conferences allowed the participants to shift their perceptions on their work. Seth also attended the Creating Change conference. When he arrived at the conference he was facing some self-doubt, feeling like "I was really bad at my job," but from the conversations he had with other professionals of resource centers and sessions he attended, he realized, "You're not doing as bad as you think you are."

Given that each of the graduate assistants in the study were enrolled in higher education and student affairs programs, there was an assumption that their academic coursework may be a source of professional development. However, that was not quite the case. There were few intentional connections between their academic program and their work. Only one of the graduate assistants ever spoke about their supervisor intentionally asking about their graduate courses and what they were learning in the classroom. Very few of the participants felt as though their supervisors were really tuned into what they were experiencing in their graduate program curriculum. Nick mentioned how his student development theory course was helpful to understand aspects of his students' development, but few of the other participants mentioned such specific connections. In fact, if there were connections made, it was them bringing examples into the classroom to educate others, not the classroom making it to their site. This disconnect

was somewhat surprising, but given the demands within their workplace, it made sense that they were just trying to meet expectations and stay afloat.

**Limited resources of time and money.** One of the last structural challenges these graduate students faced in their work was that of a lack of time and money, which has been alluded to previously within this work. For most, a budget for their programs and services was scarce and certainly underresourced for the magnitude of the work being done. In some cases, some centers had no budget while the student organizations affiliated with the center were well-funded through student fees. Seth shared that he felt the financial allocations felt inequitable. He remarked,

My supervisor at the time would be like, “Well, I’ve got 50 bucks here and there if you want to do this program,” under some secret fund that I didn’t need to know about but ultimately he would have to request money from the student organization he was supposed to advise if he wanted to do anything from the Center.

This was in juxtaposition to the student organization that had an annual budget of \$30,000. Paula felt as though the budgeting process of the institution was a symbol of institutional priorities. She commented how the president of the university would highlight the LGBT resource center in e-mails and communications as a resource, but the minimal budget they received made it difficult to actually serve students who needed the support. Similar to issues of finances, time also was a considerable challenge.

As previously mentioned, each of the participants’ positions were supposed to be 20 h a week positions. Yet, this caused a great deal of consternation and frustration by those in these positions. Again, from an institutional lens, having these positions be filled only by part-time graduate students raised questions about the genuine importance of these services. Chad commented, “They definitely kind of viewed the position as ‘Well, we’ve got to have someone do it, so we might as well get away with only paying a GA with a GA stipend to do this work.’” While cost savings and institutional finances may inform some of the decision-making around the structuring of these positions, it is clear that asking emerging professionals within the field of student affairs and higher education to do the work of a full-time professional in a 40 h a week position can be a challenge. Likewise, the turnover in these positions causes additional concerns. Paula highlighted this, discussing her concerns that having staff turnover as well as students who do not work on summer contracts creates a lack of connection for students year-round.

The question of quantity versus quality of the programmatic work within these spaces and these graduate students’ roles was discussed. Paula named the fact that she felt senior administrators on her campus who made decisions about funding and staff structures were genuinely unaware of what she does in her role and why the center is important. She stated, “More administrators need to sit down and be a part of . . . these conversations that I have every day and understand on that level why it’s [the center] is so important for students.” Nick commented that he started his role wanting to be really productive and to be focused on programming for the campus community about LGBTQ+ issues. This resulted in feeling burnt out by the end of the academic year and tokenized by the work. He was annoyed that there was a lack of engagement of LGBTQ+ issues outside of the center on campus, saying “I feel like an airport and other people want to fly in and do stuff with the

LGBT Resource Center, but it’s never someone taking their own initiative so to speak.” The demands on these graduate students to provide educational resources, such as Safe Space and ally trainings, community outreach, and panel discussions of LGBTQ+ individuals’ lived experiences, were time and resource intensive. Chad commented, “It’s kind of just the nature of the beast that as a GA you’re going to be overworked and underpaid.” However, this mindset begs the question of why that has to be the case and what that sets up from an internalized mindset for these students who are just at the start of their professional careers within higher education. This sense of burnout, tokenization, and invalidation all promoted an internalized sense of frustration or disappointment by the graduate assistants, but also reinforced the sense that these positions were untenable as part-time graduate assistantship positions in the first place. It may not come as a surprise then to learn that by the time these participants had finished their graduate programs, only three of the five found themselves in full-time student affairs positions. Two had decided that working in student affairs was not for them or had difficulties finding employment in the field.

### Limitations

Within this work, there are several limitations that must be acknowledged. First, this study only engages the personal narratives of the five participants. Thus, this is all self-reported information from the participant. We did not interview the participants’ supervisors or colleagues to understand their experiences of the participants. Additionally, the study criteria was limited only to students working at 4-year public universities. As a result, future research should also include the experiences of individuals at private liberal arts colleges and universities or 2-year colleges and universities. As aforementioned, one substantial limitation was the unfortunate corruption of audio files of interviews with two participants, which led to redoing those interviews several months after the fact. Unfortunately, this required two of the participants to recall their experiences over a period of time rather than discuss what had happened on the job in the recent past. Lastly, we were limited to only those individuals who agreed to participate, and the majority of our participants identified as White gay or queer cisgender individuals, leading to a pool that was not as diverse in terms of their social identities.

### Implications

Structural challenges for emerging professionals in the field of student affairs is a matter of grave concern because of the high rates of burnout and attrition. Between 50 and 60% of student professionals end up departing the field within the first 5 years of professional employment (Lorden, 1998; Tull, 2006). Given the fact that the five participants of this study, as graduate assistants, encountered so many structural challenges, it can only be assumed that they are already at an increased risk of attrition from the field. In this section, we will discuss particular implications of both practice and future research that stem directly from the findings themselves.

Dwindling resources in an uncertain time in higher education funding clearly has led public universities to consider alternatives to full-time employees. As a result, graduate assistantships, such as

the ones that these participants held, are seen as useful opportunities for cost-savings while still being able to provide structures and staffing supports on-campus. However, for these positions to be successful, senior administrators need to consider critical questions about how to be support these employees given the dual roles they inhabit as both students and university employees. Developmentally, university structures must be created, particularly through supervisory support, to empower these employees to be successful. As Marshall and her colleagues (Marshall, S. M., Gardner, M. M., Hughes, C., & Lowery, 2016) note, “. . . increasing employee loyalty, job satisfaction, and job commitment is imperative” in difficult budget climates (p. 158). This is even more true for professionals being groomed to enter the field of student affairs administration, given the earlier aforementioned statistics around attrition.

Senior administrators need to fully weigh the pros and cons of creating identity-based cultural centers, such as LGBT resource centers, to be staffed by part-time graduate assistant employees. From the location of their offices and spaces, how these positions are embedded within offices and/or divisions, and who supervises these individuals, all of these elements are essential to have determined with a critical eye for detail. If these graduate assistantships are used in such a way, it is crucial that they be adequately supported and funded to engage in this work. We know that those who engage in multicultural affairs cultural centers “often find themselves justifying the existence, outreach, impact and rationale of their programs to campus and community critics” (Patton & Hannon, 2008, p. 149). An impact of a dynamic where student affairs staff are required to continuously justify their existence seems like a burden too heavy for newly developing student affairs professionals, increasing the risk of burnout before their careers even begin. As emerging professionals within the field, the over-reliance and undervaluing that happens with graduate assistants and their labor within colleges and universities becomes an ethical imperative.

Administrators need to find ways that reward their efforts and contributions and maintain a clear line about expectations and accountability. The current systems on campus only reinforce the idea, as Chad noted earlier, that graduate students are “overworked and underpaid.” With little institutional history and a lack of authority and power, it is easy to understand how the participants in this study felt setup for failure. To be tasked to create programs and initiatives around identity-based work without adequate funding or staffing, this is a disastrous equation, particularly for individuals who are doing heavy lifting on campus climate issues and also expected to succeed in their graduate studies at the same time.

Without a doubt, supervision is a critical issue that must be addressed for positions such as these. As the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (2015) framework for LGBT programs states, “LGBT Programs and Services personnel, when hired and throughout their employment, must receive appropriate and thorough training” (p. 338). Specific onboarding and training must be given to students in these roles to adequately equip them to have an understanding of the student populations they are serving and knowing available programmatic tools and resources, including budgeting systems. According to the participants’ stories, supervisors largely operated in a *laissez-faire* supervisory style and wanted their employees to be more autonomous (Hirt, Frank, & Perillo, 2017). Developmentally, this may not be

the most effective supervision style. In fact, Tull’s (2006) work on synergistic supervision may be most helpful for graduate assistants being groomed and mentored to enter the field of student affairs, but also for those engaged in high-pressure, high-expectation identity-based work. This is supported by findings from Pittman and Foubert (2016) who recently found a significant relationship between the use of synergistic supervision between graduate students and their supervisors and their professional identity in the field of student affairs. In fact, supervisors would benefit from reviewing The Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals’s (The Consortium, 2016) document on LGBT2 Supervision Tips for supervisors of LGBT resource center staff who are not at the director-level.

Administrators need to challenge their assumptions and biases that having a minoritized identity around one’s gender or sexuality provides “enough” training and understanding to adequately serve LGBTQ+ students on their campus. For the students engaged in these roles themselves, there is a particular need to be well-versed and trained in intersectional perspectives that are truly intersectional. Students engaged in LGBTQ+ work must understand the ways in which power, privilege, and oppression play a role in students’ lives and be trained and find comfort in having difficult conversations around race, ability, religion, sexuality, gender, and other aspects of identity. In this study, the participants expressed feeling that they could never be enough or understand all there is to know about the work. It is important that individuals in these roles understand that representational politics will never be successful, so individuals must think differently about how they do the work. For these students, they were still stuck in the representational mindset so it would be more effective to work through this. Professional development must be provided to help equip these individuals to be able to proactively build relationships and coalitions across difference to help support students with multiple marginalized identities and decenter Whiteness from LGBT resource center spaces. Additionally, faculty members in graduate preparation programs in higher education and student affairs must consider the ways that they are emphasizing a theory-to-practice approach to our field and work to have students understand the ways that what they are learning in the classroom has an impact on their professional practice within their assistantships. After all, as Kuk and Cuyjet (2009) reminded us, “The curriculum as a whole defines what it means to be a professional within student affairs, and how the knowledge is applied and practiced” (p. 91). To not engage in this opportunity for powerful learning is a missed opportunity; therefore, faculty members are encouraged to develop more purposeful conversations with staff supervisors to figure out ways that the curriculum can be more meaningful to enhance student learning at all levels.

## Conclusion

The graduate assistants in this study shared powerful narratives with us about their experiences in these positions. Many of them were positive and affirming (that will be outlined in a forthcoming article), but the structural challenges they encountered were extraordinary. Structurally and systemically, these graduate students’ institutions have left them feeling ill-equipped and underresourced in ways that are detrimental to doing their jobs and serving LGBTQ+ students on their campus. In a day and age where

funding is lacking, public universities must be good steward of their financial investments, but we ask are the students needing support being adequately served by centers without proper budgets, staffed solely by graduate assistants who have been inadequately trained and supported? We must reexamine the structural challenges these employees face to allow them to properly do their jobs and engage with the students with whom they are meant to serve.

## References

- Alvesson, M. (2011). Organizational culture: Meaning, discourse, and identity. In N. M. Kanasy, C. P. M. Wilderom, & M. F. Peterson (Eds.), *The handbook of organizational culture and climate* (2nd ed., pp. 11–28). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Bazarsky, D., & Sanlo, R. (2011). LGBT students, faculty, and staff. In L. M. Stulberg & S. L. Weinberg (Eds.), *Diversity in American higher education: Toward a more comprehensive approach* (pp. 128–141). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Beemyn, B. (2002). The development and administration of campus LGBT centers and offices. In R. Sanlo, S. Rankin, & R. Schoenberg (Eds.), *Our place on campus: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender services and programs in higher education* (pp. 25–32). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Bochner, A. P., & Riggs, N. A. (2014). Practicing narrative inquiry. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 195–222). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Clandinin, J. (2007). *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781452226552>
- Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education. (2015). *CAS professional standards for higher education* (9th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
- D'Emilio, J. (1992). *Making trouble: Essays on gay history, politics, and the university*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2000). *The handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Evans, N. J., & Rankin, S. (1998). Heterosexism and campus violence: Assessment and intervention strategies. In A. M. Hoffman, J. H. Schuh, & R. H. Fenske (Eds.), *Violence on campus: Defining the problems, strategies for action* (pp. 169–186). Gaithersburg, MD: Aspen.
- Fine, L. (2012). The context of creating space: Assessing the likelihood of college LGBT center presence. *Journal of College Student Development*, 53, 285–299. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/csd.2012.0017>
- Hardiman, R., Jackson, B. W., & Griffin, P. (2007). Conceptual foundations for social justice education. In M. Adams, L. A. Bell, & P. Griffin (Eds.), *Teaching for diversity and social justice* (2nd ed., pp. 35–66). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hirt, J. B., Frank, T. E., & Perillo, P. A. (2017). Staffing and supervision. In J. H. Schuh, S. R. Jones, & V. Torres (Eds.), *Student services: A handbook for the profession* (6th ed., pp. 423–436). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Jenkins, T. S., & Walton, C. L. (2008). Student affairs and cultural practice: A framework for implementing culture outside the classroom. In S. R. Harper (Ed.), *Creating inclusive campus environments: For cross-cultural learning and student engagement* (pp. 87–101). Washington, DC: NASPA.
- Kuk, L., & Cuyjet, M. J. (2009). Graduate preparation programs. In A. Tull, J. B. Hirt, & S. A. Saunders (Eds.), *Becoming socialized in student affairs administration: A guide for new professionals and their supervisors* (pp. 89–108). Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Liddell, D. L., & Douvanis, C. J. (1994). The social and legal status of gay and lesbian students: An update for colleges and universities. *NASPA Journal*, 31, 121–129.
- Lieblich, A., Tuval-Mashiach, R., & Zilber, T. (1998). *Narrative research: Reading, analysis, and interpretation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412985253>
- Lopez, G., & Chims, N. (1993). Classroom concerns of gay and lesbian students: The invisible minority. *College Teaching*, 41, 97–103. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/87567555.1993.9926788>
- Lorden, L. (1998). Attrition in the student affairs profession. *NASPA Journal*, 35, 207–216. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2202/0027-6014.1049>
- Manning, K. (2017). *Organizational theory in higher education*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Marine, S. B. (2011). *Stonewall's legacy: Bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender students in higher education*. ASHE Higher Education Report, 37, Number 4. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Marine, S. B., McLoughlin, P. J., II, & McCarthy, T. P. (2015). Queering Harvard Yard: Four decades of progress for BGLTQ equality. In J. C. Hawley (Ed.), *Expanding the circle: Creating an inclusive environment in higher education for LGBTQ students and studies* (pp. 163–184). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Marine, S. B., & Nicolazzo, Z. (2014). Names that matter: Exploring the tensions of campus LGBTQ centers and trans\* inclusion. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 7, 265–281. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0037990>
- Marshall, S. M., Gardner, M. M., Hughes, C., & Lowery, U. (2016). Attrition from student affairs: Perspectives from those who exited the profession. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 53, 146–159. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19496591.2016.1147359>
- Patton, L. (Ed.). (2010). *Culture centers in higher education: Perspectives on identity, theory, and practice*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Patton, L. D., & Hannon, M. D. (2008). Collaborating for cultural programming: Engaging culture centers, multicultural affairs, and student activities as partners. In S. R. Harper (Ed.), *Creating inclusive campus environments for cross-cultural learning and student engagement* (pp. 139–154). Washington, DC: NASPA.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Pitcher, E. N., Camacho, T. P., Renn, K. A., & Woodford, M. R. (2018). Affirming policies, programs, and supportive services: Using an organizational perspective to understand LGBTQ+ college student success. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 11, 117–132. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/dhe0000048>
- Pittman, E. C., & Foubert, J. D. (2016). Predictors of professional identity development for student affairs professionals. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 53, 13–25. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19496591.2016.1087857>
- Pryor, J. T., Garvey, J. C., & Johnson, S. (2017). Pride and progress?: 30 years of ACPA and NASPA LGBTQ presentations. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 54, 123–136. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19496591.2016.1206020>
- Renn, K. A. (2010). LGBT and queer research in higher education: The state and status of the field. *Educational Researcher*, 39, 132–141. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3102/0013189X10362579>
- Renn, K. A., & Jessup-Anger, E. R. (2008). Preparing new professionals: Lessons for graduate preparation programs from the National Study of New Professionals in Student Affairs. *Journal of College Student Development*, 49, 319–335. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/csd.0.0022>
- Ritchie, C. A., & Banning, J. H. (2001). Gay, lesbian, and transgender campus support offices: A qualitative study of establishment experiences. *NASPA Journal*, 38, 482–494. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2202/0027-6014.1153>
- Ryan, R. (2011). The evolution of an LGBT Center at a public institution. *New Directions for Student Services*, 111, 71–74.
- Saldaña, J. (2009). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Sanlo, R. L. (1998). *Working with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender college students: A handbook for faculty and administrators*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Sanlo, R., Rankin, S., & Schoenberg, R. (2002). *Our place on campus: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender services and programs in higher education*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Schein, E. H. (2004). *Organizational culture and leadership* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Schuh, J. H., Jones, S. R., & Torres, V. (Eds.). (2016). *Student services: A handbook for the profession* (6th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Self, J. M., & Hudson, K. D. (2015). Dangerous waters and brave space: A critical feminist inquiry of campus LGBTQ centers. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services, 27*, 216–245. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10538720.2015.1021985>
- Stewart, D. L. (Ed.). (2011). *Multicultural student services on campus: Building bridges, reimagining community*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Talbot, D. M., & Viento, W. L. E. (2005). Incorporating LGBT issues into student affairs graduate education. In R. L. Sanlo (Ed.), *Gender identity and sexual orientation: Research, policy, and personal* (New Directions for Student Services, no. 111, pp. 75–80). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/ss.176>
- The Consortium. (2016). *LGBT2 supervisory tips*. Retrieved from <https://lgbtcampus.memberclicks.net/assets/lgbt2%20supervision%20tips%20document.pdf>
- The Consortium. (n.d.). *Find an LGBT center*. Retrieved from <http://www.lgbtcampus.org/find-a-lgbt-center>
- Tillapaugh, D. (2015). Critical influences on sexual minority college males' meaning-making of their multiple identities. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice, 52*, 64–75. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19496591.2015.996059>
- Travers, S., Welch, E. F., & dela Peña, E. A. (2016). Social justice leadership: Silos and synergies. In L. J. Santamaría & A. P. Santamaría (Eds.), *Culturally responsive leadership in higher education: Promoting access, equity, and improvement* (pp. 194–208). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Tull, A. (2006). Synergistic supervision, job satisfaction, and intention to turn over of new professionals in student affairs. *Journal of College Student Development, 47*, 465–480. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/csd.2006.0053>

Received July 7, 2017

Revision received October 30, 2017

Accepted February 27, 2018 ■