

# IPFW Safe Zone Selected Case Studies and Role Play Scenarios

*What to do if...Suggestion Solutions to Campus Transgender Scenarios  
(Suggestions made by attendees of the LGBT Institute at the 2004 NASPA  
Conference) <http://multiculturalcenter.osu.edu/glbts/page.asp?ID=96>*

## Case study 1:

Sally, a female transsexual student, approaches you as department chair. She complains that a faculty member in the department continues to call her by her male given name and to refer to her as "he," even though she has asked the professor several times to use her correct name and gender. How do you address Sally's complaint?

## Possible responses:

- ☐ Make sure the student is comfortable with the actions that are taken
- ☐ Help the student find any support she needs
- ☐ Look at the policies that protect students in such cases. If no policies exist, work to create them
- ☐ If the student is willing, perhaps pursue mediation
- ☐ If the option is available and the student is willing, enable her to change sections
- ☐ Require the faculty member and other faculty in the department to attend a trans education workshop
- ☐ Make education on LGBT issues an ongoing part of faculty development
- ☐ Be sure that trans issues are included in Safe Zone or Ally Program trainings

## Case study 2:

Linus, a male-presenting transsexual student, wants to change the female name and gender status on his records. However, he is told by the school's registrar's office that they won't alter his records unless he receives a court ordered name change and brings in a letter from his doctor indicating that he has completed sex-reassignment surgery. Linus states that he cannot afford these procedures and hasn't decided for sure that he even wants surgery. He comes to you as the director of the campus LGBT center. How do you intervene in this situation?

## Possible responses:

- ☐ Investigate requirements under state law
- ☐ Research how many transsexual students are affected by the policy
- ☐ Consider how other campuses handle the issue
- ☐ Recognize that a student's gender expression and their campus records and identification have to be consistent for their safety and to help protect them from discrimination
- ☐ Make sure that Student Affairs offices like the registrar and human resources, which are often overlooked by Safe Zone or Ally Program trainings, are included

*Case Studies from Youngstown State University Safe Zone*

- 1) A sophomore at and has recently come to terms with her identity as a lesbian. She is not involved on campus, but does have a few close friends who she has come out to and they have been accepting of her identity. This student comes to you and explains she came out to her parents last night and was kicked out of her house. She slept in her car last night and doesn't know what to do. Her parents let her know she is not welcome at home. She is enrolled as a full time student and has midterms next week. How would you help this student? Who on campus could help you help this student?
- 2) A student in a Social Identities class identifies as female-to-male transgender person. He shares with you that the issue of gender identity came up in class and the topic turned into a heated debate. Several negative and disparaging comments such as "freak" and "she-male" were made. He is out to the professor but not to the class. He shares with you he is uncomfortable returning to this class and fears for his safety if his classmates were to find out about his identity. How do you handle the discussion? Who on campus could help you help this student?
- 3) A star athlete comes to you and tells you his coach caught him kiss a male companion he was with at a movie this past weekend. The coach asked him to not say anything to the team for fear of adverse reaction from the team which might jeopardize the chance of having a winning season. How do you handle this situation? Who on campus could help you help this student?

### *Role Play Scenarios from NACADA's LGBTA Commission*

These scenarios may be adapted to fit a variety of faculty and staff roles.

**1) Academic Advisor:** You came into work this morning to a student appointment on your schedule for Emmitt Holli. Your front desk staff have a note in your calendar that they cannot find him in the system as a student. You don't know who Emmitt Holli is, but you know that you have a student named Emily Holli and think that maybe it's her brother? When the appointment time arrives, the student worker comes back to your office and tells you that Emmitt is there for his appointment with a funny look on his face. You let the look go and go out to the lobby to get Emmitt. When you call his name, Emily Holli stands up and proceeds to follow you into your office. You are a bit confused as you sit down for your meeting.

**Emmitt:** You have been in the transition process from female-to-male since you started college. Last year you started to see your therapist and talking about transitioning. This year is your year of living as a man before your surgery. You started taking testosterone this summer; you have taken the name Emmitt and are ready to come out as Emmitt to everyone on campus, where you are a sophomore in the Sociology department. You have a job lined up at the LGBT Resource Center, which you are excited about. When school starts, it's easy to tell most people that you already knew about your transition. However, you quickly realize how far apart the gender-neutral, family, restrooms are. There's one right outside the LGBT Resource Center and then the other is all the way across campus in the Student Center. When one is occupied, you don't want to walk all the way across campus, but every time you go into the women's restroom, you get looked at weird by the other women, and going into the men's restroom is still very uncomfortable for you. You are meeting with your academic advisor today and she knew that you work at the LGBT Resource Center, but not about your transitioning. You need to talk to her about your courses for Spring, but also want to tell her about your transition and the problem that you are coming across with the restrooms being on opposite ends of the campus, since she is a huge advocate of the LGBT community on campus and maybe she can team up with your boss and help the cause.

**2) Academic Advisor:** You are an advisor for first-year exploration students. You have an appointment on your schedule with a new (male) student that you have not seen since Orientation. Your front desk staff put into the meeting notes that he would like to talk about withdrawal.

**Male Student:** You are a freshman this year and are taking some general education courses, since you don't really know what you would like to major in. In the first week of school, you were surprised that one of your instructors seemed to take an interest in you and wanted to talk to you about the department and major. You met him in his office to talk about the major, since you wanted more information. When you showed up for your appointment, he closed the door and said some very inappropriate things to you about being gay. You don't know who to turn to, but you know that you do not want to be at this school anymore. You talk to one of your friends and they tell you to go see this one academic advisor from the Advising Center, since she is really cool and is part of the Safe Zone program on campus. You make an appointment, but are still hesitant to tell her what exactly happened. When you walk in and start talking to her however, you decide that you can disclose what the instructor said/did.

### *Case Studies from NACADA's LGBTA Commission*

1) An English instructor comes to you with a problem. During a classroom discussion on sexuality in which same-sex relationships are discussed, one of the students says that homosexuality is "evil" and should not be a part of a classroom discussion. This instructor is unsure how to deal with this. What would your advice be to this instructor? How can you assist her in finding an equitable solution to this issue?

2) A student has made an appointment with you because she feels she doesn't have anyone she can turn to and is afraid and confused because she is questioning her sexual orientation. She tells you she feels all alone and it seems as if she has a big weight on her shoulders as she is not sure her friends and family would understand what she is going through. She also expresses concern because she is so worried about the feelings she is having that her grades are beginning to be affected. What is your response to this plea and how do you go about assisting this student?

3) As you are walking across campus to a meeting, you notice a young man and woman embrace and share a passionate kiss. What is your initial response to and feelings about this? Later that same day, you are now walking back across campus to your office and notice two young men embracing and sharing a passionate kiss. What is your initial response to and feelings about this? Were they the same or different than seeing the first couple kiss? Why?

4) You are standing in line at the DMV. The person in front of you is engaged in a heated argument with the clerk over how to be addressed on their driver's license. Through the course of this conversation, you come to understand that this person was born male but has always identified as a female. Recently, she has begun the process of gender reassignment in order to physically become female. The DMV clerk feels that because she was born a man, she will always be a man and cannot have your driver's license say anything else. What are your feelings about and response to this issue? Should a person be allowed to be legally considered a female if they were born male? If so, should this only be after gender reassignment surgery? Why or why not?

5) You are currently teaching a Communication and Culture course at your institution. You are out at your institution and have a student come out during a classroom discussion. You met with him outside of class time to discuss safety, bullying, etc. As the term went on, this student would stop by your office to talk about his home situation and trying to figure out how/when/if he should come out to his family. He came out to his sisters who were supportive. He wasn't sure, though, about coming out to his parents. He said that his mom would be okay, but his dad frequently said things like "all those queers should be rounded up and shot in the head." You are sitting in your office (full of queer theory and gender studies books on your desk and bookshelves) one day as you hear a student running down the hall. All of a sudden this student is in your door telling you that his parents were coming. What is your first reaction? What do you talk to his parents about? What is going through your mind as they are there?