

## ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: A Grounded Theory of Lesbian and Gay Leadership Self-Efficacy Development.

Daniel Ostick, Doctor of Philosophy, 2011

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The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of gay and lesbian college students engaged in leadership and the meaning they made of their leadership self-efficacy development, particularly as it related to their identity development and various environmental assisters and constraints. The study sought to identify what shaped the development of leadership self-efficacy for these students and generated additional questions for future research. Using Grounded Theory Methodology, this study explored the primary research question: How do gay and lesbian college students engaged in leadership develop their leadership self-efficacy?

Three interviews were held each with 10 students who self-identified as gay, lesbian, queer, or sexually fluid who were highly involved in leadership activities on campus. The theory that emerged from the participants' experiences centered on the individual's self-efficacy to engage in leadership defined within the context of their beliefs about the nature of leadership engagement. The self-efficacy of the students was enhanced by support, success, and deep and broad involvement and was diminished by failure and active criticism. The students' gay, lesbian, or queer identities served to either improve self-efficacy or leadership or had no demonstrable effect, according to the

participants' stories. Sexual orientation served to improve self-efficacy for engagement in leadership by broadening perspectives, improving relationships and comfort within groups, allowing the participants to bring their full selves to their experiences, creating empathy and understanding, and improving personal awareness. Participants also shared that their identities were integral to their involvements, that being out increased their overall self-confidence, that greater comfort led to greater involvement, and that visibility and voice was important to their leadership self-efficacy. Students also shared that their sexual orientation did not have an appreciable effect on their leadership self-efficacy when they already had a great deal of confidence to engage in leadership, when they had already integrated their sexual orientations, when situations did not relate to their sexual orientations, or when the saliency of their sexual orientations was lower than other aspects of their personality.

A GROUNDED THEORY OF LESBIAN AND GAY  
LEADERSHIP SELF-EFFICACY DEVELOPMENT

by

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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Before the 1960s, no college campuses in the United States offered formal organizations serving the gay or lesbian population (Mallory, 1998). Today, gay and lesbian student organizations are plentiful and there are more than 100 student affairs offices on campuses tasked with serving LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) students (National Consortium of Directors of LGBT Resources in Higher Education, 2006), providing LGBT students both individual support and a pipeline to engage in leadership with other students. Additionally, the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (2009) includes LGBT programs and services in its guidelines of best practices within academia. But the progress in support and acknowledgement has not been met with an equal increase in scholarly attention. Few campuses and few national studies include LGBT students in their demographic categories, and few researchers have explored LGBT students' experiences in leadership, so understanding of the experiences of this population continues to be limited (Bieschke, Eberz, & Wilson, 2000; Sanlo, 2004).

Positive portrayals of developmental theory for gays and lesbians only began to develop in the late 1970s (Cass, 1979; Troiden, 1979). But, as Porter (1998) stated, "The higher education community has been an important arena for gay men and lesbians to begin the journey of discovering how their identity may shape both the personal and professional aspects of self" (p. 3). Early scholarship on diversity focused on the experiences of students of color (mostly Black) and women, but over the years, an emphasis has emerged on other groups, including LGBT students. But, there is still a lack of scholarship on college outcomes for LGBT students and it is unclear how

members of the LGBT community experience leadership in college and how they develop leadership self-efficacy.

The emergence of new paradigms to understand leadership in the last twenty years has also opened the door to explorations of diverse student bodies engaged in leadership. Social constructivism, post modernism, and critical theories are now applied in studies of leadership, adding depth beyond the previous theories focused on empirical findings and positivist paradigms (Kezar, Carducci, & Contreras-McGavin, 2006). The study of leadership, not just “leaders,” has offered additional insight into the student experience.

#### *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of gay and lesbian college students engaged in leadership and the meaning they made of their leadership self-efficacy development, particularly as they related to their identity development and various environmental assisters and constraints. Leadership self-efficacy refers to students’ self-confidence in their ability to engage in leadership. This study identified the contributions to the development of leadership self-efficacy for these students and generated additional questions and considerations for future research and practice. Using Grounded Theory Methodology, this study explored the primary research question: How do gay and lesbian college students engaged in leadership develop their leadership self-efficacy? Given an anticipated limited availability of bisexual and transgender students, these two subpopulations were not included in the design of this study

Several guiding questions influenced the initial stage of data collection and provided additional information: What influenced (either positively or negatively) these

students' understanding of leadership and their self-confidence to lead or engage in leadership? What avenues of leadership (by type of organization, purpose of group, group membership, etc.) are most likely to bolster or diminish leadership self-efficacy? Does the degree that the students are "out" influence their leadership self-efficacy?

Qualitative methods have proven to be an effective research paradigm to address this type of research question. Qualitative research is "grounded in the assumption that individuals construct social reality in the form of meanings and interpretations" (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007, p. 767). In this study, the construction of leadership self-efficacy was likely to be a very personal matter and a qualitative approach was most likely to provide a rich description of experience.

#### *Definition of Terms*

For the purposes of this study, "leader" included any student who self-identified or was identified by others to be engaged in leadership. "Leader" was not defined solely by positional leadership roles, or as leaders of particular movements or changes on campus or in the community, or restricted to gay and lesbian students involved in LGBT-focused student organizations (either by mission or membership). "Leadership," having been defined and explored from a wide range of disciplines, each with a different focus, was defined by individual students based on their own experiences and understandings of the term.

"Self-efficacy" was also largely defined through the students participating in this study, but it may be useful to situate this construct in the scholarly literature. For purposes of this study, self-efficacy is understood as an individual's perception of his or her ability to complete a specific task (Bandura, 1997). For this research, the task was

leadership. Bandura stated, “Perceived self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura, p. 3). Leadership self-efficacy, therefore, refers to an individual student’s self-perception of his/her confidence to engage in leadership behavior.

In this study, I sought to accurately reflect the identities used by the participants and when discussing research, used terms reflective of the particular study. Terms such as sexual orientation, gay, gay and lesbian, LGB, LGBT, queer, sexually fluid, and sexual minority are not wholly interchangeable and represent different groups, different experiences, and different viewpoints. I sought to accurately represent the specific concept or term being explored at a particular time or by a particular individual by using the terms of the particular individual or author.

#### *Significance of Study/Implications for Practice*

Information gathered from this study will assist student affairs practitioners seeking to create opportunities to build leadership self-efficacy for gay and lesbian students throughout their identity development and in whatever capacity of leadership in which they may be involved. In addition, the information gathered can help student affairs practitioners in higher education consider ways to better align leadership self-efficacy and capacities for socially responsible leadership and foster personal appraisal of leadership self-efficacy (Dugan & Komives, 2010) and enable faculty and staff to provide appropriate services and create a welcoming environment on campus (Sanlo, 2004).

Since the LGBT population is an understudied group, this research should also serve to provide greater insight into the understanding of the complex interweaving of the cognitive processes of self-efficacy, the development processes of identity development,

and the behaviors and attitudes related to leadership. The categories identified through the methodology may also assist future researchers in identifying important constructs to study further. Pascarella (2006) suggested that researchers needed to expand their notions of diversity and that identifying the unique experiences of this population would be a major contribution to knowledge. This study is one step towards addressing some of the possibilities of future research into identity development, such as examining students holistically and in their constituent parts, working within a construct of greater fluidity within identity, exploring macro and micro environmental influences, and considering the influence of technology on identity (Torres, Jones, & Renn, 2009).

#### *Overview of Methodology and Methods*

A Grounded Theory Methodology was chosen for this study as it provides a great deal of flexibility for the experiences of the participants to emerge through the themes identified (Punch, 1998; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Individual constructions and understandings of terms such as “gay and lesbian,” “leadership,” and “self-efficacy” suggest that the use of a qualitative methodology will allow for issues of power and mutual construction of knowledge to be acknowledged and addressed through the research process (Broido & Manning, 2002; Crotty, 2003; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Theoretical sampling was used to identify 10 undergraduate students engaged in leadership. Three interviews were held with each student to fully understand the students’ experiences and impressions, to develop relationships with the participants, and to gather enough information to construct theory (Mertens, 2005). Open, axial, and selective coding were conducted throughout the interview process to summarize, categorize, and make meaning of the data collected (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In addition, issues of

trustworthiness were managed through member-checking, triangulation of data, and peer-debriefing (Creswell, 2003).

### *Summary*

In this chapter I outlined the context of the study, defined some of the most crucial terms, and detailed the purpose of the study. I also discussed the methodological approach to this study as well as the potential contribution this study may make to the research and the field of student affairs. The theory that emerged from the data and the students' stories of leadership self-efficacy provided another piece to the complex puzzle of leadership and identity and offers researchers and practitioners additional avenues of exploration.

## CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW/THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The role of literature in Grounded Theory Methodology differs from other methodologies. Data should be gathered and analyzed before a complete review of the literature has been completed so the “grounded theory” that is created is based in real-world data and not preconceived notions based on prior research that influence the researcher’s objectivity (Gall, et al., 2007). In qualitative studies, the literature is used to frame the problem prior to data collection and then used after data collection as a basis for comparing and contrasting the findings (Creswell, 2003). The theoretical framework “serves as a lens through which researchers view the world and subsequently their research, and is created from research” (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006, p. 9). The objective is not an exhaustive review of all the literature, but instead, as a framework for becoming informed about the topic, discussing findings, and making meaning of the data.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the experiences of gay and lesbian college students engaged in leadership and the meaning they made of their leadership self-efficacy development, particularly as it was influenced by identity development and their environments. The theoretical and empirical research related to the research constructs came from several areas that need future definition and exploration here; self-efficacy and leadership self-efficacy, gay and lesbian identity development, leadership identity development, and the intersections among these concepts.

### *Self-Efficacy Literature*

An exploration of self-efficacy must begin with a review of human agency. The mental model of human functioning as a computer, reacting according to pre-ordained rules and processes (an input-output model), has been replaced over time with an

understanding of humans as “agents of experiences rather than simply undergoers of experiences” (Bandura, 2001, p. 4). Individuals are not simply exposed to environments; they explore, manipulate, and influence the environments as well. According to Bandura, human agency has four core features: (a) Intentionality is a proactive commitment to an action intended to serve a certain purpose and is centered on plans of action; (b) Forethought is a future-oriented mindframe where individuals guide their actions in anticipation of future events; (c) Self-Reactiveness is the “ability to give shape to appropriate courses of action and to motivate and regulate their execution” (p. 8); and (d) Self-Reflectiveness is the capability to look inward and reflect upon personal thoughts and actions and make judgments (Bandura, 2001) . Bandura (2001) described these as the core functions of personal human agency -- the actions of the individual. Proxy human agency occurs when an individual enlists the efforts of intermediaries to accomplish tasks or shoulder a burden, while collective human agency is a group endeavor, interactive and coordinated. Agency, in broad terms, is reflective intention turned into action.

The process of reflection can be understood through the concept of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy, as defined by Bandura (1977), is an individual’s perception of his or her ability to complete a specific task. “Perceived self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). Self-efficacy beliefs are not competencies nor predictions about behavior and not about what an individual believes he or she *will* do; but relate more to what an individual *can* do (Maddux & Gosselin, 2002). A student engaged in leadership may have different self-perceptions about his or her ability to lead a meeting, promote dialogue among members of a group, complete paperwork, write a

proposal, or talk to the president of the university. Self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-efficacy are sometimes used interchangeably, but can also have different connotations. Self-efficacy is concerned with judgments of personal capacity within a specific domain, while self-esteem is concerned with broader judgments of self-worth (Bandura, 1997). Self-confidence is a more generalized sense of competence, but not tied to a task-specific capability (McCormick, Tanguma, & Lopez-Forment, 2002). An individual may have low self-efficacy about their ability to engage in a task, but still have high self-confidence about his/her abilities in general or high self-esteem about their overall self-worth.

Efficacy beliefs are foundational to human agency. A core belief in one's ability or capacity to accomplish a task is central to the intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness of human agency. "It is partly on the basis of efficacy beliefs that people choose what challenges to undertake, how much effort to expend in the endeavor, how long to persevere in the face of obstacles and failures, and whether failures are motivating or demoralizing" (Bandura, 2001, p. 10).

One way self-efficacy can be assessed is through its level, generality, and strength across activities and contexts (Zimmerman, 2000). The level of self-efficacy refers to its dependence on the difficulty of a particular task, while generality is the transferability of self-efficacy beliefs across activities, and strength is the amount of one's certainty about performing a given task. An individual's self-efficacy is task-specific, can vary by difficulty of task, and can capture a range of levels of confidence. It is also important to note that self-efficacy judgments specifically refer to future functioning. For instance, while self-efficacy can be influenced by personal performance, it is about one's

confidence to perform a task *to come*, not one's feelings about a task that has been completed (Zimmerman, 2000).

Beliefs regarding efficacy regulate functioning and agency in four primary ways: through cognitive processes, motivational processes, affective processes, and selection processes (Bandura, 1995). In general terms, those with high levels of self-efficacy take on tasks that promote more complex thinking (cognitive), are more motivated to complete tasks at which they feel they can excel (motivational), view threats to succeed as manageable and do not dwell on deficiencies (affective), and make choices to engage in activities that promote further self-efficacy (selection). As Oettingen (1995) explained, "strong efficacy beliefs lead to greater persistence in the face of difficulties, reduce fear of failure, improve problem-focused analytic thinking, and raise aspirations" (p. 169). In addition, high levels of leadership self-efficacy are positively related to the frequency in which an individual attempts to assume leadership roles (McCormick, et al., 2002), while opportunities to learn about and practice leadership through the classroom, employment, and service can also enhance leadership self-efficacy (Pearlmutter, 1999).

The concept of leadership self-efficacy is also tied to issues of self-identity and an understanding of self in relationship to task and others. Kegan (1994) suggested a model of cognitive development wherein an individual moves through a series of "orders of consciousness," developing a more complex capacity for placing "self" in context with "other." Of Kegan's five orders of consciousness, the third, "cross-categorical thinking," and the fourth, "cross-categorical constructing," are most likely to occur during the college years. In the third stage, an individual is able to think more abstractly, subordinate his/her own interests, and consider the needs and welfare of others.

Movement into the fourth order involves the process of self-authorship and an ability to construct a value system that can weigh and compare values to each other.

Kegan (1982) described these subject-object shifts as a series of stages in which an individual grows a progressively more objective understanding of his/her world. The first stages, labeled Incorporative, Impulsive, and Imperial, happen primarily from infancy through early childhood and are marked by little objective understanding beyond self. Small children at first have no understanding beyond self (incorporative), and then move to a reflexive appreciation of the world they inhabit (impulsive), and then into a focus solely on what they need and not seeing any other meaning than his/her own (imperial). A child moves through the next stage, the Interpersonal period, with an understanding there are others in the world that have needs that must be accounted for as well. The Institutional stage is when an individual begins to have an understanding of values and can describe him/herself in terms of those values. Kegan suggested that many adults do not move beyond this point of cognitive development. The fifth stage, the InterIndividual period, is when the individual has a kind of dual-vision and can see values and issues from multiple perspectives. While not explored in the self-efficacy literature, beliefs about personal ability to engage in leadership (i.e., leadership self-efficacy) may be influenced by one's ability to see beyond personal needs and interests and engage in more objective perspective taking.

Self-efficacy is consistent with a model of "emergent interactive agency," which suggests that personal action, cognition, and affective factors interact with environmental events in a system of "triadic reciprocal causation", one in which the three factors "all operate as interacting determinants," (Bandura, 1989, p. 1175) each affecting and

interacting with the others in a reciprocal fashion. There is no one influence that drives the other influences. Any explanation of human agency must take into account the interweaving of self-generated influences with external influences.

An individual's beliefs regarding his or her self-efficacy come from four primary sources: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological and emotional states (Bandura, 1995). Mastery experience refers to personal success at a task, which promotes personal success and builds a great deal of self-efficacy. Vicarious experiences describes the influence of role models, "seeing people similar to themselves succeed by perseverant effort raises observers' beliefs that they, too, possess the capabilities" (Bandura, 1995, p.3). Related to leadership, an example would be the student who observes a similar student give a presentation in class with comfort and skill may believe he/she also has that ability. Social persuasion occurs when others suggest or persuade us that we have the ability to accomplish something, we are "more likely to mobilize greater effort and sustain it" (Bandura, 1995, p. 4). This may be demonstrated when an advisor or mentor comments that a student would be a strong facilitator or a good officer in an organization and that prompts the student to action. The final source is physiological or emotional state. An individual's physical states and moods determine his/her ability to accomplish tasks. But, it is not the strength of the physical reaction that governs self-efficacy. It is how that bodily reaction is interpreted. Self-efficacious individuals see intense reactions as energizers, but those with low self-efficacy may be struck with self-doubt (Bandura, 1995). This holds especially true for tasks involving endurance and physical vigor. The complexities of the relationship between personal

beliefs and the environment suggest that the positive or negative experiences of gay and lesbian college students may play an important role in their leadership self-efficacy.

Flammer (1995) provided some additional insight into the role that “control beliefs” play in the development of the individual. Control beliefs, “the subjective representation of one’s capabilities to exercise control” (Flammer, p. 69), are important for a couple of reasons: “(1) they are prerequisites for the planning, initiation, and regulation of goal-oriented actions and (2) they are part of the self-concept, where they determine to a large extent feelings of self-esteem, causing such emotional states as pride, shame, and depression” (Flammer, p. 69). The notions of goal-oriented actions, pride, shame, self-esteem, shared values, and diverse self interests brought up by Bandura and Flammer echo much of the language used to describe leadership and LGBT identity development.

Leadership self-efficacy can also be defined as “a student’s beliefs about his or her abilities to exercise their leadership knowledge and skills in a given situation” (Denzine, 1999). High leadership self-efficacy can motivate individuals to “pursue action, contribute more towards these actions, and persevere to a greater degree in the face of obstacles” (Anderson, Krajewski, Goffin, & Jackson, 2008, p. 595). In an in-depth analysis and development of a leadership self-efficacy taxonomy and its relation to effective leadership, Anderson et al. (2008) identified 18 dimensions of leadership self-efficacy. These included change (ability to understand and manifest change), drive (aspiration and stamina to achieve goals), solve (ability to perform work with proficiency and find solutions), build (choose team members who can contribute and develop resources), act (take risks and make decisions), involve (bring participants into the

decision-making), self-control (maintain composure and stability), relate (forge positive relationships), oversee (regulate the work of others and hold others accountable), show conviction (act in accordance with principles and foster trust), challenge (establish performance targets and assess progress), guide (cultivate teamwork and set priorities), communicate (interactive with others in a productive manner), mentor (offer support to protégés), motivate (encourage to higher achievement), serve (put the larger interests of the organization first), convince (convey information in a compelling manner), and know (grasp and use important information) (Anderson, et al., 2008, p. 600-601). These dimensions, when coupled with the components of leadership effectiveness (relational leadership, impartial leadership, technical leadership, creative leadership, directive leadership, tenacious leadership, empowering leadership, influential leadership, and strategic leadership), illustrate the complex nature of personal leadership self-efficacy.

Day, Harrison, and Halpin (2009) also spoke to the influence of leadership self-efficacy, suggesting that a leader's generalized self-efficacy relates positively to leaders' development and learning through a greater motivation to learn, more positive responses to challenges, the development of a stronger leader identity, more engagement in self-development activities, and an increase in motivation to lead.

#### *Self-Efficacy and Group Functioning*

While self-efficacy speaks directly to the individual's belief system, it does not occur in a vacuum. Societal structures and collectivistic social systems interact with personal self-efficacy in several ways that impact group functioning. Bandura (1995) suggested that personal self-efficacy contributed to group directedness just as much as to personal self-directedness, and, in fact, "group achievements and social change are rooted

in self-efficacy” (p. 34). Bandura proposed that creating social change requires the “merging of diverse self-interests in the support of common core values and goals”(p. 37) and that “leadership increasingly faces the challenge of governing over diversity in ways that permit both autonomy for constituent communities to direct their own lives and unity through shared values and purposes” (p. 37). In a study of teaching self-efficacy, Lev and Koslowsky (2009) found a relationship between collective self-efficacy and personal self-efficacy. The authors found that a group’s self-efficacy for teaching influences individual self-efficacy, and that the role one occupies in an organization may also influence self-efficacy. For gay and lesbian students, this may play out through opportunities or obstacles of involvement in different types of student organizations.

Mayo, Pastor, and Meindl (1996) studied how working with a diversity of followers affects the self-perceived efficacy of leaders. This study may also relate to lesbian and gay leadership, especially when working within a group not comprised of LGBT students. The authors hypothesized that heterogeneity in groups would be negatively associated with leaders’ evaluations of group performance and that the leaders’ evaluations of group performance would be positively associated with their self-efficacy in both transformational and transactional leadership. The authors also hypothesized that the heterogeneity of the group would have a direct and negative effect on leaders’ self-efficacy, but that this effect would be greater for transformational than for transactional leadership. The authors measured heterogeneity by gender, race, age, and length of time in the group. Through the study, the authors held their hypotheses to be true. For the direct negative effect, this is particularly noteworthy. Transformational leadership “implies a leader’s competence to originate and develop group processes that

oppose those which typically characterize heterogeneous groups” (Mayo, et al., 1996, p. 279). While not directly addressing issues of sexual orientation, the study might suggest that heterogeneity in groups may have a negative influence for lesbian and gay students’ leadership as well.

Eagly and Johnson (1990), in a meta-analysis of gender and leadership styles, reviewed the extent to which men and women differed in their leadership styles (task style versus interpersonal style, and democratic versus autocratic leadership). The authors found that while women tended to adopt a more democratic leadership style than men, this difference was mitigated by a few factors. For instance, in leadership studies conducted in experimental settings (i.e., the participants were strangers to each other), gender differences were more pronounced. But, in organizational settings, behavior reflected the influence of other social roles within the organization and lost much of its gender-stereotypic character. Gender still impacted leadership style, but the studies established a more complex picture of gender and leadership. Again, issues of organizational setting and group cohesion may appear as dimensions of gay and lesbian students’ experiences with leadership. In addition, gender differences between participants will need to be considered in a review of the data.

The relationship between leadership efficacy and group effectiveness has also been explored in the literature. Hoyt, Halverson, Murphy, and Watson (2003) found that leadership efficacy was positively related to group performance, although not directly. The authors differentiated between general leadership self-efficacy and the leader’s task self-efficacy. The former is a general sense of one’s ability to lead, while the latter is leadership within a specific setting or situation. They found that an increased sense of

general leadership self-efficacy does lead to increased self-efficacy for specific tasks. Leadership efficacy had a direct relationship to leader collective efficacy, which predicted follower collective efficacy, and, in turn, group performance. Again, the reciprocal nature of personal self-efficacy, collective efficacy, and environment is displayed. For students within this study, it may point to varied levels of leadership self-efficacy, each contingent upon task or setting.

The issue of group performance, cohesiveness, and commitment has also been studied in relationship to transformational leadership and self-efficacy (Pillai & Williams, 2004). In an examination of how transformational leadership affects outcomes in the context of a fire department, the authors found that transformational leadership predicts cohesiveness, generalized self-efficacy, commitment, and perceptions of unit performance, while cohesiveness and self-efficacy also directly predict commitment and perceptions of unit performance. The importance of cohesiveness and self-efficacy as partial mediating factors is also noted. As the authors used generalized self-efficacy as a variable, instead of task-specific self-efficacy regarding working in a fire department, the applicability to other contexts of leadership is heightened. For gay and lesbian college students, issues of cohesiveness and connection may have a relationship to leadership self-efficacy as well.

Issues of performance outcomes were explored by Prussia, Anderson, and Manz (1998). Their study examined the relationship between self-leadership and performance outcomes and the extent to which self-efficacy mediates the influence of self-leadership on performance outcomes. The authors defined self-leadership as “the influence people exert over themselves to achieve the self-motivation and self-direction needed to behave

in desirable ways” (p. 524). While a relationship was found among the three constructs, the authors noted they could not make definitive statements of causality between self-leadership and self-efficacy. In fact, their findings did not preclude the idea that “self-efficacy perceptions drive self-leadership behaviors” (p. 535).

### *Leadership Self-Efficacy and the Environment*

As the purpose of this study was to explore the development of leadership self-efficacy for lesbian and gay college students and the environments that helped develop that development, it is also important to consider the interactions between person and environment. While some models of person-environment interaction focus primarily on the strength of the environment in shaping personal behaviors and others focus more on the role of the individual in shaping the environment, there is middle ground to be considered. Walsh (1989) described Pervin’s transactional approach to behavior, hypothesizing that “individuals will tend to evidence higher performance, more satisfaction, and reduced dissonance in environments that tend to be more congruent with their personality characteristics” (p. 109). Three assumptions underlie this premise. The first is that it is painful to have a large discrepancy between perceived self and ideal self. The second is that people are attracted to things that move them closer to their ideal selves (and push away from things that move them farther from their ideal selves). The third is that people want to have as little discrepancy as possible between their perceived and ideal selves (Walsh, 1989). The constructs of perceived and ideal self, dissonance, and environmental influence on self echo the literature related to sexual orientation identity development and provide a complementary vantage point to consider the relationship between identity development and self-efficacy.

### *Leadership Literature*

While there is no universal definition of leadership (Kezar, et al., 2006; Rost, 1991), there are themes that emerge in the literature. The discussion of who the actor is in the leadership act, the goal of leadership, the role of followers, and the view of leadership as a process-oriented activity are all areas of interest to leadership theorists. In addition, leadership concepts of traits, behaviors, power and influence, and situational factors each influence the different leadership approaches. Burns (1978), a leading scholar on leadership, differentiated between transactional and transforming leadership.

Transactional leadership, much as the name implies, sees leadership as an exchange of one thing for another between leader and follower. The transforming leader, on the other hand, “looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower” (p. 4). Transformational leadership, focusing on the relationship and interaction of leaders and followers towards mutual goals, lends itself to research on qualities such as inspiration, trust, passion, charisma, vision, empowerment, ethics, and commitment (Bensimon, Neumann, & Birnbaum, 1989; Kezar, et al., 2006; Rost, 1991)

Northouse (2004) defined leadership as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p. 3), Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (2006) defined leadership as “a relational and ethical process of people together attempting to accomplish positive change” (p. ix), focusing on the leadership elements of ethics, inclusivity, process-orientation, empowerment, and purpose. Rost (1993) made a differentiation between leader and leadership, defining leadership as “an influence relationship among leaders and their collaborators who intend real change that

reflect their mutual purposes” (p. 99). Rost perceived leadership as non-coercive, having no followers, that the intended change (whether achieved or not) must be substantive and transforming, and that changes must be mutually constructed. Clearly, this is a shift from traditional leadership models developed from management. Allen et al. (1998) echoed many of Rost’s comments, suggesting that the purpose of leadership is primarily to create supportive environments, promote harmony with nature, and “create communities of reciprocal care and shared responsibility” (p. 41). This sense of shared and collaborative leadership is both valuing of diversity and inclusiveness and committed to self-development.

Other authors suggest there are specific behaviors associated with good leadership. Yukl, Gordon, and Taber (2002) reviewed past research and literature to identify task, relations, and change behaviors and came up with a list of 12 specific leadership behaviors. These include clarifying roles, monitoring operations, short-term planning, consulting, supporting, recognizing, developing, empowering, envisioning change, taking risks for change, encouraging innovative thinking, and external monitoring (p. 25). The list is comprised of behaviors that are reminiscent of a traditional view of leadership, but also contains elements of a more relational view of leadership. In total, it provides a framework for the variety of activities related to leadership. These different approaches to leadership consider the roles of different elements, from the role of the leader, the role of the group, the role of the follower (if considered at all), the desired outcome, the morality of the outcome (simply a goal, or for the common good), and whether leaders are born or made. Many of these concepts or approaches may be

alluded to by participants in this study, even if not directly by name or theory, so it is important to understand the perspective each student brings to the topic of leadership.

Kezar et al. (2006) explained the change in focus of leadership research through five altered lenses:

<b>Then</b>	<b>Now</b>
Search for universal leadership characteristics	Context Bound
Examine power and hierarchy	Focus on mutual power and influence
Study individuals	Emphasis on the collective and the collaborative
Predict behavior and outcomes	Promote learning, empowerment, and change
Leader centered	Process oriented

(Kezar, et al., 2006, p. 34)

This shift in the focus of research allows for greater flexibility to explore contextual influences on leadership, cultural perspectives, and different levels of leadership (individual and collective), all important components to consider when exploring the gay and lesbian experience.

### *Leadership Identity Development*

A more recent study exploring how college students specifically develop as leaders is the work of Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella, and Osteen (2005), who created a grounded theory of leadership development that describes a developmental process. The authors' theory, the Leadership Identity Development Model (or LID

Model), demonstrated that personal leadership identity develops through six stages, moving from awareness and exploration/engagement to leader identified (i.e., leadership is a behavior of the positional leader), then to leadership differentiated (i.e. recognizing that leadership is a behavior of anyone in a group and is a process), to generativity (responsibility to others and to the future of the organization) and finally, to integration/synthesis (life-long learning and internal congruence). “The process within each stage engaged developing self with group influences, which in turn influenced the changing view of self with others from dependence to interdependence and shaped the broadening view of leadership, shifting from an external view of leadership to leadership as a process” (Komives, et al., 2005, p. 609). The authors, in exploring the application of the model, offered a reminder that “leadership educators must also acknowledge the ways leadership identity intersects with other dimensions of identity such as race, culture, sexual orientation, gender, disability, religion, and social class” (Komives et al., 2009). Each stage of leadership identity is marked by the developmental influences of adults and other students and an evolving sense of personal relationships with others and broadening view of leadership (Komives, Longerbeam, Mainella, Osteen, & Owen, 2006).

Personal identity should be a central focus in the exploration of the development of leadership skills because it provides a structure around which knowledge is organized, is a source of motivation and direction, and provides access to personal stories and values that can be used to understand others (Day, et al., 2009; Lord & Hall, 2005). Lord and Hall believed that leader self-regulation is influenced by individual level identities, relational identities (definition in terms of roles or relations to others), and collective identities, and that as leaders develop, they move from an individual focus to a more

collective identity, becoming more follower or group-centered and achieving an integration of leadership skills with identities as a leader. Day et al. (2009) proposed that “leadership competence is formed through spirals of leader identity formation and change in the context of learning and development through leadership experience” (p. 185). This mutual reinforcement explicitly ties identity and leadership together and influences the rate of development in each.

Thompson (2006) also explored factors that contributed to college students’ leadership process development. Using the Leadership Attitudes and Beliefs Scale III (LABS-III), developed to measure both hierarchical and systemic thinking, Thompson surveyed junior and seniors at a private college regardless of leadership involvement. While the generalizability of the findings is limited, the authors did find that the strongest contributing factors to a student’s beliefs about leadership were interactions with faculty/staff and peers. Internships/field experiences/off-campus study and participation in athletics also contributed significantly. Logue, Hutchens, and Hector (2005) also asked about the factors contributing to leadership for college students, but used a phenomenological approach and focused on student leaders, four of whom were male and all of whom were white. Each participant thought of their leadership involvement as overwhelmingly positive and their comments grouped around themes of people, action, and organization. Subthemes of people were leading people, helping people, and the concept of team. Organization in this context refers to the students’ “awareness of the personal identity that the organization provided for each leader” (Logue, et al., 2005, p. 403), and the subthemes were defining events, leaders v. mentors, and structure. For action, the subthemes were getting things done, success, and busy lifestyle. While

grounded just in positional leadership and only tailored to white students, this research provides support for the idea of leadership as a positive endeavor with both process and task functions associated with it.

Kezar and Moriarty (2000) argued that individuals need to rethink assumptions about leadership in order to better understand the diversity of college students. Their study, based on the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) 1987 Freshman Survey data and 1991 follow-up, using a sample of almost 10,000 students at 352 campuses, showed that a diverse set of strategies is needed. The authors found that differences of gender and race led to differences in self-perception and the factors that drove these changes were different for different groups. In addition, the importance of non-positional leadership had a differential influence on different student populations. For instance, being elected to office “was only predictive of Caucasian men’s development of public speaking and ability to influence others” (Kezar & Moriarty, 2000, p. 67). The importance of position did not hold for women or for African-American men.

One study exploring aspects of students’ experiences in college that contributed to leadership outcomes is the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (MSL) (Dugan & Komives, 2007). This national study, with responses from 50,378 students at 52 colleges and universities across the United States, asked a range of questions about pre-college and collegiate experiences and measured students’ beliefs about social change, leadership self-efficacy, and socially responsible leadership using theoretical measures grounded in the Social Change Model of Leadership Development (HERI, 1996). Pre-college factors, such as leadership training experiences, involvement in student groups, volunteer service, varsity sports, and positional leadership roles, contributed significantly to leadership self-

efficacy outcomes. Differences were also found with gender in college students, with men reporting higher leadership self-efficacy, while women reported higher leadership competence. Gay/lesbian/bisexual students were more comfortable with change than their heterosexual peers, “showing greater aptitude and comfort with managing and navigating change” (Dugan & Komives, 2007, p. 14). In addition, college experiences such as discussions about socio-cultural issues, mentoring, campus involvement, participation in community service, positional leadership, and involvement in formal leadership programs were all positively associated with leadership outcomes (Segar, Hershey, & Dugan, 2008). Dugan (2006) also studied whether types of involvement influenced students’ levels of socially responsible leadership and found that community service was most influential, but also that involvement of any kind “assists in helping students to recognize the need to connect individual and group leadership to the broader needs of the community” (p. 341).

Data from the MSL has also been used to understand the influences of race, gender, and sexual orientation on students’ capacities for socially responsible leadership (Dugan, Komives, & Segar, 2008). The authors confirmed the findings from the earlier study that a gap exists between women’s capacity for leadership and their leadership self-efficacy. The study did not find significant differences on capacities for socially responsible leadership based on sexual orientation. Dugan and Komives (2010) also explored whether leadership self-efficacy as an intermediate outcomes contributed to explaining students’ capacities for leadership, finding leadership self-efficacy to be a powerful contributor to the leadership development process. Interestingly, the authors found an inverse relationship between pre-test measures of leadership self-efficacy and

social change model values, possibly due to inaccurate or inflated perceived levels of leadership self-efficacy prior to college or due to the influence of leader-centered views of leadership.

### *Gay and Lesbian Identity Development*

The body of knowledge related to gay and lesbian identity development also needs to be understood when exploring the research question, as sexual orientation identity development and leadership self-efficacy are both built through experiences and meaning-making. The interplay of these concepts may provide additional insight into how identity development is supported or challenged through leadership experiences and how self-efficacy for leadership is broadened or narrowed through the identity development process.

While quite a few theorists have explained LGBT identity development, one of the first, Vivienne Cass (1979, 1983, 1984), provided a strong overall description for the journey individuals take on the way to a more fully realized sexual orientation personal identity. Cass used the accepted term at the time, “homosexual,” to represent sexual orientation. It is important to note that Cass developed this model through research of primary young, gay, White men, which may not fully encapsulate the experiences of a diverse LGBT population. Cass’ model consists of six stages of homosexual identity formation, which move the individual from a state of identity confusion, through awareness, acceptance, pride, and finally, to synthesis. In each stage, the developmental process was described according to a number of cognitive, behavioral, and affective dimensions, including commitment, disclosure, generality, identity evaluation, group identification, social interaction, alienation, inconsistency, sexual orientation activity,

acculturation, deference to others, dichotomization, personal control, strategies, personal satisfaction, and professional contact (Cass, 1984). These dimensions may provide insight in understanding the dimensions of students' leadership self-efficacy in this study as well.

The first stage of Cass' model, Identity Confusion, is where questions of "Who am I?" emerge, along with feelings that one is different from peers, creating personal alienation. Reactions may include an initial search for additional information (to reduce dissonance and increase understanding), or denial and inhibition of behavior. Stage 2 is Identity Comparison; the individual in this stage is able to acknowledge (to themselves), "I may be a homosexual." A greater sense of alienation develops and the individual feels very isolated. Reference group membership will serve to exacerbate or ameliorate these feelings.

The third stage, Identity Tolerance, is when individuals can now say "I probably am homosexual." Although the individual seeks out contact with other LGBT people to counteract their isolation and alienation, he/she continues to tolerate rather than fully accepts a gay or lesbian identity. A critical factor is the quality of the contacts. Identity Acceptance, the fourth stage, is when an acceptance of the individual's gay identity emerges. Contacts with other LGBT individuals grow and friendships are formed. The questions of "Who am I?" and "Where do I belong?" have been answered, but passing as a heterosexual is still a routine strategy. Some individuals at this stage limit contact with heterosexuals (family and peers) and begin rejecting passing as a strategy, which causes additional dissonance. Stage Five, Identity Pride, is marked by a devaluation of the importance of heterosexuals to self and an increased valuation of the gay identity. There

is a strong commitment to LGBT issues and groups, and a strong sense of gay pride. Along with pride comes anger and frustration at society and others (both heterosexuals and LGBT individuals who don't have the same level of pride). Activism is high and the individual is likely to be out to most people. The final stage is Identity Synthesis. The "them and us" philosophy has been softened at this stage. Heterosexuals are not viewed as the enemy and positive relationships with supportive heterosexuals are developed. The good and bad in both heterosexuals and gays are acknowledged, and the individual's sexual orientation identity is more fully integrated into their entire self-identity.

Although Cass (1979, 1983, 1984) provided a snapshot of the sexual orientation identity process, this model left out some critical differences between personal identity and group components of identity. Since leadership for purposes of this study is defined as a group endeavor, it is important to consider identity development with the context of groups. Other models of gay and lesbian identity development (Cass, 1979; D'Augelli, 1994; Troiden, 1989) explained an individual's developmental journey from confusion through recognition and to self-affirmation, but did not consider the movement within a larger community. McCarn and Fassinger (1996) developed a model for lesbian identity development that can easily be translated for all LGBT individuals. This model worked under the premise that while there is an identity development process that involves individual development, there is also a process "involving reference group identification (What does it mean to be lesbian/gay in society?) that is similar to other minority identity development" (McCarn & Fassinger, 1996, p. 519). Former models of LGBT identity development have conflated these concepts, but these authors saw that lesbians and gay men "step onto two paths at once – they must acknowledge their membership in an

invisible minority group and change their attitudes toward the meaning of a group that was not previously relevant” (McCarn & Fassinger, 1996). The authors described four phases of identity, each of which was differentiated by individualized sexual identity and group membership identity.

The first of these phases is Awareness. For personal identity, this is manifested through a realization of being personally different. For group membership identity, there is a recognition that different sexual orientations exist in the population. The second phase is Exploration. For the personal identity, this means exploring personally strong or erotic feelings for members of the same gender. For the group identity, this phase is manifested by exploring personal attitudes towards gays as a group and considering personal membership within that group. The next phase is Deepening/Commitment. For self-identity, this involves a stronger commitment “to self-knowledge, self-fulfillment and crystallization of choices about sexuality” (McCarn & Fassinger, 1996, p. 521). For the group membership identity, this shows itself through personal involvement in LGBT groups, with an awareness of oppression and consequences of identity. The fourth phase, Internalization/Synthesis, results in a holistic appreciation for and identity of self related to sexual orientation. For group membership, the individual sees themselves as a member of the minority group, across contexts. The findings of the study and the two branches of identity development were replicated and confirmed for gay men as well (Fassinger & Miller, 1997).

A recurring theme in the literature about the LGBT experience is the concept of “coming out” or “degree of outness.” LGBT students assess their environments for contextual issues regarding homophobia and heterosexism and may choose to hide facets

of their identity based on how welcoming or unwelcoming they interpret their environments to be (Evans & Broido, 1999). Stevens (2004) conducted a Grounded Theory study of gay men in college and found that disclosure to others and environmental influences played an important role in individual empowerment. The degree to which a student is “out” may be another issue to consider in terms of leadership self-efficacy.

### *Lesbian and Gay Leadership Self-Efficacy*

While there is scant research connecting lesbian and gay identity, leadership, and self-efficacy, “core to the self and identity approach to leadership effectiveness is an understanding that the way that we perceive ourselves, our self-concept or identity strongly informs our feelings, beliefs, attitudes, goals, and behaviors” (van Knippenberg, van Knippenberg, De Cremer, & Hogg, 2005, p. 496). One of the few studies that connects the sexual orientation identity development, leadership, and self-efficacy has been the work of Porter (1998). The purpose of his study was to “ascertain the contribution of gay and lesbian identity formation to the variance in a participant’s self-efficacy to lead in a transformational manner in the context of a same-type organization (a group composed primarily of gay and lesbian individuals) and a different-type organization (a group composed primarily of heterosexual students)” (Porter, 1998, abstract). Variables included sexual identity formation, self-esteem, self-efficacy antecedents, and five types of transformational leadership self-efficacy and also explored differences by gender and race. As described by Bass and Avolio (1994) in adapting Burn’s (1978) theory, the five types of transformational leadership are idealized influence (attributed and behavioral), individual consideration, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation. Using quantitative research methods and a variety of survey

instruments, Porter found that progression in gay and lesbian identity did not explain any significant variance in leadership self-efficacy, and that there were no gender differences related to self-efficacy for transformational leadership between gay and lesbians. Porter noted that the study examined only transformational leadership and that other research studies found gender differences between men and women related to other approaches to leadership. He found that gay men had higher self-efficacy “to possess idealized influence in a primarily gay and/or lesbian student organization compared to a primarily heterosexual organization” (p. 137). There was no comparable difference for lesbians. Idealized influence is described by Bass and Avolio as behaviors that “result in their being role models for their followers” (p. 3).

Renn (2007) conducted a Grounded Theory study exploring LGBT students’ involvement and leadership in on-campus and off-campus activities (both LGBT-focused and non-LGBT-focused) and identities related to sexual orientation or gender. This study was conducted with 11 students from three campuses; five men, five women, and three female-to-male transgender individuals from a variety of academic years and racial backgrounds. Renn found that “increased leadership led to increased public LGBT identity and a merged gender/sexual orientation and leadership identity” (p. 311). Renn also categorized LGBT student leadership into three primary identities: LGBT Leader, LGBT Activist, and Queer Activist, based on personal identities related to sexual orientation and identity as leaders. These distinctions of role and identity may prove useful in understanding individual students’ perceptions of leadership and place within different leadership processes.

Longerbeam, Inkelas, Johnson, and Lee (2007) conducted a study of the experiences of lesbian and gay college student using secondary data from the 2004 National Study of Living-Learning Programs (NSLLP), comparing LGB (authors' term) students to heterosexual students in on-campus housing across a number of dimensions, including leadership-related constructs. Lesbian and gay students were more likely to be involved in social and political activism, more likely to discuss sociocultural issues with peers, and more likely to have faculty mentors than their heterosexual peers. Gay and bisexual men were also more likely than their male heterosexual peers to have a sense of civic empowerment. No differences between lesbians and gay men and heterosexuals were found related to appreciation for racial and ethnic diversity or academic self-confidence, although gay men were more likely than lesbians and heterosexual men to experience growth in their ability to apply knowledge in difference contexts. There were no differences in participation in study abroad or internships between the lesbian and gay students and their heterosexual peers. This study underscored that lesbians and gay men cannot be viewed as a heterogeneous population with a singular experience. Research must consider the distinct, and sometimes opposing, experiences of gay men and lesbians.

### *Summary*

The literature on leadership, sexual orientation identity development, and self-efficacy offers a range of issues, concepts, and theories to explore further, each with its own unique stamp on what being engaged in the leadership process involves. This study sought to explore the potentially complex relationship between sexual orientation identity and self-efficacy for leadership as defined by the participants, not defined solely through

any one particular model or definition of leadership or leadership identity. The stories of the participants that emerged through the data collection and the literature were used to compare and contrast the findings.

### CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research differs from quantitative research in several significant ways, including an acceptance of postmodern sensibilities and an emphasis on capturing the individual's point of view, examining the constraints of everyday life, and securing rich descriptions (Punch, 1998). Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggest that "qualitative research does not entail making statements about relationships between a dependent variable and an independent variable" (p. 41), but that "the research question in a qualitative study is a statement that identified the phenomenon to be studied" (p. 41). In other words, the constructs to be explored must be defined, but the exact relationships between all pieces will be discovered through the data collection and analysis. This study, an exploration of gay and lesbian leadership self-efficacy development for college students engaged in leadership, lent itself well to a qualitative approach, which allowed for individual stories to emerge, rich descriptions to be shared, and for relationships between constructs to be discovered.

#### *Methodology*

As the purpose of this research was to explore self-efficacy, a concept rooted in perception and experience, a methodology that gave myself as the researcher and the participants space to explore these concepts in depth was appropriate. Grounded Theory, as defined by Strauss and Corbin (1998) is "theory that was derived from data, systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process" (p. 12). Grounded Theory was chosen for this research because there is very little known about the relationships between the constructs of sexual orientation identity and leadership self-efficacy. It requires openness and flexibility by the researcher throughout the data

collection and data analysis processes, which occur concurrently, each process informing the other. Characteristics of researchers engaged in grounded theory include:

1. The ability to step back and critically analyze situations
2. The ability to recognize the tendency towards bias
3. The ability to think abstractly
4. The ability to be flexible and open to helpful criticism
5. Sensitivity to the words and actions of respondents
6. A sense of absorption and devotion to the work process. (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 7)

A distinction should be made between Grounded Theory, which is the result of the research process (the theory that is created), versus Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM), which includes the approach and the methods used (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). For the purposes of this research, Grounded Theory Methodology was referred to as GTM and related to the approach and methods, while Grounded Theory was used to denote the theory that was derived from the data collected from participants.

GTM can more widely be seen as a family of methods, characterized by the bodies of work of Glaser, Strauss, and Charmaz (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). Across each these families, GTM can be distinguished from a generic inductive model through “1) theoretical sampling; 2) constant comparison of data to theoretical categories; and 3) focus on the development of theory via theoretical saturation of categories rather than substantive verifiable findings” (Stern, 2007, p. 163). The basic tenets of GTM include:

1. Data gathering, analysis, and theory construction proceed concurrently.
2. Coding starts with the first interview and/or field notes.

3. Memo writing also begins with the first interview and/or field notes.
4. The constant comparison method is used to tease out similarities and differences and thereby refine concepts.
5. Theoretical sampling is the disciplined search for patterns and variation.
6. Theoretical sorting of memos sets up the outline for the writing of a paper or book.
7. Theoretical saturation is the judgment that there is no need to collect further data (Wiener, 2007, pp. 301-306).

Grounded theory, as originally defined by Glaser and Strauss (1967), is at its most pure when the data allow categories to emerge naturally, as opposed to a more systematic approach that uses coding and coding families to shape and define the data (Kelle, 2007). Glaser focused his writing on method and theory instead of methodology (Birks & Mills, 2011), but Strauss and Corbin's more user-friendly approach provided a more explicit manner in which to analyze data, which can be particularly useful to novice researchers (Kelle, 2007). Strauss brought notions of "human agency, emergent processes, social and subjective meanings, problem-solving practices, and the open-ended study of action to grounded theory" to the understanding of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006, p. 7).

#### *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this study was to investigate the experiences of gay and lesbian college students engaged in leadership and the meaning they made of their development of leadership self-efficacy, particularly as it was influenced by identity development and environments. This study sought to identify contributions to the development of

leadership self-efficacy for these students and generated additional questions for research and practice.

The nature of this research question and the population being studied naturally led to a qualitative method. Trying to understand the meaning of individuals' experiences or problems, such as "the act of coming out" or "personal leadership beliefs" lent itself to delving into personal stories. In addition, "qualitative methods can be used to explore substantive areas about which little is known or about what much is known to gain novel understandings" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 11).

### *Methods*

As the nature of data collection and analysis emerged throughout the study in GTM, the plan presented here represented a guideline that was adjusted as participants were identified, interviews held, and data reviewed. This section outlines the methods used for this Grounded Theory study of the development of gay and lesbian students' leadership self-efficacy.

### *Sampling Criteria and Strategy*

Participants for this study were identified through the use of purposeful or theoretical sampling, whose aim is to "go to places, people, or events that will maximize opportunities to discover variations among concepts and to densify categories in terms of their properties and dimensions" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 201). The goal was to collect as much information as possible to develop a theory of gay and lesbian leadership self-efficacy.

### *Snowball Sampling*

To achieve this density, particularly for this population, I employed snowball sampling to locate students who identified as lesbian or gay and had engaged in leadership activities on campus. I began with key informants on campus (staff, faculty, and graduate students who work closely with LGBT students or with other student leaders) who identified additional informants who led to still further informants (Appendix A). As the list of informants “snowballed,” I was provided with an ever-increasing list of students to consider for the study (Mertens, 2005). Each of the 24 identified students was invited to join the study (Appendix B) and asked to complete a participant interest form (Appendix C). The interest forms of 17 who responded were reviewed to identify a diverse group of 10 gay and lesbian students representing a range of backgrounds and involvements.

### *Maximum Variation*

The sampling strategy employed several methods. One sampling method was maximum variation sampling, which, as the name implies, served to maximize the variation within the sample and increase saturation of data. As initial participants are identified, further participants were chosen based on the variation they bring to the study. This variation may include gender, race and ethnicity, national origin, levels and kinds of campus involvement, and the degree to which participants are out to others as gay or lesbian. Additionally, intensity sampling was used to ensure that the concepts of self-efficacy were well-represented in the participants chosen.

### *Sample Size*

There are no firm dictates as to sample size for GTM. The final number of participants and interviews were determined as data was collected and when a saturation point had been reached, but consisted of 10 participants with three interviews each, as recommended by Mertens (2005). The emphasis was not on an exact number, but on finding “information-rich cases that elicit an in-depth understanding” of the students’ experiences (Jones, et al., 2006, p. 65). The exact number of participants and interviews were guided by theoretical saturation, not a pre-established concept of the “right” number.

### *Research Setting*

Participants in this research were chosen from a large public university in the Mid-Atlantic which provided a range of leadership positions for students, had a diverse student population, and had opportunities for students to engage in lesbian and gay issues and activities. The student body consisted of approximately 37,000 students, 11,000 of whom are graduate students. The university is a Carnegie Classification Doctoral/Research Extensive institution and the flagship campus of the state university system. The population had an approximately equal number of male and female students. The undergraduate population was 68% White, 12.5% Black/African American, 13.7% Asian American, 5.7% Hispanic American, and 0.4% Native American. In support of LGBT students and issues, the university has an academic department for LGBT studies administered through the provost’s office and undergraduate studies. In addition, the campus supports an office for LGBT equity within academic affairs, reporting to an associate provost working on issues of diversity and equity. Student Affairs also supports

a graduate assistantship for LGBT support through a multicultural involvement unit within the division. There are several student organizations on campus that directly serve the LGBT population. These include an organization for bisexual Students, a Safe Space group, a Transgender support organization, organizations for women, and ones for students of color. There is also a larger LGBT group identified as Spectrum in this study and a graduate LGBT coalition organization.. Advisors to these student organizations acted as informants in identifying potential study participants.

### *Participant Questions*

Information collected through the interview process informed additional questions and areas of analysis until coverage had been reached, and no additionally useful information seemed available. While interviews were not sought with bisexual and transgender individuals, these personal identities did emerge through the interviews.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) described four types of questions the researcher should ask as interviews are approached, including sensitizing, theoretical, practical, and guiding questions. Sensitizing questions are those that “tune the researcher into what the data might be indicating” (p. 77). Theoretical questions “help the researcher to see process, variation, and the like and to make connections among concepts” (p. 77). Practical, or structural, questions are those that “provide direction for sampling and that help with development of the structure of the evolving theory” (p. 77). Finally, guiding questions “guide the interview, observations, and analyses”(p. 78), changing over time from open-ended to more specific. Given the lack of literature and previous research on gay and lesbian students’ leadership self-efficacy, the range of questions were broad at points and

more practical and pointed at other times to provide a more comprehensive picture of the students' experiences.

Questions to be asked of participants must be in service to the research question and evolving theory. Specific sets of questions to be asked of participants evolved over time based on the data collected and analyzed, but began with more broad questions, such as “describe your identity as a gay or lesbian individual” “what kind of leader are you?” and “how has your confidence as a leader changed over time?” These very broad questions tried not to assume too many specific relationships among the concepts of lesbian and gay identity and leadership self-efficacy, but instead let the relationships (if they existed) form out of the data collected. Leadership self-efficacy has been defined through the components of setting direction, gaining commitment, and overcoming obstacles to change (Paglis & Green, 2002), but this research sought to expand the concept to include belief structures and other leadership attributes important to the participants, allowing for a broader, more inclusive, and more comprehensive understanding of leadership self-efficacy for lesbian and gay college students.

#### *Data Collection/Interview Protocol*

Three semi-structured one-on-one interviews were conducted with each participant. Interviews are most useful to fully understand the students' impressions or experiences, to gain a full range and depth of experiences, and to help develop relationships with the participants (Mertens, 2005). This qualitative interviewing approach “provides an open-ended, in-depth exploration of an aspect of life about which the interviewee has substantial experience, often combined with considerable insight” (Charmaz, 2006, p.29). These multiple interviews allowed the participants to share a

range of experiences and beliefs, with each interview building from and expounding upon the information gained and shared in previous sessions. I used the time between interviews to reflect on the interview. This time also allowed the students to think more deeply about the answers provided and to reflect on their experiences more fully. Certain guiding questions were posed based on the research question and information gathered from previous interviews, but participants were allowed to share openly their thoughts and experiences. In the first interview, I shared the informed consent form (Appendix D) with each student and reiterated the level of confidentiality each student could expect. The informed consent detailed the intention of the research and informed the participants that they can withdraw from participation at any time (Punch, 1998). Each student also had the option to identify a pseudonym that could be used in place of their name on all identifying documents and in the analyses. In the initial interview, I asked more broad open-ended questions informed by the review of the literature (Appendix E). Examples included: How have you come to understand what leadership means? How would you describe society's definition of what it means to be a leader and how does that fit or not fit for you? Are there particular leadership qualities or traits that you believe are strengths or weaknesses for you? Describe how your self-identity as a gay man or lesbian has developed. How "out" are you and to whom? Has your sexual orientation influenced your self-confidence to be engaged in leadership? This "life-stories approach" was hoped to reveal connections between leader identity, personal self-concept, and self-knowledge (Shamir & Eilam, 2005).

I took field notes during the interview and digitally recorded the sessions to be transcribed. Participants were informed that all digital recordings would be kept

confidential and secured to ensure that the only person who had access was myself and that nothing would be published or shared without their explicit authorized consent.

Additional interviews were built from the initial interview and explored the concepts of leadership self-efficacy and gay and lesbian identity in more depth, examining the role of mentors and peers and other individuals, changes in their experiences over time, and obstacles and opportunities that had shaped their leadership self-efficacy.

### *Memo-Writing*

I wrote memos throughout the data collection process and between coding and analysis. Memo-writing “sparks our thinking and encourages us to look at the data and codes in new ways” (Charmaz, 2000, p. 517) by connecting personal thoughts directly to the data. It allows the researcher to keep track of what he or she thinks of the data, what information seems to cluster together, and helps integrate the theory (Stern, 2007).

### *Data Analysis*

It should be noted that while the methods are presented here in sequential order, the process was seldom orderly. Using a constant comparative method of data analysis, “sampling, data collection, and data analysis occur continuously and in relation to one another” (Jones, et al., 2006, p. 43), requiring analyzing at every stage in the research process.

Data analysis began immediately upon collecting data from participants and continued throughout the interview process. Strauss and Corbin (1998) identified five purposes of coding procedures:

1. Build rather than test theory.

2. Provide researchers with analytic tools for handling masses of raw data.
3. Help analysts to consider alternate meanings of phenomena.
4. Be systematic and creative simultaneously.
5. Identify, develop, and relate the concepts that are the building blocks of theory. (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 13)

While fundamentally interpretive, the process for data collection and analysis does involve specific steps, as outlined by Creswell (1998) and Strauss and Corbin (1998). The first of these steps is **open coding**, where categories of information are formed from initial interviews, and includes subcategories, or properties, and dimensions (range and variation within each category). During open coding, “data are broken down into discrete parts, closely examined, and compared for similarities and differences” (Strauss & Corbin, p. 102). Where properties are “the general or specific characteristics or attributes of a category, dimensions represent the location of a property along a continuum or range” (Strauss & Corbin, p. 116). In this study, these characteristics and their properties and dimensions cannot be defined outside of the data collection.

The second step in analyzation is **axial coding**, the process of reconnecting the subcategories together in new and conceptually different ways to discover relationships among properties and dimensions. When coding axially, the researcher looks “for answers to questions such as why or how come, where, when, how, and with what results” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.127). In this step, conditions were examined, and relationship statements (hypotheses of sorts) were produced.

**Selective coding** is the next step. It is “the process of integrating and refining the theory” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 143), or the development of a central or core

category that relates to all other categories. This is the primary storyline that substantially defined the answer to the research question. To be considered a core category, it must have analytic power, gained through “its ability to pull the other categories together to form an explanatory whole. Also, a central category should be able to account for considerable variation within categories” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 146). The development of this core category allowed me to develop a “storyline” that clearly explained the phenomenon that was happening, which, in this case, was the experience of lesbian and gay leaders and their development of self-efficacy.

### *Trustworthiness*

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), four issues of trustworthiness need to be addressed in qualitative research studies: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility is an evaluation of whether or not the research findings represent a reasonable interpretation of the data collected from participants. Transferability is the degree to which the results of the research can be applied to settings outside of this one individual study. Dependability, whose counterpart in quantitative research is reliability (or the ability to replicate findings), speaks to the quality of the processes of data collection, data analysis, and theory generation. Since the results of a qualitative study cannot be replicated, dependability can be viewed through collection of all archival data from the study and explicit details of all processes. Confirmability is a measure of how well the findings can be supported by others and can be seen as coming directly from the data and not as a result of researcher bias (Guba & Lincoln, 1998).

Creswell (2003) suggested several strategies to provide validity and trustworthiness to the findings of the research, each of which was employed in the

analysis of data for this study. The first is to “*triangulate* different sources of information by examining evidence from the sources and using it to build a coherent justification for themes” (p. 196). This means that themes and dimensions cannot be represented by just one source or one comment. They must be shared experiences to truly be described as themes. Another strategy, *member-checking*, involves asking the participants themselves to read over materials (transcripts, summaries, themes, etc.) and gauge if they feel the information is accurate. Member-checking was also done in this research. First, prior to the third interview with each participant, the student was provided with a summary of the first two interviews to review, reflect upon, and comment on during the third interview to clarify or correct any of the information gathered. Also, all the participants were invited to an optional focus group near the end of the data analysis period to discuss their experiences and comment on the emerging theory. In addition, each participant was provided an explanation of the findings to offer additional feedback.

Researchers should also use “*rich, thick description*” (p. 196) in sharing the findings, so the reader can more fully understand the experience being explained. The data analysis strived to use students’ own words, language, and sentiments to describe their beliefs and experiences whenever possible. This research also engaged in *peer-debriefing*, locating a person “who reviews and asks questions about the qualitative study so that the account will resonate with people other than the researcher” (p. 196). This person was familiar (but not overly familiar) with the research, had insight into the research constructs of leadership, self-efficacy, and sexual orientation identity development, and had a strong understanding of qualitative research. The peer debriefer

reviewed the methodology and findings of the study and offered insight into descriptions of categories, explanations of findings, and offered critique on the form of presentation.

### *Limitations*

There were some potential limitations about this research that should be noted. This study was conducted on one campus, and although the goal of qualitative research is not to produce theory that is replicable, the particular experiences of students at this individual campus may be dissimilar to students on other campuses, providing less insight into a larger gay and lesbian leadership experience. Additionally, while I, as a researcher, developed mechanisms to account for and ameliorate instances of researcher bias, the research will need to be read and understood through the lens I brought as a gay man doing research on gay and lesbian students, with recognition that differences may have been found had the research been collected and analyzed by another researcher with a different sexual orientation. Finally, the research was focused on gay and lesbian students and excluded the full experiences of bisexual and transgender students. Given an anticipated limited availability of these students, bisexual and transgender students were not included in design of this study, which may affect the transferability of the study to other settings.

### *Researcher Reflexivity and Subjectivity*

The role of the researcher as the instrument of data collection must be explained when using any qualitative methods, particularly grounded theory, as I acted in the role of inquirer, facilitator, and participant in the data collection (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). My positionality, or relationship with the participants and the topic, must be addressed throughout the research process (Jones, et al., 2006). As a gay man, I brought to the

research my personal belief that sexual orientation is an innate characteristic – that gays and lesbians are born with their sexual orientations - and that being gay or lesbian is a fundamentally acceptable identity to possess. I also believe there is no “ideal” way to be gay or lesbian; that each individual carries their authentic self with him/herself. I recognized that my role of researcher may be confounded with a role of “mentor,” as I conducted this research with some students I knew or knew of and certainly grew to know and care about through the research process. I needed to be especially cognizant about ethically engaging with these students in the interview setting and outside the interview setting. During the interviews, I did not bring into the conversation information I possessed about a student from outside knowledge, and I had a discussion with each participant, ensuring that information shared with me would remain confidential, as referenced in the Student Consent Form (Appendix D). In addition, each participant and I discussed the degree to which I should acknowledge that I know him/her when I encountered him/her outside of the interview. Some participants were more “out” than others or were more or less open about their participation in this study, so I was aware of this and responded appropriately.

In addition, as the instrument of data collection, I attempted to ensure that my notes and transcriptions were free of personal bias and truly represented the voice of the students being interviewed instead of my interpretations of what they shared. I needed to be mindfully aware of my personal perspectives in order to stay open to hearing perspectives that may have deviated from my experiences or belief systems.

### *Summary*

In this study, I used Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM) to explore the experiences of gay and lesbian college student engaged in leadership and the meaning they made of their development of leadership self-efficacy, particularly as it was influenced by identity development and their environments. My personal paradigm shaped and influenced my research design and methods. Using theoretical, intensity, and snowball sampling, I identified 10 students to participate in three individual interviews each to explore their experiences more fully. From the data collected and personal memos I wrote, I conducted coding at three levels; open, axial, and selective coding. A constant comparative method allowed me to move back and forth from the data to the analysis to find deeper meaning and have each process inform the other. Throughout the data collection and data analysis processes, I established methods to ensure the trustworthiness of the analysis.

## CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

This study explored the experiences of gay and lesbian college students engaged in leadership and the meaning they made of their leadership self-efficacy development, particularly as it related to their sexual orientation identity development and various environmental assisters and constraints. A range of contributions to the development of leadership self-efficacy were identified in this study for these students and generated additional questions for future research. I conducted three interviews each with 10 participants. First, open coding was conducted on each interview resulting in more than 575 individual codes. These codes were grouped into more comprehensive categories with associated properties and dimensions, representing range and variation within categories. A larger theme arose from these categories to form an emerging theory of gay and lesbian college student leadership self-efficacy development grounded in the experiences of these students.

In this chapter, I introduce each participant in the study, present the categories, properties, and dimensions that emerged from each category using thick rich descriptions from the words of the participants, and provide an overview of the emerging grounded theory. The emerging theory reflected the process of how gay and lesbian students who were engaged in leadership developed their self-efficacy to do so. The emerging theory describes the how sexual orientation pushes someone towards greater leadership self-efficacy, how other elements do so as well, what causes a push towards lower self-efficacy for leadership, all contained within the context of the students' beliefs about leadership. Students also described ways in which sexual orientation had no push neither towards greater or lower leadership self-efficacy. I will explore the participants' evolving

definitions of leadership to provide context to their development of leadership self-efficacy and provide examples of how their leadership self-efficacy was bolstered, diminished, or held steady, both from their gay, lesbian, or queer identities and from their more general experiences in groups and organizations.

### *Participant Descriptions*

Biographical descriptions of each of the participants are provided (in the terms they used to describe themselves), along with social group identities (Table 4.1). Students also approved the descriptions as written. As noted in Chapter III, the focus on selection for participants was on creating maximum variation, identifying students from a wide range of backgrounds, experiences, and social identities. Each student either chose a pseudonym or stated that he or she wished to use his/her own name for the study. In either case, I will not identify which names are pseudonyms and which names are true names for the participants. Given the small number of LGBT-focused organizations for student involvement on the campus for this particular study, some students may be more readily identifiable than others, but every available effort has been made to ensure confidentiality. Some student organization names are redacted to improve anonymity and confidentiality.

Overall, the participants were a diverse group of students. Of the 10 students, four identified as female or gender queer. Three students were African-American, one identified as having a mixed racial background, and the remaining six identified as White. Five students were Jewish or were raised in a Jewish religious tradition. All students but one (Dean) were seniors or recent graduates upon completion of the study. Each student identified as a member of the LGBT community.

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Race-Ethnicity</b>	<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Religion</b>
Dean	White	Gay	Male	Culturally Jewish & Christian
Dexter	African American	Gay	Male	Agnostic (raised Episcopalian)
JB	White & Jewish	Queer	Gender Queer/ Female	Jewish
Jorge	Hispanic/Latino ; Caucasian & Black	Gay	Male	Atheist
Kincade	Black	Queer	Gender Queer	Agnostic (raised Methodist & Non-denominational Christian)
Liam	White	Gay	Male	Agnostic
Mary	African American	Sexually Fluid	Female	None
Rachel	White	Lesbian	Female	Jewish
Sam	White	Gay	Male	Jewish/Atheist
Tanner	White	Gay	Male	Jewish

Table 4.1.: Participants' Social Group Identities

*Dean*

Dean is the youngest student in the study, having just finished his junior year in college. Dean is White, identifies as a gay man, and considers himself culturally Jewish and Christian. An only child, Dean's parents divorced when he was a small child and he lived primarily with his father through high school. Dean is also close to his grandparents, who offered some stability and support as he was growing up. He was very involved in high school and remained so during college, serving as an Orientation Advisor and on Class Council, as well as being involved in a sketch comedy troupe. Dean was also involved in his living-learning community. While not involved in LGBT-

focused organizations, Dean is out to his friends and within his organizations in college. Before college, Dean came out to close friends and his father, but is not yet out to his mother or his grandparents. At the conclusion of this study, Dean studied abroad in Europe. He is a History major and French Studies minor and is considering a wide range of post-graduate opportunities.

*Dexter*

Dexter is a 21-year old African American man who was raised Episcopalian but now identifies as agnostic. Born in Liberia, Dexter came to the United States as an infant with his mother and four older brother, but was not joined by his father until age 13. While in high school, his parent were divorced and Dexter lived with his father until college. Dexter's home life for the couple years before college was isolating, with limited time allowed with friends. Upon entering college, Dexter's father moved back to Africa. Dexter is out to his mother and his oldest brother in his family, but is wary of the response he may receive from others in his family. He is out to almost everyone in his college communities. A communications major with an LGBT Certificate, Dexter has been highly involved in college, serving as a Resident Assistant, a member of a student leadership group, a Spectrum officer, and a Student Ambassador for an academic college. He is considering a career in student affairs and a graduate degree in the field of Student Affairs Administration.

*JB*

JB is a recent graduate from college, currently working full-time for the university in a student affairs position. JB is White, considers herself Ashkenazi Jewish, identifies as having a queer sexual orientation, and identifies as genderqueer/female in her gender

identity. JB attended primarily magnet high schools and was involved in activist causes. In high school, JB became involved in gay groups, but did not identify as gay. Upon entering college, she was taken to a Spectrum meeting, and while still not identifying as a member of the LGBT community, became immediately involved. JB's identity as queer and gender queer evolved through her collegiate experiences. JB received her bachelor's degree in American Studies with a certification in LGBT studies. She was very involved in college, particularly with social justice advocacy work. In addition to involvement in her two living-learning programs, she was an officer in Spectrum and a poetry group, worked for the student newspaper and held a part-time position in a multicultural-focused student affairs office on campus.

### *Jorge*

Jorge is a 21-year old gay male atheist who self-identifies as Hispanic/Latino (race) and Caucasian and Black (ethnicity). His mother is from Haiti, his father is from Spain, and Jorge is fluent in Spanish. In high school, Jorge was the student body president and worked at a major retail chain part-time. He came out as gay during high school (and had a boyfriend) and found support through his friends and other gay co-workers at his job, eventually coming out to teachers as well. In college, Jorge is out in some settings and not others, and has come out to his family members more recently. Jorge is pursuing a dual degree in Accounting and Information Systems and is considering management positions after graduation. He has been very involved in college, serving as a Resident Assistant, a member of Class Council, a campus tour guide, a staff member within a student affairs department, and engagement in his living-learning

program. Jorge has also held an internship position within a branch of the United States military.

### *Kincade*

Kincade is a recent graduate, now working full-time in the engineering field after majoring in Mechanical Engineering with a Minor in LGBT Studies. Kincade is African American and identifies herself as Queer (sexual orientation) and Gender Queer (gender identity). Raised in a United Methodist and Non-denominational faith tradition, she now identifies herself as agnostic. Kincade came out to herself as a lesbian in elementary school and came out to others by 8<sup>th</sup> grade. She did not feel a great deal of discrimination in high school due to her identity, and was very involved in pursuing her interests in engineering. During college, she was exposed to more information about personal identities and was able to deconstruct her identity to find herself as gender queer. In college, Kincade was involved in college in organizations based on her identity and major, including the Black Engineers Society, another organization for LGBT students in STEM fields [Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math), and also served in leadership positions within Spectrum.

### *Liam*

Liam is a 21-year old White gay man who identifies as agnostic. He has held positions of increasing responsibility within a leadership-focused state-wide program for youth for a number of years. Liam came out to others in his senior year in high school, but thought of his gay identity as just a part of himself. His high school was in a rural part of the state and Liam looked forward to the opportunities college would provide and the support he would find. In his junior year in college, he began to reconceptualize his gay

identity as being particularly important to his whole identity. Liam is out in all settings, including to his family. He has been highly involved in college, serving both in student government as a legislator in the university senate. He currently holds an editor position for the student newspaper and has an officer position within Spectrum. Liam is pursuing a dual degree in Art History and History and plans on attending graduate school after college. Liam has remained active in the state-wide leadership program through increased responsibility for shaping and coordinating the program for future leaders.

### *Mary*

Mary is a recent graduate currently pursuing a graduate degree in education. While half her family is Muslim and half are Catholic, Mary considers herself spiritual and does not connect herself to a particular religion. She is African American, the daughter of parents who immigrated to the United States in the 1970s. Mary attended a private Catholic high school as one of few students of color, and was an athlete on the basketball team, eventually serving as captain. Mary majored in Psychology and minored in Spanish Language and Cultures as an undergraduate student and was highly involved on campus. She was a Resident Assistant, and Peer Educator on LGBT issues, served in a peer leadership team, facilitated a small-group for Spectrum, played club basketball, studied abroad, and participated in Alternative Breaks service-learning experiences. Mary identifies her sexual orientation as sexually fluid. In high school, she had a girlfriend and identified as bisexual, and upon entering college, began to see herself as lesbian. More recently, she had a boyfriend for a few months and has identified as sexually fluid. Mary is out to both friends and family.

### *Rachel*

Rachel is a White lesbian who identifies as Jewish. She is a senior with a double major in Philosophy and Jewish Studies. She has been highly involved in the Jewish community on campus, serving in officer positions both within a Jewish LGBT organization and a Jewish Reform organization, as well as coordinating Reform services and leading alternative break trips for the Jewish community on campus. Rachel also enjoys exploring music, playing guitar, and singing. After graduation, Rachel plans on attending graduate school and pursuing Rabbinical Studies. Growing up, Rachel came out to her parents in middle school, but having received negative feedback, went back into the closet and pursued relationships with boys through high school. After her first year in college, she began exploring her lesbian identity and is currently in a relationship and comfortable being out in various settings. While her mother is supportive, her father has been slower to accept her lesbian identity.

### *Sam*

Sam is a White gay man who identifies as Jewish/Atheist. One of four sons of parents involved in children's issues (his father is a pediatrician and his mother a school administrator), Sam attended private Jewish schools prior to college. In high school, Sam became comfortable with his gay identity and after writing an anonymous coming-out story for his high school newspaper, used the story to come out to his brothers and parents, who have been supportive. In college, Sam is pursuing an individualized major in Global Health with an emphasis on International Development and Conflict Management. He has traveled extensively, both as a study abroad student in Africa, but also worked in social service agencies in Tanzania during summers. He has been very

involved in college, serving as an officer within a Jewish LGBT organization, coordinating a campus Help Center hotline, running a mental health peer education program, working in the Study Abroad office, and advising students in the individualized studies program.

### *Tanner*

Tanner is a 21-year old White gay male who identifies as Jewish, having attended private Orthodox Jewish schools during most of his secondary school education. His mother and stepfather are very religious, but his father is atheist, so Tanner moved back and forth in households with very different environments. Tanner spent his senior year in a public high school, which he credits for allowing him to figure out who he was and have a more traditional high school experience and exposure to new ideas and involvement in the arts. It was during his time in public school he was able to come out to others. He is majoring in Studio Art with a certification in Hebrew. Tanner became involved early in college and has held leadership positions within Spectrum and a martial arts student organization. Tanner is out to everyone, including his family, although his mother is in a state of denial, as he describes it.

### *Overview of Emerging Theory*

The focus of this study was the development of leadership self-efficacy for gay and lesbian college students engaged in leadership with a focus on the process in which their leadership self-efficacy grew, was challenged, and was influenced by their sexual orientation identities. For this study, it was important to first identify the participants' beliefs about leadership to place their self-efficacy in context. The emerging picture was one in which the participants grew to think of leadership as based in relationships,

involving change, tied to their values, focused on inclusion, and related to service and duty to others. Each student spoke about the ways his or her sexual orientation identity was central to the development of leadership self-efficacy, but also spoke to ways it was not central. The emerging picture shows that sexual orientation influenced leadership self-efficacy development in some striking ways, but for the very same students, depending on when or how they engaged, it had much less of a relationship.

The students in this study also shared a number of additional influencers on their development of self-efficacy to engage in leadership. The categories for the increase of leadership self-efficacy were a sense of success, deep immersive involvements, and support and encouragement from others. At times these were related to sexual orientation and sometimes they were not. These concepts will be connected at the end of this chapter into the grounded theory.

### *Evolving Views of Leadership*

Participants in this study described having gone through a paradigmatic shift in their beliefs about what leadership is and could be. In high school, they believed that leadership was about the position held, about being in charge, or about a hierarchical structure. In college, they grew to believe that leadership was about relationships, about change, about service and duty to others, and was based on the important values they held. This section will describe this evolving view of leadership.

### *High School Notions of Leadership*

High school was when most of the participants started becoming more involved in student organizations and beginning part-time employment. Their conceptions of leadership were based often on positions held or based on the structures that were in

place for them to consider. For instance, Dean defined his view of leadership in high school when he started assuming leadership positions:

I thought of it as ... more of a hierarchy type thing, like the people who did the most and organized everything and just kind of like, “here it is.” And like people who kind of do what you kind of tell them or kind of the direction that you're going. So ... it was a very hierarchical system I got going in my head.

He also shared that because he had a strong personality and his ideas of stereotypical leaders included lots of hand movements and a high degree of charisma so he thought this was the proper way to be engaged with others in leadership.

I have a big personality I tend to think and when I had other officers –I would get frustrated with them just because when we have tried to split up things to talk about and I would get frustrated sometimes because they would say things very softly, not like - Hands! [student gestured broadly] – in the movies or I don't know. The typical stereotypical leader is usually someone like Obama - very charismatic gesticulations. So I would get frustrated with that type of thing so I would write people off and in essence say, they're not a leader, they don't have the personality for it necessarily.

Dexter associated leadership with control. While he looks back on his beliefs and behaviors with a critical eye, he acknowledges that he considered power to be central to his beliefs about leadership:

I never really thought about leadership in those terms, but I guess back then I would associate it with control. You know, I was figuratively the leader of my group of friends, and I felt like in high school to me that meant being in control of them. I was sadly quite manipulative back in the day. I could get people to do what I wanted them to do or hang out with me in whatever way that I wanted to hang out.

JB's conceptions of leadership follow closely with what she saw happening around her- that someone was always in charge:

I definitely think that my first idea of leadership was closer to what society's definition of leadership is. In everything from sports to the military to the way we run business in our country, there's the big person in charge who's all, “go ahead,” whatever. Definitely that's sort of the societal vision, the CEO, the

president, the team captain, that isn't really – or I guess more of the coach really, or the owner.

While JB considered the kind of position being held, Kincade connected this notion of being in charge to making the decisions. In her comments, she has already processed how this idea has changed for her:

Before, they had to just sort of... the person in charge of things who... makes all the decisions, maybe bosses people around, but after working with different student groups in my internships it seemed more like leadership is... vision and followership.

Rachel not only identified leadership as positional, she believed that if she could not hold the position of leader, then what she was doing was not valuable:

And yeah, like in high school, it was – there was kind of the mentality like if – this sounds so screwed up, but like if you're not in a leadership position or working your way toward a leadership position in X or Y, unless you're getting like serious joy out of it, you're wasting your time because it's not gonna get you anywhere.

### *Leadership as Relationships*

As the students moved through college, they began to see leadership in new ways. One of these was recognizing that leadership is not about the individual person. It was about the person engaged with others in pursuit of a shared goal. The ability to successfully engage with others was a hallmark to building leadership self-efficacy for students in this study.

Dean, being very involved in high school, came to college thinking that being a good organizer meant you were a good leader. He came to believe that while being organized was a good skill to have, leadership was about more than that. He shared, "I can organize this, I can do that, but that's not what being a leader is necessarily about, being an organizer. It's some of the responsibilities but being vested in the group is more

effective.” As an Orientation Advisor on campus, Dean needed strong interpersonal skills to excel in the position. He saw this as leadership, commenting that:

knowing a lot of my students, and making them feel comfortable and creating like an initial rapport, which I feel is essential for, I mean, for anybody, for any skill, yeah, especially a leader to be aware of everyone in the group.

This sentiment was repeated when Dean spoke about his experiences in his college sketch comedy group, relating that creating a sense of family in an organization was important to him:

One thing I am very happy with about [organization name withheld] is that for the most part, everyone gets along very well. We’ve, ever since my freshman year, we’ve really tried to become more of a [organization name withheld] family, and we really try to do more things together. And, to be friends outside. And, that’s really taking shape more so, I would say many of my best friends are from [organization name withheld], which is the vision that me and a lot of other people had. We wanted to really get that. And, incorporating our freshman members and they fit in great. And, have their own voice.

Sam, like the others, came to see leadership as most effective when done with others, not in conflict with others:

And, I think many people view a leader as agitators, people who can ruffle feathers and get things done that way, when I kind of realize that the most effective leaders are the ones that can actually network and play behind the scenes and be respectful.

Rachel described leadership as the art of “making connections with people,” and realized that even when she was in a position of leadership and the group she was working with was struggling, “there needs to be a team to make something like this work.” In her work with a campus LGBT Jewish organization, she felt particularly proud of the work that the group as a team was able to accomplish putting on a successful panel discussion:

Everyone on the board either found speakers and communicated with them about it and had them come, or marketed the hell out of it, or something like that.

Everyone played a big role, and when it came down to it, a bunch of people came. It was a really, really, really good evening, and yeah, [organization name withheld] works together. Yeah, it's pretty cool.

Sometimes the change in beliefs about leadership came not slowly, but came hard and fast. Dexter, who identified himself as manipulative in high school, did not see much change in himself his first year in college, but had an important experience his sophomore year:

And that's when I went to [event name] Social Diversity in Leadership Retreat. And so that's when I was exposed to a more formulaic... definition of leadership, and I really enjoyed it. Leadership is a group process. I felt like that made a lot more sense than some one person being the leader because it really isn't the work that's done. It's really the product of that figurehead. It's the product of everyone's work. And while, yes, a leader – a positional leader might be there for direction, I figure actually everyone who wants to is engaging in leadership in... just giving their all to the group process and working together and collaborating.

In fact, through that experience and then his increased involvement in leadership initiatives on campus, Dexter's mindset about leadership took a dramatic turn:

I operate better in groups. I do not think I like leadership by myself. I enjoy working with others. I enjoy bouncing ideas off of others. I enjoy the idea of diversity creates better product.... Because more people are there to play devil's advocate or just advocate on their beliefs and realize and inform others that things have to be changed to make it a more encompassing product.

Tanner also talked about how, as someone engaged in leadership, it is important to include others and compromise. In talking about being in charge, he commented:

That's not being a leader, that's being other things, and I don't think they understand that being a leader really means you have to work with people and sometimes you have to make compromises that don't necessarily fit your exact views, but if you're being a leader, then you have to be inclusive.

As the new president of an LGBT-focused organization, Tanner often took on a lot of the details of an event himself, often finding himself burned out by the experience. He realized that good leadership was not about getting things done, it was about getting

things done in relationship with others, offering that “being an effective leader is recognizing how to work in different groups”:

Because if you don't give other people opportunity to do what they are good at, then they're not gonna grow and your organization or your corporation or whatever you're working for, isn't going to succeed because eventually they're gonna graduate. So if I'm not helping people step into leadership roles, then the organization's going to disappear.

JB began college with the belief that if no one else would take charge, then she would step in and make things happen. Like Tanner, this accomplished the task at hand, but did not connect her leadership to a group experience. As she looked back, she commented:

I think definitely I'm at least trying to take a more, not backseat idea of leadership, but... a more mentoree style of leadership.... I'm definitely from that point sort of trying more to think of leadership as, “Okay, I'm the facilitator of the team and my goal is to make this team work together to achieve this team's goals rather than I'm going to achieve my goals whether or not they like it.”

Mary had a similar experience in her position as a Resident Assistant, seeing that she did not need to be the “end all, be all” for leadership in her community. She shared that, “It was very much a community coming together and all of us putting our ideas on all of us as leaders to come together and make change happen. And in all my involvement, I try to model that.” The idea of leadership as building connections with others became so ingrained in Mary that it was second nature to her and when some of her resident complimented her on her leadership abilities, she had to remember this. She commented, “I didn't think I did anything extra. I thought... the person-to-person connections make me feel like I'm a leader, but not necessarily when I've had a position have I done anything extravagant.”

Jorge's experiences working as a Resident Assistant also supported his changing notions both about leadership, but as importantly, about how he wanted to engage others as a leader in the future. Jorge used to want to be "a boss," to be "top down, I sit at a desk, you come, you report to me," but recently realized he wants a job "where I can collaborate with others":

I don't like any of that business. I wanna be friends with people. I wanna... kinda be the head of the group, like the leader of the group, but I want everybody to have kind of a collaborative thing. I like discussion and things like that.

Jorge's work as an RA was honored with an award, an honor he attributes in large part to his development/generative style of leadership, working to help make younger RAs into better leaders. For him leadership, "is not necessarily getting a project done; it is also building the people around you to be better when they are away.

Liam has been involved in a number of organizations on campus, from a very hierarchal group like the University Senate, to a student-run experience like the student newspaper, to a more decentralized student group like Spectrum. His position in Spectrum, in which he became involved during his senior year, was to assist with the accounts office, writing budgets and contracts. It was in this role that he was able to see leadership as more than a position; that is was also about being supportive of others, or as he put it, "it's not about you":

So it's showed me sort of a different side of what leadership could be, which I never really experienced the sort of, like, I can step back. And I can be supportive. And I can helpful. And I can do these things to make the rest of the organization function without necessarily being, "I wanna do this and this and this. And these are my goals. And this is my broad vision." So I think it's let me experience the other different types of leadership that are possible, which I'd never really done before. And I think that will translate well once I graduate, into whatever job or whatever I end up doing in the future.

## *Leadership as Change*

The theme of leadership as involving change echoed through almost all of the students' stories of their experiences in groups and organizations. The answer to the question, "leadership for what?" led to statements about meeting goals, creating change, having vision, making a difference, and having a positive impact. Leadership was action-oriented for these students and their leadership self-efficacy was built from collaborative efforts aimed towards change.

Dexter put it plainly when he said, "you're obviously not being a leader if you're not taking, like, steps towards doing something. You can't really sit idly by and engage in leadership, so on seeing things that you're interested in, seeing things that you think are wrong that need to be changed and actually doing something about it is important." Dexter goes on to contrast the basic task of fulfilling job responsibilities with leadership, saying, "actually, I feel like if people are just doing their jobs then it wouldn't really be leadership because then... you're not really taking the initiative. You're not helping the group towards its goal. You're just doing your job."

Kincade described leadership as being driven by mission and solving problems:

It's mainly having a vision, being able to convince other people of the vision, and getting other people invested and working towards this sort of mission and... keeping people on track... and listening to other people's ideas to see if... those would be compatible with getting to where you want to go. I feel like leadership – a lot of it is initiative and being comfortable and taking initiative and facilitating things, talking to people, getting problems solved.

Jorge commented specifically that he had a lot of "emotional intelligence" – being able to read people and know their limits – and that when working in the US military as an intern, he experienced some major organizational changes that allowed him to work

well within a change environment. Jorge equated leadership with the ability to inspire people to succeed as change was happening around them:

I wasn't necessarily a boss or anything like that but they had gone through a big... leadership change at the top and then just to see the people different, the different people... transition and to see what their responsibilities were; and the sensitivities that people had. I was always very cognizant of what... those things were and how to... manage people and still... inspire them to do what they are supposed to do throughout that process.

Other students, like Sam, saw that leadership can take many forms. For him, change does not need to be huge important change. Leadership can also be a catalyst for change, "something that needs to get done and someone who's actually willing to take acceptance to do it". Sam went on to say:

There are different modes of leadership for different things that need to be led. There are the Martin Luther Kings who are these figureheads and people can look to one person who can make a lot of change and motivate a lot of people single-handedly. And, then there are the Ella Bakers, who subscribe to the school of thought, that's more, 'Oh, I'm just kind of a catalyst working with people and together we are the leadership group.' And, depending on the scenario, it's the kind of the model that I'll adopt on various different things.

This idea of "getting things done" or "seeing that there was a need that needed to be addressed and doing something about it" was also an important part of Sam's story. He is clear in describing his abilities to make that happen:

That is if there is a goal, I will network and I will work very hard and I can usually stir up a lot of backing and stir up a lot of participation through motivation, is one of the things that I've been able to do. Through speaking with people in an educated way and a passionate way, I have a very high success rate of getting people to listen and to act on certain things. And, I like that I can see results for certain things.

Several participants in this study spoke of the power of leadership to contribute to social change, which the students conceptualized as positively contributing to the betterment of their communities. Sometimes opened to this idea from participation in a

leadership conference, like Mary or Dexter, or exposed to social change through travel, like JB or Sam, or through student organizations, like Dexter or Tanner, the students shared stories of creating change for the betterment of society or others. JB commented, “My personal vision for leadership is that it would be moving towards social justice and more egalitarian.” Dexter echoed this sentiment, offering, “You can’t really sit idly by and engage in leadership, so on seeing things that you’re interested in, seeing things that you think are wrong that need to be changed and actually doing something about it is important.”

Liam used his ability to engage in leadership to describe an effort he made as an editor of the student newspaper to both maximize his resources and contribute to the university. For National Coming Out Day in October, he knew the paper would include the annual Out List of LGBT faculty, staff, and students. He used the timing of the issue to solicit a guest editorial and to write his own editorial piece about a rash of recent gay suicides in the US and contribute positively. He shared:

I’m also in charge of writing the staff editorials that the newspaper publishes. Because I get to do that, I get to feel I’m contributing back to the university. And I think the leadership is... putting different pages together in a way that will maximize the impact.... So it was very much something that I was able to put together that I felt helped maximize the impact of a day that a lot of people forget about through doing it, through this page, which was a really nice feeling.

Tanner brought together the concepts of leadership as action with his gay identity, recognizing that, for him, you cannot fully engage in leadership if you cannot be true to yourself:

When you have to hide a part of yourself, it’s very, very difficult to empower other people and be an effective leader, because part of you is silent, and really the only way you can be a leader is to not be silent, because I think leadership demands action, and if part of you is paralyzed, then you can’t be a leader.

Tanner, particularly self-efficacious to engage in leadership, shared that as he becomes more self-confident and self-aware, he is more capable of standing up for the issues he believes in and more likely to demand respectful treatment from others, and “that’s how you go about making a positive change.”

Mary, highly involved in college, saw the connection between being able to create change and the power of working in a group to do so:

I never went out there like, “I’m the one that has all the end all, be all.” It was very much a community coming together and all of us putting our ideas on all of us as leaders to come together and make change happen. And in all my involvement, I try to model that... and I loved doing that, and that made me the most happy. So for me, that’s what stuck with me over time.

For some of the students in the study, change showed up in the guise of activism. For Sam, this meant organizing assemblies and educational campaigns and marches in high school focused on the genocide in Darfur. For JB, this meant involvement in organizations like Food Not Bombs and Reclaim the Streets. Tanner was led to activism by asking himself, “So how can I be a part of a community that I see as being victimized by a lot of people in the government and how can I help people?” Leadership as a vehicle for change was present in almost all the students’ stories of their experiences in groups and organizations.

#### *Leadership as Service and Duty*

Another theme that emerged was the concept of leadership as a service or duty to others, often borne from a place of empathy and understanding of the experiences of others. This service or duty manifested itself in several ways, from stepping up and taking on a challenge or new initiative, focusing more on a group’s needs than one’s own needs,

ensuring that new leaders are nurtured in the organization, or remembering to care for and consider the needs of other individuals who are engaged in leadership.

Kincade, while downplaying her abilities in creating vision, was able to see her strengths in attending to a felt need and establishing new or improved organizations to meet those needs:

I'm generally good at seeing a void and trying to fill it or seeing something that's there that needs to be changed and making it good. Like going from bad to good or not existing to good, as opposed to necessarily good to great....I got [LGBT organization name withheld] started finally and I got [LGBT organization name withheld] started back up after the facilitator sort of evaporated. Then I'm good at handing it off to capable people who grow it afterwards. So, I'm good at getting the bare bones, basic, this-is-what-you-need-for-this-group-to-run sort of thing and then allowing people to run with it.

JB, a self-identified "problem-seeker," seeks problems out not for self-aggrandizement, but because she also perceives that an issue needs to be addressed or a void needs to be filled. Her history is full of these experiences, from becoming the de facto president of the Young Green Party in high school after just transferring into that school to becoming the TA for a study abroad experience. For JB, necessity combined with talent and obligation bred engagement:

During the trip, I think there was this opportunity to step up in a lot of ways. I sort of became the TA for this class on route. And that was very much an acknowledgment on the part of someone – hierarchically above me, but also of myself that I had something to teach people, which was really exciting. Because I did sort of have the opportunity as a peer but also as a teacher to be like, "maybe you should reconsider this."

Some of the participants shared how their leadership is manifested by their concerns for the group's welfare outweighing their own personal needs. Dean, for example, worked with an officer in the student government and came away disappointed with what he perceived to be a very hands-off approach to leadership, particularly when

contrasted with what he saw on another campus. His lesson learned was that “being part of the group, anything else is kind of outside;” that the group is more important than yourself. During our first interview, Dean was struggling whether to list his name in the student newspaper’s annual Out List, identifying out LGBT faculty, staff, and students each year in the student newspaper on National Coming Out Day in October. His sense of duty comes through in his words:

But just I guess the other perspective is having that thought of, if someone else sees that and that makes them either wanna come talk to me or talk to somebody about it. So they feel more comfortable about themselves, I guess that [is] social responsibility, it’s a real struggle for me. And I am kind of talking myself into doing it now, because if I am out there, what does it matter? At the same time, I don’t wanna be one of those people like, “I’m gay and here I am” and – which I feel as though some people may think.

Dean was weighing consequences, others’ beliefs about the actions, and his own sense of personal responsibility. His feelings about commitment were also echoed in his comments about what it means to be engaged in leadership and how it means more than holding a position:

I guess, in respect to the traditional idea of leadership was instilled into me, like being committed to something... just having your name on paper as president, treasurer, okay, cool that means nothing, if you’re not committed to something, devote your time to it, really care about the organization’s mission. So, that was a big wakeup call. I knew in college, I was like, “I’m not joining more than two, three clubs, whatever.” And really committing my time to that. Leadership as being about others and not about yourself was also shared by Liam.

Liam, serving as an editor in the student newspaper, was clear that leadership is not about the leader:

It’s about making sure that the people that you’re working with that – it’s not about you...It’s about the organization. It’s about helping the organization grow. And, even more specifically, it’s about training and helping the people that you’re working with prosper and grow and... removing roadblocks for them so that they can achieve their successes and so that the organization as a whole can sort of function better, and you can achieve your goals. But it’s really more collaborative

than any one person just saying, “We’re going to do this,” and delegating responsibility.

Rachel, while often finding herself in positions of responsibility and taking on leadership roles, began to see that leadership does not only happen at the top of the organizational chart:

I wanna do a fewer things well, and if that means not being in charge, that’s cool, like I shouldn’t need to be. With that said, I’m happy to help and if what I can be doing that’s most helpful in these situations, being president, obviously, as you can see, I’ll do it, but it’s not an ambitious kind of thing.

For other students in this study, the duty of engaging in leadership was also to develop leadership in others. Dexter, a Resident Assistant, had a resident on his floor who he thought would be excellent as an RA. Dexter shared, “I feel like if I got this kid to be an RA it’d be my legacy essentially. And so right now I’m talking to him about it, and I feel like that’s a form of leadership to, you know, develop others.” Dexter has been an RA for a number of years and as he has grown and matured in the position, his role on his staff team has also grown and matured. As a new RA, he felt silenced by the older RAs on his staff. But, now as a senior RA, he sees part of his responsibility as providing a space for additional voices to be heard in decision-making. This has also been true for him in his work with Spectrum.

We created a position to voice their opinion. So, we recreated five new positions that year to address people’s individual concerns. Some people wanted to do more social change work, more advocacy work. Work within DC was like the groups there so they created a position for that. I feel like finding your voice or creating a space where you can give other people voices, I feel like it is a salient theme.

Liam, looking at his upcoming graduation and the organizations he is leaving, shared, “I think much more of it is sort of helping the people that you’re working with

develop as leaders on their own.” In his service to the organization, he felt the obligation to leave it in good hands:

Sort of making sure that there’s growth and there’s development from people who are newer and who are going to take over the organization has definitely been something I’ve been focusing on the last, in the last two years or so.... basically helping them grow and less about like you being in charge of organizations. And I think that has changed as I’ve grown and I’ve... seen a whole lot of different leadership positions or been in a lot of different leadership positions.

For some students, like Tanner, the act of serving others affirmed the effort he was putting in. After an event went very well, he thought, “so seeing that and seeing the organization grow as a whole and have more people involved and interested and taking leadership positions, is a continuing affirmation that what I’m doing matters and is effective.”

Service, duty, and responsibility to others and organizations was a clear theme from the participants. As they developed their leadership self-efficacy, descriptions of themselves as growing in their confidence often touched on whether they felt they were doing something of value and how well they met their obligations.

#### *Leadership as Connected to Values*

While the participants’ notions of leadership in high school were action oriented and positional – getting things done, being in charge – they described their beliefs about leadership in college as shifting with an increased emphasis on values. Their relationships with others engaged in leadership caused them to not only consider their own values, but also how those values shaped their basic beliefs about working with others in groups.

Dean was faced with examining his values as part of a sketch comedy troupe on campus. Group members presented sketch ideas to the larger group, seeking approval and laughs, but that did not always work as planned:

If you're writing sketches and presenting to the group and you think it's funny, whereas everyone else can be like, "You're crazy, we can't put this on." Or, values come into it more. So, that definitely questions my values around... some of the sketches that we have... I might cringe at them. But, if everyone else is laughing, do I still laugh? It really, actually now talking about it, makes me a little more aware of the process.

Kincade started grappling with issues of values as she became more aware of her identity as queer and became more involved in the Spectrum. The value she placed on the ethic of justice pushed her closer to her involvements in the LGBTQIA community:

I guess maybe made me more aware and more conscious, and made me lean to that a little bit more because those injustices were more salient to me than the more... silent and institutionalized ones that had been with... race and ethnicity.

Liam, like Kincade, came to campus looking for ways to become involved, but wanted to make sure that he was able to make a difference. He moved from organization to organization looking for the involvement that would match his values:

I sort of bounced around and done a whole lot of different things in college and... tried out things I thought I might be interested in that looked cool. And... that I thought I could make a difference in. I came here. I thought I wanted – I saw some things I wanted to change. I heard about some things and I sort of bounced between different organizations and different things trying to do those things and... exploring my own interests there.

Liam was not the only student in the study who test-drove his involvements. Mary went to the Black Student Union, the African Student Association, and the Caribbean Student Association, but felt they were not talking about issues she cared most about. She needed involvements that spoke to her whole identity and her values.

They weren't getting into social justice pieces outside of races and ethnicity, so for me, it was like, "I'm going to avoid groups that don't really care about this stuff, and really get to the meat of what I care about, what I'm passionate about." So yeah, that definitely helped me to get away from groups, or like you said, join other things. Being a visible piece, again. That visibility is stuck with me as being very important and germane to what I'm doing. Making sure that I'm visible to others so they have some kind of outlet and vice versa, I can get something from other people.

Mary started college believing in leadership as hierarchal. But, she had a seminal experience attending a leadership and diversity retreat that helped her understand that leadership can be learned from anyone, is based on her values, and is inclusive:

I see leadership as something that can be learned from anyone.... And then also I think there's input from everyone in that; it's not just one person who's the leader that does everything. So that's kind of where it's at now, and just being congruent with your values and how you want others to see yourself and your actions and I see all those kinds of things in leadership now.

Mary clearly connected her personal passions and values to the work she does as a leader. She gave a great deal of thought into what she valued and liked to do and began making conscious choices to match her identity and her involvements. She shared, "It felt more – my whole self felt more involved in everything. It just felt more meaningful."

Tanner also found ways to answer the question he asked himself, "So how can I be a part of a community that I see as being victimized by a lot of people in the government and how can I help people?" Tanner connected his involvements to the importance of having a sense of self, to being whole:

If you can't be a whole person to yourself, how can you help other people become one?.... But when you're really happy or empowered and confident, you help people, and you try to make things better, which is nice, and then you feel better about yourself, because you've helped other people, and it's a lovely chain of events.

Rachel was very aware of and concerned about the responsibilities for effort and time that she was placing on other individuals. She felt she needed to be "a good force in their lives," and ensure that she was respectful of their time:

And I think that's a big part of being a good leader because in my experience I know that if someone is not understanding of what's going on in your life and they're just asking way too much of you, or just expecting way too much or is not being grateful for what you do, then you're just going to be like, well, that's

messed up. I'm done with this completely, and that accomplishes nothing. Plus it's just inconsiderate.

Sam also shared why he becomes engaged. For him, having traveled and worked across the globe and having been exposed to much, he explained, "Just that realization that there's so little that actually matters in life, makes me able to take on the things that really do matter." Sam values passion and knowledge, believing both are central to leadership and leadership with only one and not the other can make things worse. In high school, he successfully led a campaign in his school to foster education and advocacy about HIV and AIDS, but also had an experience that highlighted these values:

It was something that I felt passionate about and I felt needed to be addressed. And, I remember like towards the end of the day a teacher approached me and said, 'I don't think you should've done this.' And, I said, 'Why not?' And, she said, 'Well, like why AIDS? Well, I think fighting breast cancer's a bigger issue that we need to deal with, why didn't you do something on breast cancer?' And, I said, 'Because it's something I feel. Someone else can do breast cancer, go for it. I'd love it if they did. But I think that I did this is a good thing.' And, it comes from that I learn about it, I have a connection to it and feel strongly about it.

He summarizes his lessons from this and other experiences as, "I'm not willing to put myself into a position where even if I'm very passionate, or even if I know something needs to get done, I have seen people blindly do those kinds of things, and make things worse off, and I'm not willing to make that mistake."

### *Inclusion*

One of the most visible values held by the participants in the study was the value of inclusion. Time and again, the students spoke about the value they place on including multiple voices, having identity be visible, and allowing others to give input.

Dexter, as mentioned before, was self-described as manipulative in high school, using his influence to gain advantage for himself. By his third year in college, he really

noticed that he had moved beyond that mindset. He had a friend who he found easy to manipulate, but discovered that he now did not want to manipulate him. As Dexter said, “If I want him to do something I want him to want to do it or I want to know if he wants to do it or if we should do something else.” It was important for Dexter to create the space for his friend to have his voice heard or to listen for clues to gauge reactions. This was true for Dexter’s organizational involvement as well as his personal life. As a senior RA, he is trying to create a space for everyone on staff to have an equal voice.

For Kincade, the challenge was in balancing input from others with the needs of the organization to move forward. While she found input and inclusion critical to a positive group environment, she waffled on whether she considered this a strength or a weaknesses, seeing both sides of the issue and working through her beliefs verbally:

I think weaknesses for me at least are... wanting to know what all of the options are and wanting a lot of input from other people before I just haul off and make a decision. Because... the decisions affect everybody and I don’t want people to feel like, well, you didn’t ask me or anything like that, but then if people never get back to me, then it’s sort of problematic. So I guess in summary that would be not wanting to make decisions without sufficient input from other people. Could be a weakness, but I guess it could also be a strength because then you’re not just going all wild and I’m just going to do whatever I want sort of thing.

Dean placed a great deal of value on inclusion in groups. When describing each of his major involvements, he talked about his relationships with others and how he always wanted to know their opinions “just so to get all the stakeholders opinions and just to hear what everyone has to say.” Like Kincade, he also wondered whether inclusion would be interpreted as indecisiveness:

Just because, if a decision has to be made, I want people to feel as though they're included in that. However, on the other hand, that could be turned into indecisiveness because sometimes for class council, things wouldn’t get done because people didn’t know what they want or get too many different opinions

and blah blah blah and sometimes a leader has to make a decision, so I kind of go into that as well.

Mary, who identifies her sexual orientation as sexually fluid, suggests that some of her beliefs about inclusion are based on others' confusion about her identity. She personally experienced individuals who were less than accepting of her and wanted to provide a space for others that was more inclusive:

I think that I'm more accepting of differences that are not Black and White, because a lot of leaders who are gay who don't understand bisexuality or don't agree with [it]....and I think the students connect with me because I was just like, "Anyone is welcome. You don't have to be gay. You can come as long as you're going to be confidential to what we're doing here," and all those things. So, I think my ability to connect with other students because of my openness, I think was good.

For Mary, including others was a conscious decision, but other students in the study were not as sure. Rachel, for instance, saw herself as sensitive to differences when she works with others and thinks this may be due to a history of stigmatization, but cannot readily place its origins:

Maybe being queer makes you subconsciously, or consciously, accept or cherish the differences in people, which would make you a better leader, and I think that the differences, like diversity, not just in terms of race and sexuality and things like that but in terms of personality and ability, and all that stuff is something that I value, and try to be really sensitive to, and to try to adapt the way I work with people... and that maybe being queer could help people with that. Because coming from a standpoint of difference, especially one that is stigmatized in a lot of society could help with that. And I don't think that's a conscious thing for me, but it could be. It really could be. I don't think it's a conscious thing for me, though.

Sam shared that a friend and colleague of his referred to Sam's aptitude for inclusion as "political empathy," that "I can look at people no matter what kind of political, and political in a very loose term, political stance or ideas or motivations or anything, and get that. And, empathize with it and go with it." He saw value in his

ability to be in a room with individuals with vastly different viewpoints and still say, “okay, how can we work together to actually do something?” For Sam, some of this empathy stems from his Jewish upbringing and his experiences of being in the closet:

I always had a community narrative of persecution and oppression, and that allowed me to learn certain aspects about empathy and activism and not being okay with any status quo, challenging authority, all those kinds of things, and being in the closet, and the evolution of my gay identity has done a similar thing, where when you’re in a minority, when you are in a community as historically oppressed it comes with certain educational factors that I have valued.

Finally, for Tanner, inclusion meant more than including voices within your organization, but reaching outward to work with other groups on campus and learning more about issues outside of your direct experience. In talking about his experience in Spectrum, he shared:

Just because we have... a specific group of people that we’re here for, doesn’t mean that we’re not here for other people on campus. Which is why we try to work with a lot of other groups. And, I think that’s a big part of what leadership is to recognize that. You can’t be really active in one part of campus, but completely ignore other groups on campus. Because, you’re just gonna limit yourself and limit your organization.

To summarize, in high school, these students viewed leadership through the lens of positions held, authority given, and missions accomplished. But, in college, their conceptions of leadership grew and became based in relationships with others, was focused on change, became about service and duty to others, and was based on the important values they held, like inclusion and visibility.

### *Self-Efficacy and Sexual Orientation*

The emerging picture from the participants’ stories is that their sexual orientation identities were related to the development of their self-efficacy along a dimension. Each student spoke about the effect that their sexual orientation had on their development of

leadership self-efficacy, from broadening their perspectives, giving them comfort in relationships with others, being integral to their involvements, and allowing them to bring their full selves to an experience. At the same time, this was mitigated by almost every student speaking about how their gay identity was not central to their development of leadership self-efficacy. For some, their confidence to engage in leadership pre-dated their experiences with coming out or involvement in gay-focused organizations. For others, they had come out early and integrated their leadership identities and sexual orientation identities, so it seemed less salient now. Others compartmentalized their experiences, saying that certain involvements did not have much to do with their sexual orientations, so it did not impact those involvements. And others shared other influences that outweighed the importance of their sexual orientation on the development of their leadership self-efficacy.

#### *Sexual Orientation Identity Tied to Self-Efficacy*

As the students in this study shared the process of how their gay, lesbian, or queer identities shaped their leadership self-efficacy, a pattern of positive experiences emerged. While asked more generally about the relationship between being gay or lesbian and their personal leadership experiences, each student spoke almost exclusively about the positive impact their sexual orientation gave them while engaging in leadership. The students felt that their personal perspectives were broadened, that the relationships with others were improved, that their involvements were driven by their sexual orientations, and that there was comfort in being able to bring themselves fully into an experience.

### *Broadening Perspective*

Students shared how being gay, lesbian, or queer contributed to their maturation and a more complete understanding of the world around them, giving them greater insight and perspective. Dexter coupled his gay identity with his identity as African American to comment that “it gives you a really different view of the world, being in a double minority class.” Kincade commented on this similarly, saying, “I feel like no matter where you go, who you are follows you.” Her queer identity shaped how she experiences the world:

But the way you interact with the world has to do with how you experience it and how you experience it depends on the identities you carry around with you. So since you always carry those identities around with you, that’ll impact how you see things and that’ll make that different from somebody else’s, who has a different set of identities.

For Dean, while his mother was Jewish, he did not consider himself a minority in his community, but did see how being gay had provided him a different perspective of the world. Dean offered, “I guess it’s given me a different perspective of a minority out there. I mean because otherwise I’m White, male, suburban, my mom’s Jewish but just the way I was raised, I was never really like – it was never really an issue of minority at all, much as I put it that way.”

Liam, like Dean and Kincade, saw how his identity shaped his worldview and the decisions he made to engage as a change agent. He consciously sought out opportunities that were driven by his gay identity:

I think were I not gay and were I just your typically like suburban, White, male, straight... I don’t think and I hadn’t experienced what it was, and I hadn’t experienced discrimination and I hadn’t experienced that sort of minority status. I don’t think I would necessarily be so gung-ho for change and looking for things to change. I think that’s really influenced me in what I got involved in. Because I

got involved in different organizations at the specific times that I did because I could make a difference in that organization at that time.

### *Authentic Relationships and Comfort in Groups*

A theme that emerged in the students' stories was that as they grew more comfortable with their sexual orientation or came out more fully in groups and organizations, that there was also improved relationships with others. Dean shared a lot on this topic, examining deeply his experiences in different organizations and where and how he felt most comfortable. In not being able to share his identity, he commented:

So it might have made me seem a little removed, maybe a little inaccessible just because I couldn't share. Because relationships and just like, "oh, that cute guy, that cute girl," - it's a basic part of people's lives. And if I wasn't participating in that, that kind of put me at a distance...there was no connectability. So I think that has kind of removed me from being accessible or people perceiving me as that, and... it kind of hurts because I wanna be that, I wanna be accessible, which I feel as though I am much more now.

In looking at his current situation, he certainly saw how he has changed:

So I think, just the fact that I'm out, therefore I'm more comfortable with myself... helps with leadership and in fact, that I can have a candid discussion about it, in this form or whatever, I think gives me credibility as a person, as a leader.

For many of the students, it was important that they be authentically themselves in the groups they were engaged with. Within LGBT-focused organizations, this was less of a concern, as others would already assume that these students were LGBT, but in thinking about non-LGBT-focused organizations or general leadership approaches, being fully present in their identities was crucial.

Tanner attributed being comfortable in his identity as positively contributing to his leadership self-efficacy, asking, "if you can't be a whole person to yourself, how can you help other people become one?" He saw this as directly related to wanting to create better environments for others.

So I just think that growing in your self identity has really helped me become a better leader and a happier, more open person who enjoys life a lot more, and that gives you a lot of energy and positive energy to effect change. When you're happy with yourself, you kind of want other people to be happy too. You know, what is the saying? "Misery loves company." And it's true....But when you're really happy or empowered and confident, you help people, and you try to make things better, which is nice, and then you feel better about yourself, because you've helped other people, and it's a lovely chain of events.

Rachel, like Tanner, saw the power of personal authenticity in groups in making connections with people, that "if there's something so basic about me that I'm feeling all awkward about telling people, and then once I do tell people I don't know how they really feel about it, that's just like a block." She said it wasn't a big block, but is something that she thinks about, this relationship between identity and perceptions of others.

Some students, like Mary and Liam, tried out different involvements as a new student, searching for those experiences that allowed them to be fully present. Mary, having attended a private Catholic high school as one of the few African American students, wanted to connect to her racial identity in college, but found that integrating her racial identity and her identity as a sexual minority was difficult:

I never felt like I could be my full self.... So, I stopped going to the BSU and the ASA meetings, which I wanted to go to. I thought it would be good to connect with that side of me, but it just felt like if I can't connect with this side, too, then why should I even be going to these meetings, let alone be getting involved with any committees or anything like that that they had.

While she looked for involvements that embraced her whole identity, she did attribute improved leadership self-efficacy partially to her identity as a sexual minority.

I think that it has been very helpful because I've used that to put myself out there more, so I try to be as vulnerable as I can in any group setting or joining any groups, letting them know that this is a part of me, so that – it makes me more confident than if I'm already putting this very important part of my life out there

to anyone, so I think that helps to make me more confident when I'm working with different groups.

### *Personal Awareness and Empathy*

For some students, their gay, lesbian, or queer identities contributed to their development of personal awareness, including an increased ability to understand and appreciate different perspectives, a willingness to discuss uncomfortable topics, and more concern for others' wellbeing. Tanner suggested that being gay, for him and others, helped him become more comfortable talking about taboo topics like sexuality. He shared a story about this realization:

Someone yesterday was talking that said how being involved in the LGBT community has opened them up to a lot of different things and that they're very comfortable talking about issues that most people would find uncomfortable or taboo, whereas, you go to a queer meeting, and inevitably you're going to talk about sex in some form or another. It's usually what happens. But... that's because your identity is based around a sexual orientation. So like, sexuality is an inherent part of the conversation, which... gives gay people an advantage is that they are more comfortable and open about sexuality, and that you do get to be more open and talk about things that people have difficulty with.

Sam's experience was less driven by the fact of his gay identity and more about what he learned from being in the closet and from his Jewish heritage. When asked what influenced his self-confidence to engage in leadership, he said:

A lot of it does come from the experience of being in the closet...to be able to have an experience or a deep understanding of being the other or being left out or being uncomfortable or feeling like something isn't what it should be, has put things into focus for me. So, I do think that the experience of being a very conscious liver of being in the closet, and a very strong community history of the Holocaust and I had a very strong Jewish community, I think those two kind of past histories with the support I have always gotten, with a very supportive family and a very supportive community.

Liam's experiences as a sexual minority helped create empathy and a drive to create change for others, even when not related to LGBT issues. As a minority member

as a student of the University Senate (most members are faculty and staff), he worked for several years on the development of the “Good Samaritan policy” for the university:

I think my sexual orientation and... recognizing and being a minority has made me very empathetic toward... plight is not the right word....But about the experiences and sort of the difficulties that can be faced by different populations and minority individuals....I think it made me push harder because of the empathy that I developed for anyone who happens to be in a minority situation anywhere at any point in their lives. I just have a great deal of empathy. And I can understand where they're coming from. So I think it made me push harder for certain things.

Dexter, while speaking initially in the third person, shared his experience that being in the closet and how always watching his back made him a stronger person

I feel that it is such a complex experience growing up... constantly having to cover your back. All the lies, omissions, flat out lies. I feel like they force you to grow up and I feel like that's also a factor of...I'm saying that it... made me... a stronger person than I would have been otherwise....And it's like... now that I'm thinking about it, that actually does have a lot of effect in how I choose to engage myself. Also, I wouldn't be engaged in leadership, I don't feel like in college at all if it weren't for that... being gay.

Several students commented that they believe that in order to engage in leadership, it is important to have self-awareness. Kincade expressed that this self-awareness also affects the ability to provide guidance and support to others:

I feel like in general, to be a leader or to take on a leadership role, I feel like you have to be at least somewhat aware, self-aware and be comfortable with yourself. Because otherwise, I feel like you might have some anxiety about you know, being the face of something or... taking on a role where you're responsible for things and people look to you for guidance or answers or something like that, when you can't answer certain things for yourself. And... clearly you don't know everything. But I feel like you should at least know some basic stuff about who you are.

This self-awareness can also create a sense of resolution and determination about what is right and what is wrong. For a student like Tanner, his personal journey resulted in a demand for others to treat him fairly:

Yeah, I do think that being involved and growing in your self identity and awareness of who you are can only strengthen your resolve and your commitment to whatever cause you've attached yourself to, and that's – that's definitely been my journey through college, is becoming a very, albeit sometimes very strongly opinionated, strong-minded person, but I've used a lot of that to develop who I am and you know, I stand by what I feel strongly about, and I'm not going to back down on issues

### *Identity as Integral to Involvement*

Almost every student in the study was involved in LGBT-focused organizations during college and many of them described their identity as being integral to the kinds of involvements they had and the ways in which they engaged with others. Kincade shared that “it's hard to just kind of ignore” and JB commented that “I don't think anything I do at this point can really be separated from it.” Even when JB joined an organization not ostensibly about gay identity, it often ended up that way:

...most things have come to tie back into being queer. When I started getting involved with [organization name withheld], it was just on a poetry level. It wasn't on a queer level. But then I ended up organizing the queer poetry series. And in my other creative writing stuff, it was just creative writing. And then there was this hilarious moment my senior year where we had the awards ceremony for the literary magazine. And people who had won awards had to read. And it was just, like, Oh My God. This is happening. Everyone read. And there were all these stories about families or whatever. And I get up there. And I'm wearin' a friggin' suit. And I read this story that's about a woman who's having a lesbian affair.

Jorge, in considering his involvements, approached it more philosophically, wondering how what he did reflected who he was and how he could integrate his identity in these spaces:

When it comes to thinking about others that would be involved, I think for all of us in terms of when it becomes time for us to determine whether or not we can be leaders, we all have to first come to the stage of, do we feel comfortable with who we are? What groups are we going to affiliate ourselves with? What is the general theme of the things I am going to do in life, and how can I or, am I going to be able to integrate my identity in that life?

Kincade, following up that her identity as queer is “kind of hard to ignore,” also shared that because her queer identity is so integral to who she is, that it by necessity would shape her interactions with others:

Because... it’s always there and it’s always something I think about, whether it be in my interactions with... non-LGBT focused groups and about whether or not sort of make it an issue or not. You know?... But I seem to have a... more lasting connection to... LGBT related groups because it is such a strong part of who I am and how I identify...

Kincade has a unique story, majoring in a field, Mechanical Engineering, that rarely reflects her multiple identities – African American, female, queer sexual orientation, “gender queer” gender identity. Still, she found that her path to improved leadership self-efficacy grew through more engagement. Whether that is attributable to personal growth, a belief that others were more accepting, or if was related to the queerness itself was still unclear:

I think my level of involvement has increased as my... acceptance of queer identity and stuff has increased... So I think my growing acceptance of queerness has helped me, but I’m not sure whether it’s the queerness itself and being more comfortable with myself, or whether... noticing that other people are comfortable with me has helped. So I guess it’s probably a mixture of both, noticing that I could be myself and be... out and nobody really cares one way or the other. Sort of has given me more confidence to branch out into more leadership roles.

#### *Being Out Increasing Overall Self-Confidence*

While some students attributed greater involvement or improved self-efficacy to engage in leadership to their gay identities, for others, it was not about being gay per se or not only about being gay, it was about being out. For Jorge, being out “just has added to my confidence in all these positions.” Rachel was clear that “this isn’t really about being gay,” and described the experience of coming out as follows:

When I finally came out to people just like – when I got to the point that most people who...really know me know I’m gay, it was like this huge weight was

lifting off my shoulders and I just became more confident because... I wasn't being cornered into this role of being with guys, and I am who I am, and it's whatever... but that's not really me being lesbian making me more confident. That's... me being out made me more confident.

Mary saw her involvements across the board increase after she starting coming out and that being out "leads to the confidence."

That helped me to get my identity and helped me to work on different things, getting involved in that first, that led to other opportunities, like the RA position, Peer Leadership Counsel, other things that I started saying, "Oh, this connects here. Let me see how I can work with that."... Well, and in just looking back, I feel like the more and more I was able to say who I was, the more and more I felt like I could relate to people – the more I felt like I could be more out there with being involved in the leadership part of things,

### *Comfort Leads to Greater Involvement*

Many students negotiated their involvements in a search to find a comfortable and welcoming space. Naturally, this led many of them to organizations focused on LGBT-issues. Liam made the conscious decision to limit his involvements to spaces where he could be open after he was hesitant during some initial involvements as a first-year student from a rural part of the state:

Every space that I've been in, I've been out – every organization that I've been a part of has been an organization that I've been comfortable being out and sort of being open. And I wouldn't choose to put myself in an organization that I wasn't able to do that in.

Tanner, highly involved in Spectrum, also found that greater leadership self-efficacy bled into his other major involvement in the martial arts group:

I'm the president of [organization name withheld], which is so completely removed from being president of Spectrum, but it's definitely transferred into a general, like leadership quality... where you're confident about yourself and if you're comfortable with yourself, it affects other people. When you're comfortable with yourself and confident in who you are, other people pick up on that and... people will respect you for it. So it helps in all aspects of life.

Dean found that as he became more comfortable in his identity, he got more involved and was more willing to push out of his comfort zones. He proudly shared:

It just made me think, really think about why I did some of the things I've done, and just see how comfortable with myself as a gay man just or as a person in general, how that's moved forward and how it's let me... do different things and how I see things differently and allow my leadership to expand to a point where I'm going to be throwing myself into a whole new situation and out of comfort zones and this and that.... I have to take pride in some sort of growth there.

Shortly after our interviews, Dean left for a semester to study abroad. He commented that he hopes his willingness to move out of his comfort zones, "will make me more confident and be able to explore things I never knew I was interested in before or leadership strategies that I may have seen as intimidating or not my style, but be able to at least see the merits of that."

#### *Visibility and Value*

For some students in the study, the element of being gay that affected their leadership self-efficacy was not about being gay or being out, but was being visible or valued. JB, for instance, who identifies with a queer sexual orientation and a gender queer gender identity, had thought a great deal about what it means to visible to others in her queerness:

I think there definitely have been confidence-related challenges particularly at the times when I perceived myself to be more visibly queer. Especially when I'm involved in leadership areas that aren't either LGBT related or sort of segregated-ish in the LGBT community because when I'm in a room full of queer people, I'm fine, whatever.

While often these moments of questioning are only moments and not indicative of a larger concern about self-confidence to engage in leadership, they do point to the value of visibility. More often than not, JB found herself rising to the challenge:

I ran an open mic on campus and I hosted that open mic. Every time I hosted that open mic, not every time but often when I was in that space, I was like, “Okay, how are people perceiving me? Do I wanna go up to the mic because I look like a dyke? Whatever.” I think it’s in some ways it’s been a challenge because of that. In some ways because it is a challenge, there’s the sort of calling to rise to that challenge. I’ve become more confrontational but sort of force yourself more out there to do more because it is a challenge.

### *Supportive Infrastructures*

The participants also described the support they experienced through the infrastructures, resources, and networks that were available to them as they engaged in leadership, often as it related to their sexual orientations and personal identities. JB easily identified offices and academic experiences that supported her through some potential struggles:

But I think the awesome thing about being able to be a college student is that so much of that journey has been... supported by academic study. And I think the combination of exposure to queer theory or LGBT material and in my college courses combined with supportive infrastructure, like having the MICA office [Multicultural Involvement and Community Advocacy Office] especially, having the LGBT studies folks....if they had not existed, I probably would’ve floundered a lot.

Tanner, like JB, was also highly involved in Spectrum and part-time employment in the MICA office on campus. The presence of a staff member dedicated to addressing LGBT issues created an environment of support that allowed him to develop natural partnerships with visitors to the office and challenge him to think about things as a leader:

I’ve definitely did a lot of that last year with [name withheld], because I’d come to him with some issue that Spectrum is facing and he would always say like, ‘Okay, well, how would you think of it? How would you respond? Think about these different groups and the people that you’re involved with.’ So, he really made me think a lot. Which was really helpful. So, MICA has been a tremendous resource with other people.

Mary was one of the only students of color in her high school and found a great deal of support from the dean of her high school. After entering college, she knew that this was of value to her and sought these supportive resources and networks out for herself. She sums up her experiences as follows:

When I think of [college name] I think of just a huge support network for me anywhere I wanted – any place I’ve been involved in some way, I’ve tried to build good connections with people in certain ways, and they have, in return, supported me in different ways, too. So, I feel like [college name] in general, this network here – I feel bad when we ask questions in dialogue circles for PLC [Peer Leadership Council] to our students, “Do you feel like you have support here at [college name]?” And a lot of people say no. They don’t have any connections. I feel like I got so involved; that has been so good here for me. That’s something I’ve really valued.

#### *Worth of Sexual Orientation Identity*

Students in this study also found that environments that affirmed their sexual orientation, provided safety and support, and allowed them to be fully present in their identity, also contributed to their leadership self-efficacy development. Some students sought out involvement in LGBT-focused organizations for these reasons, but these were equally important in their involvement in other groups and organizations. Liam summarized this idea when he stated:

So I think a key part of it is just sort of those spaces – knowing that you’re going to be okay in those spaces. If you step up and take a leadership role, you’re not gonna be – nobody’s gonna be playing “smear the queer” with you behind your back....You become part of organizations where you feel comfortable and where you know you’re going to be accepted for who you are.

Mary did point out that her involvement in LGBT-focused organizations provided a different kind of support. There was an unspoken understanding of who she was and this led directly to greater comfort, greater involvement, and greater investment.

There was a different comfort level in those organizations. So... it was so good to not have to explain too much to people and just have that space that felt safe, so I

could just – after not having to deal with that and not having to think about it too much, it’s like, “Oh, then I can be my real self or come as a whole person,” if that makes sense. That’s where I had all my friends. I felt very safe in that space to become more active. I saw places where we weren’t doing too well, like people of color weren’t really out there much, so wanting to make sure that I was maybe a figure to do that was really important for me.

Jorge had a part-time position at a large retailer when he was in high school. He was only out to a few individuals at that time, but discovered that there were a number of gay individuals who worked at his store. When he came out in that space, he found that he could more fully embrace his identity and be his true self:

I feel like it made me very comfortable with just my personality and just the way I was. I’m very outgoing and I’m just happy and things like that. And I feel like me not being out I might have thought, “Oh, maybe I’m being too feminine, maybe I’m being too forward with people, they’re getting the wrong idea,” and things like that but I think that for in my mindset, me knowing that other people knew was kinda the cushion for me to be the way I was in a sense.

#### *General Leadership Self-Efficacy Support*

Every participant, when asked what contributed to or diminished the process of developing their self-efficacy to engage in leadership, spoke about the importance of the support of others. Elements of positive support ranged from encouragement, role modeling, investment of efforts, deep and broad involvements, and the confidence gained from working positively in relationships with others. In this section, I will share the students’ rich language to illustrate each of these elements more fully.

#### *Encouragement*

Encouragement shows up in a variety of ways, from suggesting that someone might be good at something, or offering an opportunity, or letting someone know you believe in them. For the participants in this study, encouragement was a powerful positive influence on the process of leadership self-efficacy development. For some, like Tanner,

it was simple words of encouragement. He shared, “People just like said, ‘Oh, you should be involved.’ And, I just thought, ‘hey, okay, why not? This is something that maybe I can be good at.’ And, I was. So, it was great.”

Like Tanner, encouragement for Mary manifested itself through recognition of her talents, along with additional opportunities to engage in leadership. For Mary, this was particularly profound in learning more about leadership for women:

Having support around me from everything that I’ve gotten involved in, people saying, “I see that you’re good at this; you should do this more,” or people give me outlets to be myself... has bolstered that self confidence because... you know, I took a women’s leadership class, women in general - self confidence is something we kind of lack, and I still think that I’m working on that too. So just having the resources of people around you who believe in you has been huge.

Rachel sometimes judged the sincerity of the message, but would not deny that compliments created confidence for her:

People are always saying I’m a really good leader. That makes me feel more confident. Sometimes I wonder if they’re just saying that because they know that I’m willing to do things.... Like – you know what I mean? That sounds really romantic, but really it’s a lot of shit work – it’s a lot of work. And so some – I don’t know. I really – I don’t want to, like, put these things on people – when people compliment me, I feel more confident.

Encouragement through opportunity was echoed by Kincade, who offered that positive feedback when coupled with additional opportunities gave evidence that she had something special to offer:

Having feedback from other people is always good... like when you’re doing something and people consistently choose you as... the captain or leader or something like that. You begin to think, well, maybe there’s something that I’m doing right or capable of that makes me have good leadership qualities.

Liam, through finding his confidence raised by the encouragement of others, recognized that this was a skill that he could also offer to others:

I also feel like I do a pretty good job of... positive re-enforcement and... letting people who I'm leading know that they're doing a good job and giving constructive and positive feedback so that they feel like they're valued and their work is valued. Because I think that's one of the most important things that you have to do as a leader is make sure that everyone else feels that they're important and they're being valued.

JB's comments about encouragement support Kincade's. JB had a greater belief in her ability to succeed at a task when someone praised her or singled her out for an opportunity or honor:

I think what bolsters my self-confidence is... being asked to do things or being – I don't know if praise is the word. I really enjoy when people come to me and say, "JB, you have to do this. You're the only one who can do it. You're so good at it." And I'm like, "Okay, great. I can do that."

Encouragement was not solely limited to a specific task or a specific opportunity.

Regular encouragement, like that experienced by Jorge, helped create a greater sense of overall leadership self-efficacy:

People always told me that I was very good at that so I thought I was very good so I thought, "Why – I can apply this to every situation," and then in high school I was very big in student government organization.

### *Role Models*

Many of the students found themselves surrounded by individuals they could look to for guidance and support. While often sources of encouragement, those individuals were also role models to the participants in this study about how to engage in leadership, sometimes directly related to their sexual orientation identity.

Sam, from a very early age, received messages of support from his father about the value of honesty and open communication:

Whether it's my dad who's been incredibly open with me since a very young age, and just from that point valuing honesty, and just knowing that there's no topic that's embarrassing to talk about. And, there's no topic that shouldn't be talked about. And, you know we weren't one of those families where there were taboos.

Sam also shared that his father role modeled how to interact with other people, helping Sam, even as a child, interact with others in a more adult manner. This had long-lasting implications, both in behavior and in beliefs about the values of leadership and inclusion:

So, that kind of set me up for being able to talk with anyone about anything, and that's kind of definitely been a foundation for what I view leadership as. To be able to adapt to different people, to... not exclude anyone in any kind of creative process or any kind of process at all.

For Jorge, the role modeling that came from his father provided a mirror for Jorge to consider his own talents and ambitions:

My dad was very influential and he was always a very big leader at every job that he ever worked at. He only got his bachelor's degree when he was like 38 or something like that.... I don't even know how old I was but he was just finishing his graduate degree and he had already been making hundreds of thousands of dollars working as director of some – so, I was like, “If he can do it why can't I?”

Several students shared stories about particular individuals outside their families who were their role models. Tanner was effusive in his praise of another student who was president of a student organization the year before he held that position and who continued in the organization through his leadership. Her presence, experience, and advice were invaluable to him. He also talked about another former student, saying, “She was always someone who I went to, like any problem I had, personal, professional, like I would go to [name withheld] and she was like my campus mother for a long time. She was great. She would be such a source of comfort and help me to grow as a person.”

Tanner's role model was also gay, and the importance of role models that reflect personal identity was shown through other participants' stories as well. Mary, who is pursuing her graduate studies, commented about the role models for her in the field and in the Resident Life staff on her campus:

We're just full of so many people who aren't just a cookie cutter White male or what you might think of in society. So that was so helpful. In my own community, I had three RDs [Resident Directors] who were defined as gay, and then my CD [Community Director] was also gay. I'm like, this is amazing. I felt so comfortable. It was a comfort piece. So... that helped me to also get involved even more, knowing that I had people that knew what I was going through or could connect in some deeper way with me, facing my sexual identity.

### *Investment of Others*

Self-efficacy was built not only through the words of others or observing the behaviors of others. It was also grown through the direct involvement and investment of others in the work of these participants. Participants, having described leadership as a process involving relationships, reiterated this by pointing out the importance of a group experience in building their personal efficacy for leadership.

Dexter, very involved on campus in both a leadership council and as a Resident Assistant, said that for both experiences, “engaging in leadership is – not easier, but, like, it’s less stressful when you have more people for support....You know, there’s always that support system and I feel like the support system gives you the confidence to do that.”

Dean spoke about the experience of working together with others, collectively invested in the experience. He shared, “I like to think I have a part in shaping that culture and making that belief come true.” Dean contrasted his experiences in one student organization with another, pointing out how important investment was to him and how, even after a short period of time, he likes the new brand of leadership he is engaged in:

I feel better about my [organization name withheld] leadership now because... we are a tight-knit group, we're friends outside the group, whereas class council, we meet and do our stuff and that's it. We're not really friends, friends outside the group. So even the month and a half I've been in – I've had a position in [organization name withheld]- I feel really good about that as opposed to my time in class council. Which I – of course I had moments where I was pleased by that

but already I'm very, I like that. I like my [organization name withheld] leadership. More so than my class council one already.

Similar to her experiences with role models, Mary saw value in working with others who shared parts of her identity and could help her find the connection between who she was and what she was involved in:

I was trying to figure that out about myself, too, because the influence of my identity and me growing in that way was really big, too, at that time. It was a whirlwind in as much as I could get involved in, wherever I could place my hand in something – people who were around who were influential at the time – definitely a lot of people like [names withheld] and the RDs in my area. Because they were LGBT, for me, that was awesome. I was like, “Wow, I have people that understand what I’m going through and they’re in these positions and they’re influencing students, too. This is obviously something I can be doing more of.”

#### *Positive Relationships with Others*

The participants in this study put a great deal of value in having positive relationship with the individuals in their organizations and commented on how these relationships bolstered their self-efficacy to engage in leadership. While accomplishment was also important, Dean gave a great deal of credence to the simple power of a positive attitude:

I like being liked or like when people smile at me at least, even if they don't like me, if they're smiling, that's fine. That's what I like to see. So I try to – when people will give me energy back, that's what bolsters me. So, for example, even if... everyone is smiling and talking at the meeting and nothing got done, as opposed to a meeting where no one said a word and everything got done, I would still feel, I mean in the end, probably the latter would be my ultimate, but at least immediate serving goals.

#### *Success*

Being successful in their endeavors, or feeling they had learned something through the efforts, also was positive to the participants' process of developing self-efficacy for engagement in leadership. Participants in this study were asked to identify

people, places, or events that had an effect on their leadership self-efficacy development and almost all of them spoke of their pride in a job well done.

The participant's positive feelings toward success was clear. Having a successful event, feeling like you made a positive impact, knowing that you learned something useful – each of these bolstered the students' development of leadership self-efficacy.

Dexter described his experiences:

And so during the conference and after the conference just our seeing the product of all of your work, the product of two months of work showing up in the November retreat that we just had at [ ]LC [[college name] Leadership Conference]. And it really makes you feel like you've done something because you're standing in the work you've done. And there hasn't been that negative energy around it. It's completely a positive experience I think.

Liam shared his experiences working through the red-tape of the university and feeling positive about the outcome:

I mean when things go correctly, when things work out well and there's a product that is without flaws I think that's certainly a good thing. And when, I think it's always a good thing if you're working in organizations like policy making organizations which I've done a lot. If after all of the bureaucracy goes through there's actually a final product that's always a fantastic sort of confidence boost.

Liam also offered that it is not just individual successes that bolster self-confidence to engage in leadership. It is also the cumulative effect of being able to balance multiple experiences successfully and commit to the things he really cared about:

But I would say part of it is, I'd done all these things. I've taken all of these classes. I can fit everything that I want to into my schedule. It's just a matter of how busy do I end up wanting to be. So I think just being able to do all of those things and handle jobs and extracurricular activities and academics, obviously, at the same time. And... as my involvement got... heavier. And I started doing more and more things. Then I realized – especially, like, sophomore year, that I could do all of these things. And junior year at the same time that... led into my senior year... booking myself into all of these organizations that I wanted to do – to be involved in before.

Rachel commented on how success can wash away personal doubt and how she judges herself on quantifiable metrics of success:

As far as... ability and skill is concerned, I don't doubt myself because I've seen results that, like, I get really good grades. I made this program go really well. I made that program go really well. So as far as, like, measurable evidence, I feel like that makes me confident.

Tanner attributed the success not only to a successful outcome, but to the success of the planning and effort involved to make an event happen. In addition, he recognized that success is cumulative and can be seen through organizational growth and increased involvement. His conception of success broadened:

Big confidence boost definitely, whenever we have a successful event. That's always a confidence boost. You come into these events, you can do all the planning in the world, but until you see everyone there having a good time, then you can finally sort of breathe a little bit....And, so seeing that and seeing the organization grow as a whole and have more people involved and interested and taking leadership positions, is a continuing affirmation that what I'm doing matters and is effective.

The participants each had their own interpretations of success, from an event going well, seeing the growth in others, recognizing that success breeds greater confidence to be more involved, or simply feeling good about the outcome. The positive effect of a job well-done was almost universal among participants.

### *Success as Transferable*

Many of the participants spoke about how success or failure made them feel in the moment or how it affected the development of their leadership self-efficacy, but some also commented how success over time contributed to success in multiple areas of their lives.

Tanner saw the transferability of his success as president of his martial arts organization and his personal martial arts accomplishments to his work with the Spectrum:

It's made me more effective as a leader. Because [organization name withheld] is a different kind of hands-on, it's not so much planning speakers and big social events...And, so I'm constantly being challenged. And, it's physically and mentally demanding. And... it sort of has gone hand-in-hand with my leadership experience in Spectrum, being president of both at the same time has, it's helped me be a lot more confident in myself and people have told me that. They said, "You seem like you're really comfortable being in charge and you know what you're doing." Which is useful to know what you're doing and to be confident, because it helps as a leader. You know, because I think that there has been a lot of connection. In [organization name withheld], the more I learned in my own martial arts training, the more I've done, the higher rank I've gotten, has translated into all other aspects of my life as you're just more confident and it shows in anything you're doing.

#### *Deep and Broad Involvement*

The participants in this study, to a person, were deeply involved in multiple organizations on campus. While many of them engaged in some organizations more than others or were more briefly involved in some and more substantially than others, each of the participants found organizations where their involvement was more than cursory. Their involvement was long-term, deeply engaging, and personally meaningful to them. The opportunity to engage fully contributed to their leadership self-efficacy development in ways that would likely not have been possible with brief, passing involvements.

JB dismissed the idea that the development of leadership self-efficacy was a natural product of maturation. She saw development as a product of involvement:

Well, I mean, I think that it's not inherently going to happen. But I don't think that if a senior gets involved in leadership they will be a good leader because they are a senior. I think that if a freshman gets involved in leadership, by the time they are a senior, they might have some idea of what they are doing.

Liam has worked for a number of years with a state-wide leadership development program for middle school and high school youth and attributes a great deal of his growth to involvement in that program. In college, he is also an editor for the student newspaper after having worked with the paper for a long period of time:

I think that's a large part because I've been involved in the organization for many, many years, and many, many different roles. I've taken a lot of risks. And they've paid off. They turned out well. Even when they haven't, people have been supportive. So I think that's probably the most important one. In college, the most important one at this point – or the place where I feel – I think – most confident is sort of is at the [student newspaper] at this point....and at the [student newspaper] where I know everything, I'm aware of what's going on. I know all the rules and regulations. I'm working with other students....and I've been able to utilize all the experiences that I've had in the past in different organizations, both in college and out. I'm able to utilize that to lead people who work for me, with me, and stuff like that.

Dexter, through his involvements in facilitating dialogues at multiple leadership conferences, like the [event name withheld] multicultural leadership retreat, saw that there was a cumulative effect for him from his efforts:

I feel like maybe some things have been built upon.... [event name withheld] was amazing this year by the way. I learned a lot from it.... like these themes are becoming so much more apparent and obvious, especially as I direct my life more towards certain fields. Like building efficacy through facilitating conversations. That has been really strong for me.

Sam also recognized that self-efficacy built in one environment can be applied to new settings. He was clear that the skills may be different and that the situation changes, but because he had been broadly exposed to a diversity of working environments, he felt confident that he could adapt and succeed anywhere:

I'm fairly confident saying that most environments I can still get stuff done in. And, feel comfortable in most environments. I can go from [organizational name withheld] or I can go from a Jewish Community, a Jewish day school, where everyone's upper middle-class-White person, and then I can be thrown into a township in South Africa, like where every single person's Black and I'm the only person who's White. And, I can, have work with the language barrier in Tanzania,

and I can work in environments that people are driven, versus environments where people really have absolutely no passion for what it is that I want to get done. And, so I've learned that each scenario is different, and I can't go in, thinking, "oh, this is how I did it here and that's how I'm gonna do it here." That each new opportunity that I take on, I take on as fresh and work with it that way.

Jorge felt that his ability to be a constant presence in an organization gave him more confidence to speak up and have his voice heard, and while he may have been able to succeed at the task as a new student, the ability to work interpersonally with others had been expanded:

Because I feel like I have more of a presence here and I'm more – I have a lot more friends. I have a lot more supporters. People when you're a freshman, it's kinda like, "Who's this guy?" And now it's kinda like, "Oh, that's Jorge. I see where he's coming from." Like, for example, yesterday, we had a very big junior class council event, and freshman year, I don't know if I would be able to pull off – like I'd probably do it operationally, but then, thinking about like getting there and talking to people, and doing the whole socialization thing, I don't think I can do it.... And now it's kinda like, "Think what you think. I kinda got this, so," and I kinda feel that way about all my things.

#### *Mitigators to Development of Leadership Self-Efficacy*

Many of the students were able to describe the ways that being gay, lesbian, or queer had a positive effect on the development of their leadership self-efficacy and were able to describe how support, involvement, success helped develop leadership self-efficacy. But, they were also able to describe how being gay, lesbian, or queer sometimes had little or no relationship to their confidence to engage in leadership. Some of the reasons they provided include a confidence to engage in leadership that predated either coming out or involvement in LGBT organizations, an integration of their leadership and sexual orientation identities prior to college, a compartmentalization where they perceived the situation to have little or nothing to do with their sexual orientation, or a

belief that other issues played a much more salient role in the development of leadership self efficacy.

### *Confidence Came First*

Some of the students described themselves as natural leaders, or as having a “leadership personality” and considered their self-confidence for engagement as well-ingrained before college or before involvement in LGBT organizations or before coming out. JB, for instance, described herself as being “politically involved before even realizing like a queer identity.”

Tanner said that his friends and his parents have always thought of him as “a leadership type,” exhibiting charisma and high self-confidence. He felt good about himself and found ease in speaking his mind:

I'm pretty confident in myself and my ideas, sometimes to a fault I guess....So there's a lot of – what I like to say is my strength – is – I had one of my teachers in high school said that I was brutally honest, which I guess is true, in that I will say what's on my mind....So... I grew to be very confident in myself, which is a gift. A lot of people don't get that for a long time, and I was fortunate enough to form opinions about myself pretty early on and I liked those opinions so I stuck with it.

Sam grew up with a strong role model in his father and learned a great deal about interacting with others through watching his father. Treated as an adult at an early age and having frank and open conversations in his family, Sam learned valuable skills about adapting to different people, including multiple voices in the process of leadership, and how to have mature conversations with others:

So, that kind of set me up for being able to talk with anyone about anything, and that's... definitely been a foundation for what I view leadership as. To be able to adapt to different people, to... not exclude anyone in any kind of creative process or any kind of process at all. So, he was the first one probably.

Liam, while sharing examples of how his elements of his leadership self-efficacy were positively affected by his gay identity, also stated clearly that “I don’t necessarily see my self-efficacy and my gay identity as being linked.” The organizations he became involved in were related to his identity, but:

But I don’t necessarily think my self-confidence is because that started – I started doing leadership stuff well before I came out. So it was just sort of a natural progression from me going from leadership in high school to leadership in college.

Liam, having been highly involved in the coordination of a middle school and high school leadership program for the state and having been involved in student government since middle school, came to college with a great deal of leadership education and experience. He was going to be involved and engaged in leadership regardless of his gay identity:

I like being involved. That’s something that I enjoy doing and that I’ve been doing for a really long time, so I feel like it... I think that it is just sort of maturation, because I was always going to be in those roles.

In plain terms, Liam says that the way he leads for LGBT-focused groups and non-LGBT-focused groups is the same. He had been doing leadership in high school and college was just another environment to do it in:

Leadership for me is the same thing, regardless of who I am and where I am and sort of what I do and what type of leadership I practice – is... the same in every different organization. Obviously, I might play different roles. But the end result is the same thing....I was completely self-confident that I was able to accomplish anything I wanted to in the organization. So it was just, like, okay, this is fine. And I don’t think I carry myself differently or interact with people differently or plan differently in that organization than I would anywhere else.

Kincade has a similar experience as Liam. She felt her college involvement was a natural progression from the type of leadership she was engaged in during high school. Her involvements “translated” into the organizations she joined in college. Kincade did

not believe her self-confidence to engage in leadership is any different than non-gender queer individuals, sharing that “it’s just a matter of how prone you are to get involved in things period.”

Rachel grew up with a message from her family that “you are exceptional. You are better than those around you.” Rachel came to college not wanting to simply be in a group, but felt the need to be leading in some sense and felt like she wanted to be or should be working hard and putting herself out there. She entered college already self-efficacious in her ability to engage in leadership.

### *Identity Already Integrated*

For some students, their gay identity was already integrated with other aspects of their identity or seen as “just a part of who I am” instead of the driver of their leadership self-efficacy. Jorge was out to most people in high school and at his part-time employment, so came to college with the attitude that he was going to be authentically and fully himself:

I was comfortable with that and then when I came to college, I decided that before I transitioned from that, oh I’m not really gay, then I am gay, I am just going to be gay to everyone at first and then I was comfortable with that stage....So, I feel like now I am a confident leader and I have had experiences that help me support that and I am able to also, in my leadership, integrate my identity when needed or when I feel comfortable.

Jorge’s high school experience was very “high profile,” as he described it. All the teachers at his school knew he was gay, as well as his friends. Slowly, many of his male friends also came out as gay, helping him find support in a common experience. Jorge’s attitude was:

“I’m gay, so what? Let’s move on with life.” I’ve never really in any leadership role I’ve had, I’ve never been a person to really promote my sexuality above my

responsibilities in that respective position. So I've never... at my first meeting with people been like "yes I'm Jorge and I'm gay." I've never done that.

Tanner shared that, "I don't think that my identity was or who I am was so much based on being a gay man. I think it's just like it's just another aspect of me. It's like, well, I'm a lot more than just that. That's just one part, integral part of myself that it just is." Tanner believed that his gay identity is usually not very central to his leadership:

It's a non-issue to a point where... I even forget that it is an issue. That I forget that it's not either the norm or statistically the norm or whatever terms you wanna use, and then something'll happen where I'm reminded, 'Oh, yeah.' And, that will... come up again. But, it really, with my family, with my friends, with everyone I interact with, because the way I approach it, is completely a non-issue. Which I really very much so like.

Kincade shared that she "had already pretty much come to terms with my identity by the time that I really started getting involved in groups" in high school. She shared the following about her experience before her junior year:

By then, I had already sort of figured it out and come to terms with it. I sort of started figuring things out in 9th and 10th grade. Well, figured it out and was scared 9th grade and then was okay with it by 10th grade, and then by 11th grade it wasn't a big deal to me or anyone else apparently.

### *Self-Efficacy as Situational*

For some students in the study, even when out to almost everyone in their lives or heavily involved in LGBT organization, being gay became a non-issue if the group or organization they were engaged with wasn't about their identity or identity seems less central to their role. Dean, while out and comfortable in his sketch comedy group, did not feel the same need in his involvement with Class Council and thought of his gay identity as almost inconsequential:

Yeah, I really don't... recall any sort of connection there necessarily. Just besides the initial, little more business oriented and whereas with [organization name withheld] and orientation, it was share more, so we're more friends and

everything, and... Class Council never really hung out outside, which may be because I viewed it as a place where we got stuff done and that was kind of it.

Liam was involved in the University Senate and while he did describe his desire to make a difference and support the issues of minorities as taking place in that setting, he was not out in that space.

The senate, absolutely not because it has almost nothing to do with – I really just don't see those – the senate especially as not being a space where that even comes up. It's just very rules, procedures. We go through these things. We vote. We have very strict procedures about what committee chairs are allowed to do, which... hindered my ability to really do anything when I was a chair last year or even as a normal senator. It was just you show up at meetings.

Similar to his experience in the student government on campus, Liam did not question his ability to engage in leadership, nor was his leadership self-efficacy negatively affected by these experiences. They were just not settings where anyone talked about their personal lives. Overall, Liam found that campus was a “much more liberal” and accepting environment and offered that “I don't know [that] my sexual orientation really played a whole lot in how my confidence as a leader.”

Even though Jorge came to college out to almost everyone and made an early decision to stay out, this did not always translate into being out in every setting, particularly when he did not see it as relevant to the position he held. Jorge was in a student supervisor position in the Department of Transportation Services (DOTS) and shared his impressions of that workplace:

I think an element, for me, of being a leader is... selectively applying elements of my personal life into the things that I do on a daily basis. So, at DOTS, that has never been a situation. Because it's such a process-y environment and there's such a very – we kind of abide by a lot of rules, and we have a goal each day, day to day, what we do. I don't think I'm in a role that needs to... tell people about who I am. We do a lot of paperwork, and permits, and things like that. We don't talk about student conduct or student interaction and things like that.

In general, Jorge's responsibilities "as a person in terms of finances, or for my family, or obligations in my positions and responsibilities in that, like they've always held precedent over elements of my identity." This compartmentalization can be seen in the contrasting experience Jorge had as a Resident Assistant on campus. Being out in that position seemed relevant to the relationships he had with his residents

But this year, I kinda integrate myself more like even when they're going out, I'll like stick around them, see them get ready, talk a little bit about their drama and things like that. And like listen to their gossip, contribute a little bit, talk some crap, but – and I feel more – maybe I feel more comfortable doing that knowing that they're not gonna be like, "So, Jose, do you go out with like – and hang out with the ladies blah, blah, blah?"

### *Saliency of Other Identities*

The students in this study came from a wide variety of backgrounds and represented a range of races and religious traditions. When they spoke about what influenced their self-efficacy to engage in leadership, they often shared stories that showed that their gay identity was just part of the picture, and sometimes not the primary part.

Rachel described the things she consciously called upon to assist her in leadership as her "mental toolbox," which is not defined by her lesbian identity:

What I consciously use when I'm deciding what to do, and... when I make decisions, what are the things I think about? One might think about their religion, the people that are important in their lives, what they would think. One might try to reason things out, one might think about their queerness and I don't think about that that much. And this has made me realize that, which is really funny because I always assumed that it would be or that it was.

Rachel shared that being a lesbian is a substantive part of who she was, but if she were to write a list of her identities, it wouldn't be at the top. She is more likely to think of Jewish values when thinking about being a good leader and commented that when thinking about

queer values, “I don’t even know what that would really be.” Even as a student involved in queer advocacy work, her leadership is not driven by her sexual orientation identity. In fact, she shared that “there is really, honestly, nothing I can think of that I would like to be doing right now that I don’t want to or don’t think I could do because I’m out.”

Sam offered that his gay identity has a lot of value in his leadership and that he would be a “completely different person if I did not have that experience or that aspect in my life,” but sees that development as only a part that shares space with other aspect of identity, such as his Jewish identity:

It’s just a part of my life. So it’s not that I’m a gay leader or a gay person, I’m a person and there are different parts of my life that affect who I am. And I’m lucky that I’ve had this experience that’s definitely had a huge impact in my life, and I’m going to give it credit, that I absolutely identify and acknowledge how much of an impact that’s had on my life....And I know that if I didn’t have that aspect of my life, I’d probably be a lesser person. But at the same time, it’s only a part of me.

Sam believed it was the narrative of his personal history as a whole that contributed to his leadership self-efficacy and that his gay identity could not be parceled out as having a particularly unique contribution.

I view it less as you know, “Oh, that’s the gay part of me that’s making me do this,” and more as, “we all have our own personal history and we’ve all had experiences that have affected us and that’s one of them.” So, so many other instances in my life have also affected my confidence and my passions and my desire, and my ability to lead.

For Dean, it was less about another aspect of identity being salient and more about the interpersonal dynamics of relationships driving his self-efficacy for leadership. As he gained more confidence in his friendships and his relationships with others, he felt more confident to engage in leadership with others.

## Pushes to Lower Self-Efficacy

The participants, in addition to feeling the benefits of encouragement, role modeling, and positive relationships with others, also felt the sting of criticism, lack of investment by others, and discrimination.

### *Active Criticism*

Criticism provided obstacles to the process of developing leadership self-efficacy. Kincaide described feedback as a double-edged sword, where encouraging words are welcome but, “if people continuously tell you that you suck as a leader, then you might start thinking I could quite possibly suck as a leader.” Liam, in his effort to create positive relationships with those he works with, took criticism to heart:

I try to give positive feedback to them and I hope they give positive feedback to me as well as constructive feedback. But when it’s just much more adversarial between those two things that sort of makes me feel less confident about what I’m doing and not want to do it.

JB echoed this sentiment, suggesting that extreme criticism, although in her example unrelated to her sexual orientation, especially when it’s not constructive, has led her to think, “Well, maybe I should just quit then you can do it,” would be the solution to the issue.

Dexter, who earlier described his positive experience in one organization with a great deal of investment, also experiences the reverse with a different group on campus:

If you have people helping you, then it makes – it brings the task down a bit. It’s not so momentous. So I feel like that was a problem with Spectrum. I guess Spectrum would be an example for where that wasn’t happening. Where we had – it wasn’t really delegation. We were trying to work together, but we would always end up delegating the responsibilities.... You’re treasurer, go pay for this, but don’t help with anything else I guess.

Dean had a similar experience working with one of his organizations, making him question not only others' skills and abilities, but his own aptitude for leadership:

The thing that really would get me down about Class Council was when people would stop showing up at meetings. I understand people are busy, but exception of not responding to emails and it really made me question whether it was something I was doing, which is possible, me and the rest of the exec board, or whether it was just people get busy and stuff like that.

Tanner, having struggled with his own abilities to accomplish all the tasks associated with coordinating a major event in a mistaken belief that it was better to do it all himself, came to terms with the notion that he, too, had a responsibility to invest in others to build their leadership self-efficacy and support the organization:

Because if you don't give other people opportunity to do what they are good at, then they're not gonna grow and your organization or your corporation or whatever you're working for, isn't going to succeed because eventually they're gonna graduate. So if I'm not helping people step into leadership roles, then the organization's going to disappear.

Only one participant in the study spoke about the influence of direct discrimination. While isolated, Jorge's experience illustrates how harmful acts or words from others can harm self-efficacy for leadership:

Things that knock down my confidence... would be just different barriers because of my identity... because sometimes because I'm dark skinned, people don't necessarily appreciate hearing direction from people that are different from them or because I'm gay. That really has never come up here but in high school, I remember I was walking through the hallway once with my president fleece [item of clothing], all cool, and then some kid yells "faggot" at me or something like that.

### *Perceived Failure*

The trajectory of the participants' process was not always positive. As the students built their leadership self-efficacy, they were led to balance success with failure and were challenged when things did not go as planned or hoped. Kincade put it plainly

when asked what influenced her development of self-confidence to engage in leadership: “Prior leadership experiences, I think. You know, when things go badly, you sort of question yourself. When things go well, you get more confidence... That seems to be the sort of balancing act.”

Dean describes this push and pull of success and failure related to his ability to commit to his involvements fully given his plans to study abroad, especially as it related to his ability to provide a consistently successful product:

I guess feeling confident in what I’m able to produce for a semester reflects that because I would say this is probably like the least involved, activity-wise, I’ve been in college just because I was... pulling out of things because I’m studying abroad and there’s a lot of year-long things I haven’t been able to commit to, and transitioning [organization name withheld] stuff and transitioning class council stuff. So I would say that’s maybe brought things down a little bit but other things have brought it up. So that’s been another factor, just production value, I guess, to put a label on it.

JB was able to put success and failure into context for herself, remembering why she was involved or what her goals were and not letting individual successes or failures let her lose sight of the bigger picture:

And I don’t think you even need to really be successful. I feel like I have failed miserably at probably the vast majority of things that I have attempted to do. Maybe not miserably, but if I decided to quit trying if every time two people came to a Spectrum event, then the Spectrum would be even more screwed. And like this whole grad school thing, it’s like I’m applying again, even though this has been like the most miserable experience of all time. But I have to remember that I’ve applied for scholarships before and not gotten them, and then applied the next year and gotten them, or sometimes I just don’t get it. But, it’s worth continuing to try. Because that’s something I want to do.

Rachel placed her failure into the context of the former person in her position, who she saw as more successful. While she saw that the responsibility did not lie solely with her, the impact was still personally felt. Commenting on an event with low turnout, she offered:

And part of me – it’s not like it makes me feel totally crappy about my leadership abilities, but it makes me doubt myself a little, yeah, because, yeah, it just didn’t – people were expecting something, people on the board. With that said, I was one of two or three board members who were at the event. People couldn’t really blame me for things going wrong. In that one instance... a bunch of things went wrong and I don’t think it was my fault necessarily, but I didn’t do anything awesome like [name withheld] had done, apparently, to make all these people come.

Rachel felt an obligation to do a good job, and it shows in her comments when things go well, too. She stated, “People I know came out of them saying, ‘Yeah, that was awesome. I really gained a lot from that,’ and I felt really good about that. And it made me feel more confident in my leadership abilities.”

#### *Self-Efficacy Built from Self-Efficacy*

Participants in the study shared how involvements in one aspect of their college career translated to other involvements and how a greater sense of leadership self-efficacy overall helped them develop greater self-confidence to engage in leadership. Kincaid thought it was simpler than that, attributing some of her leadership self-efficacy to, “just general self-confidence I feel like probably helps because if you’re not confident in yourself to begin with, you probably wouldn’t be confident enough to take on a leadership role.” Liam saw his growth as a series of small successes building towards greater involvement and success:

So and I think – and as those happened on little, on small scale, and as you grow confidence, confidence just grows because, if you’re successful with something smaller, you take on something a little bit bigger, and then it just keeps growing and growing. And, if you keep being successful, you keep thinking that you’re fine.

Tanner believed that the growth in confidence he was experiencing working with the martial arts group had a direct relationship to his confidence in other areas. He shared, “the more I learned in my own martial arts training, the more I’ve done, the higher rank

I've gotten, has translated into all other aspects of my life as you're just more confident and it shows in anything you're doing."

Even when the tasks are seemingly very different, Tanner saw himself grow in multiple areas due to his self-confidence growing as a result of his martial arts involvement:

When you are comfortable throwing a tornado kick, you're comfortable filling out forms... you're more sure of yourself and... in [organization name withheld], my role has become someone where I'm teaching now.... I'm not just going there and learning from other instructors. I'm now one of the instructors. So, that's a leadership role that is constant and where you have to teach other people is really different than going and taking classes and that's spilled over into Spectrum where I have to teach people how to do things and how to approach different scenarios and how to do planning and logistics.

#### *Grounded Theory of Lesbian and Gay Leadership Self-Efficacy Development*

The theory that emerged from the participants' experiences (Figure 4.1) centers on the process of the development of self-efficacy to engage in leadership defined within the context of beliefs about the nature of leadership engagement. The self-efficacy of the students was increased by support, success, and deep and broad involvement, while decreased by perceived failure and active criticism. The students' gay, lesbian, or queer identities served to push them to higher self-efficacy for leadership or for mitigating reasons, had no discernable effect, according to the participants' stories. Sexual orientation served to bolster the development of self-efficacy for leadership engagement by broadening perspectives, improving relationships and comfort within groups, allowing the participants to bring their full selves to their experiences, improving personal awareness and empathy, and accessing supportive structures. Participants also shared that their identities were integral to their involvements, that being out increased their overall self-confidence, that greater comfort led to greater involvement, and that visibility and

voice were important to their leadership self-efficacy. Students also shared that their sexual orientations did not have an appreciable effect on their leadership self-efficacy when they already had a great deal of confidence to engage in leadership, when they had already integrated their sexual orientations, when they felt situations did not relate to their sexual orientations, or when the saliency of their sexual orientations was less prominent than other aspects of their personality or identity.

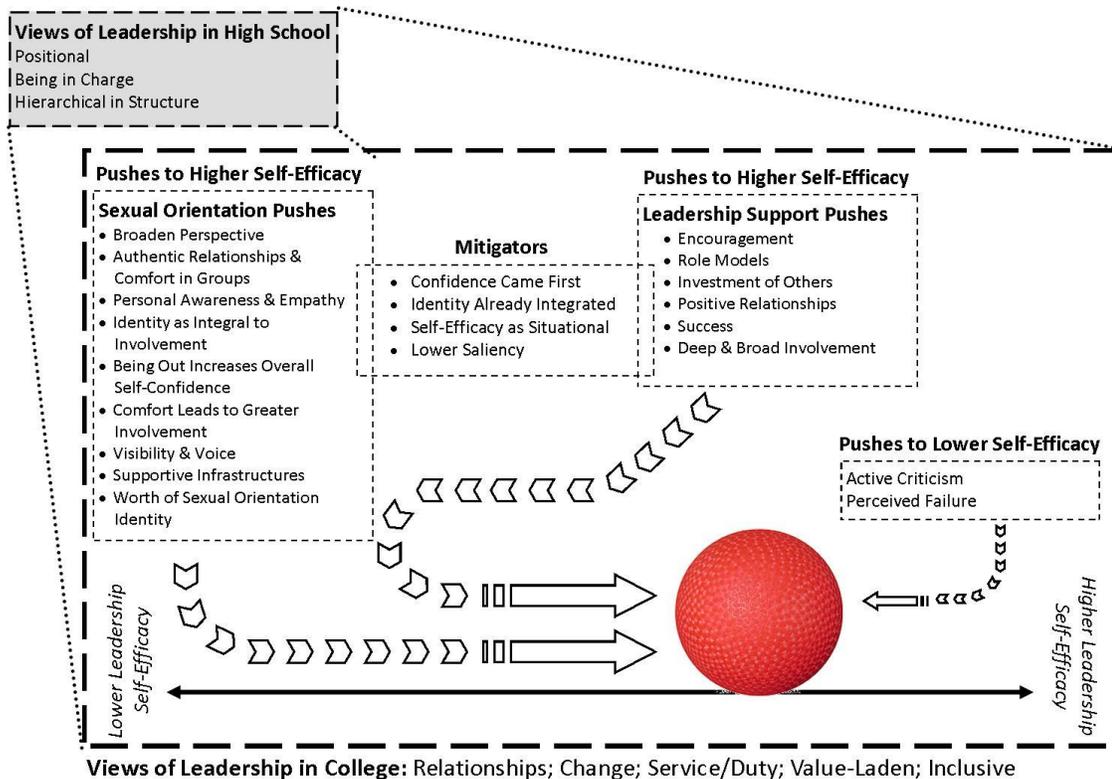


Figure 4.1: Grounded Theory of Lesbian and Gay Leadership Self-Efficacy Development  
*Views of Leadership*

The participants all experienced a paradigm shift in how they thought about leadership from high school to college. Many of their high school beliefs revolved around control, accomplishment, positional authority, and hierarchal structures. In college, they

came to experience and believe in leadership as relationships with others, as creating change, as service and duty to others, as based in values, and as inclusive. Their leadership self-efficacy developed in the contexts of these new beliefs about leadership. Greater self-efficacy to engage in meaningful relationships with others or higher self-efficacy to create inclusive spaces would be considered as increased self-efficacy to engage in leadership for these students.

#### *Sexual Orientation Pushes to Higher Leadership Self-Efficacy*

For the students in this study, their lesbian, gay, or queer identities for the most part pushed them to greater leadership self-efficacy. Their sexual orientations served to broaden their perspectives about the world, giving them insight into the experiences of minorities. It also improved their relationships and comfort within groups, which led to increased involvement on campus. Being out allowed them to bring their full selves to their involvements and increased their overall self-confidence. They commented that being lesbian, gay, or queer created empathy for the experiences of others and improved their personal awareness, making them more cognizant of who they were, which proved integral to the involvement choices they made in college. In addition, it created a greater understanding of the importance of visibility and voice and inclusion in groups and organizations. Their leadership self-efficacy was also positively affected by the presence of supportive infrastructures and when their sexual orientation identity was given worth by those around them.

#### *Leadership Support Pushes to Higher Leadership Self-Efficacy*

There were a number of general contributions to the development of the participants' self-efficacy to engage in leadership. These included the explicit verbal

encouragement of others, role models the students could look to for examples of leadership, the active investment of others in the work the students were doing, and positive relationships with other individuals in groups. Students also commented that being successful and having broad and deep involvements in groups contributed to their leadership self-efficacy.

#### *Mitigators to Pushes to Higher Leadership Self-Efficacy*

At the same time that most of the students shared examples of how they perceived that their sexual orientations and self-efficacy to engage in leadership were connected, students also shared examples of mitigating reasons why their leadership self-efficacy development was not related to their lesbian, gay, or queer identities. Some students commented that they have been confident to engage in leadership for a long time and this confidence pre-dates their development of an LGBT identity or involvement in LGBT organizations. For others, they had successfully integrated their sexual orientation identities and leadership identities in high school. Some students compartmentalized their leadership experiences and when the organization or setting was not explicitly about being LGBT, then their sexual orientation identities were not important to their confidence to engage in leadership. Finally, a number of students commented that there were other aspects of their identity that were more salient to their leadership self-efficacy development such as religion.

#### *Pushes to Lower Leadership Self-Efficacy*

As highly involved students, the participants had far fewer examples of issues that diminished their development of leadership self-efficacy or pushed them to lower levels of self-efficacy. The primary examples were contrasts of the positive elements. While

strong encouragement improved leadership self-efficacy, active criticism decreased it. While success bolstered leadership self-efficacy, failure dampened it. For the students, these pushes had much less impact, as the regular building of self-efficacy for leadership gave them the tools to place these dampeners in perspective and the inertia of the development of self-efficacy contributed to more self-efficacy development.

### *Summary*

The 10 students in this study (Dean, Dexter, JB, Jorge, Kincade, Liam, Mary, Rachel, Sam, and Tanner) each examined and explored their involvements in college in relationship to the process of developing self-efficacy to engage in leadership. Pushes to greater leadership self-efficacy were much more numerous than the pushes to lower leadership self-efficacy, providing a picture of highly involved students who grew through support, success, and deep involvement and whose sexual orientation identities gave them a wider, more opened, more self-aware, and more connected view of themselves, others, and society.

## CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the emerging theory of lesbian and gay leadership self-efficacy development outlined in the previous chapter in relation to the research questions that framed this study and the related literature, and addresses implications for research and practice. The chapter will finish with an examination of the strengths and limitations of this study.

### *Discussion of Emerging Theory in Relation to Research Questions*

The purpose of this study was to investigate the experiences of gay and lesbian college students engaged in leadership and the meaning they made of their leadership self-efficacy development, particularly as they related to their identity development and various environmental assisters and constraints. The following questions initially guided this study: (a) what influenced (either positively or negatively) these students' understanding of leadership or their self-confidence to lead or engage in leadership?; (b) what avenues of leadership (by type of organization, purpose of group, group membership, etc.) are most likely to bolster or diminish leadership self-efficacy?; and (c) Does the degree that the students are "out" influence their leadership self-efficacy? The intended outcome of this study was to create a theory grounded in the participants' experiences that addressed these questions and explored the process of leadership self-efficacy development.

*What influenced (either positively or negatively) these students' understanding of leadership or their self-confidence to lead or engage in leadership?*

For the students in this study, there were a range of issues influencing their self-efficacy to engage in leadership. As exemplars in leadership, these students exhibited a

wider variety of influences that contributed to the process of developing leadership self-efficacy and a smaller variety of negative influences. The positive influences included support from others, which took direct forms such as encouragement, positive relationships with others, and active investment of others, and less direct forms such as the presence of supportive infrastructures and role modeling from others. Support also came in the form of others showing that the participants' sexual orientation had value and worth. Self-efficacy was also increased through successful implementation of programs and activities. Students who felt a sense of accomplishment grew in their confidence to engage in leadership. Finally, self-efficacy was increased through deep and broad involvement. The students in this study were actively engaged across campus and many of their involvements were as significant change agents or officers, with deep and long-lasting engagement in their organizations.

The students' self-efficacy was diminished in two primary ways, through active criticism and through failure. Students expressed that when they receive criticism about their efforts or approaches, it damaged their confidence to further engage in leadership. In addition, just as success bolstered self-efficacy, failure diminished it.

*What avenues of leadership influence leadership self-efficacy?*

In exploring the avenues of leadership (by type of organization, purpose of group, group membership, etc.) that are most likely to support the process of developing leadership self-efficacy, I found that the type of organization was not as influential as the types of relationships within a particular organization. While students had a variety of involvements, including LGBT-focused organizations, student government and representative bodies, sports teams, student employment, religious groups, academic

organizations, and others, the type of organization was not the driver of leadership self-efficacy development.

Some students did explain that if the type of organization was not focused on LGBT issues or if personal relationships were not central to the organization's purpose, such as student government or University Senate, then their gay or lesbian identity was less important to their functioning in the group. The saliency of sexual orientation was low because the purpose of the group did not require disclosure of personal identity. But, the students' leadership self-efficacy development was not influenced precisely because identity was not relevant. Students shared that when relationships in the group were important, it was important to be out and the degree to which they were comfortable being out influenced their comfort engaging in those spaces.

*Does the degree that the students are "out" influence their leadership self-efficacy?*

As almost all the students in this study were out in the primary relationships in their lives, this research question more explicitly explored how being out or being gay or lesbian influenced the process of developing leadership self-efficacy. For the students in this study, their sexual orientation identities had both a positive effect and no effect on their leadership self-efficacy. Every student provided examples of how their sexual orientation positively influenced their leadership self-efficacy. Some examples were internal, such as broadening their perspectives, creating empathy for the experiences of others, and improving personal awareness. Other examples were related to relationships with others, such as more comfort in relationships and feeling as if they could bring their full selves to an experience. Examples also related to involvement actions, in that

students felt that greater comfort led to greater involvement, that being out increased overall self-confidence, and identity was integral to involvement.

At the same time that students identified ways that sexual orientation positively influenced leadership self-efficacy development, they also identified ways that it had little to no influence. Some students came to college very self-efficacious in their leadership abilities and did not see sexual orientation as being as influential. Others had already struggled with their identities in high school and came to college with leadership and sexual orientation integrated. Others saw sexual orientation as less salient than other parts of their identities and some saw situational elements as being more important.

#### *Relationship of Grounded Theory to Existing Literature*

In Chapter II, I outlined literature that helped frame the topic of this study and the methodological approaches taken. In this section, I will review the findings from the study in relationship to the literature to emphasize points of comparison and contradiction.

#### *Lesbian and Gay Identity Development*

The experiences of students in this study mirror much of what has been written about the LGBT identity development process in research literature. Cass (1984) charted the dimensions used to describe stages of gay identity development in terms of cognitive, behavioral, and affective dimensions. Students in this study described Cass' dimension of disclosure, describing the importance of disclosing their personal identities to bring their full selves to an experience. They also referenced the dimension of group identification, exploring the sense of belonging they felt within groups of which they were a part. The dimension of social interaction was also explained through students' stories about the

types of settings in which they engaged in leadership. Although Cass' model of gay identity development was developed using White men for the research, her last stage of Identity Synthesis can also be seen in the experiences of the students in this study. In this stage, gay identity is no longer seen as "overwhelmingly the identity by which an individual can be characterized" (p. 152). Gay identity is no longer hidden, but is only one part of their character and identity. This mirrors some of the comments of students from the study who spoke about their gay identity being important, but not the most important aspect to their leadership engagement and the increased saliency of other identities.

Issues of saliency of identity were also explored through the work of Abes, Jones, and McEwen (2007). Building off the work of Jones and McEwen (2000), the authors describe a dynamic relationship between personal identities which cannot be understood in isolation of each other. The model portrays identity dimensions as intersecting rings around a core of personal identity (personal attributes, characteristics, and personal identity). The meaning-making capacity of individuals is a filter by which contextual influences can influence personal identity. Complex meaning making filters out more contextual influences, while less complex meaning making allows contextual influences more impact on identity perceptions. For this dissertation, these dynamics played out in several distinct ways. Students from backgrounds that emphasized other dimension of identity, like race or religion, spoke about how these identities influenced their involvements and world views. Other students, like Rachel and Sam, spoke about the saliency of their gay identities when held in comparison to their religious traditions. The filter of meaning making was also relevant to the students' experiences. Students in this

study, who had complex meaning-making capacities, had the ability to determine the relationship between context and perceptions of identity and saw the connections between involvement and identity.

While this study did not explicitly explore the differences between gay men and lesbians, McCarn and Fassinger's (1996) model of lesbian identity formation is helpful in distinguishing between the two processes of personal development and group membership identity development. The authors describe a model with two parallel branches of developmental phases that are related, but not simultaneous. These phases match many of the experiences shared by the students in the study. The later phases of deepening/commitment and internationalization/synthesis for group identity development are marked by more personal involvement with reference groups towards a synthesis of gay identity into an overall self-concept.

A few students in the study presented sexual orientations that were more complex and dynamic than the labels "gay" or "lesbian" could adequately explain. Two participants self-identified as queer and one as sexually fluid – all three of these students identified as gender queer or female, but were comfortable with the use of the feminine pronoun. While not fully explored in the student affairs literature, some lessons can be learned. Abes and Kasch (2007) used queer theory to explore lesbian college students' multiple dimensions of identity. The authors described a journey towards self-authorship that requires a resistance of power structures that define one as abnormal. They suggested that for queer students, the multiple dimensions of identity are fused together, "intra-sections rather than intersections" (p. 632). Identities cannot be separated and do not exist in isolation, distinct from one another. In addition, queer students, not satisfied

with just joining organizations, sought to “subvert or to reinvent the structures” of those organizations (Dilley, 2005, p. 66). For the two queer students in this study, this assertion held true. Both Kincade and JB were comfortable in the role of agitator, seeking to provide a different experience to students in groups and organizations and always seeking change.

The concept of fused identities posited by Abes and Kasch is also helpful in understanding the holistic experiences of students in this study. While sometimes the students in this study would describe their experiences in terms of race, religion, or other personal identities outside of their sexual orientation, they usually spoke of their identities as a whole, making it challenging to parse out the individual influences of gender, race, or religion from the central identifier of sexual orientation.

By and large, the students in this study described positive experiences they had regarding their sexual orientation. While this may be attributable to the selection of students who were exemplars, it is also possible that students tend to minimize incidences of heterosexism and homophobia.

### *Leadership Development*

As the process of students’ leadership self-efficacy development was grounded in their personal understanding of what it meant to be engaged in leadership, the interviews produced data that resonated with the literature on how students develop their identities as leaders and how they develop their understanding of what leadership is. Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella, and Osteen (2005) created a theory of leadership development that described this developmental process. As explained in Chapter II, this Leadership Identity Development Model (or LID Model) demonstrated

that personal leadership identity developed through six stages, moving from awareness and exploration/engagement to leader identified (i.e., leadership is a behavior of the positional leader), then to leadership differentiated (i.e. recognizing that leadership is a behavior of anyone in a group and is a process), to generativity (responsibility to others and to the future of the organization) and finally, to integration/synthesis (life-long learning and internal congruence). Students moved from dependence to interdependence, shifting from an eternal view of leadership to a broader understanding of leadership as a collaborative process.

In my study, the students' journey of a broadening understanding of leadership was evident in many stories. The students came to see leadership as based in relationships with each other, not based on the position held. Successful engagement with others was seen as leadership, a clear connection to the shift from leader identified to leadership differentiated in the LID model. Students also described the importance of responsibility to others and the future of the group by mentoring other students and helping them step into leadership roles and mentoring other students. This generative approach is very much removed from their high school views of leadership. Students at times were clearly situated in a particular stage of the LID Model. For instance, Tanner described his frustration at having to accomplish things on his own, a leader identified concept. Dexter described how attendance at a leadership conference opened his eyes to leadership as a group process and collaboration, demonstrating his own shift in thinking towards interdependence.

Lord and Hall (2005) suggested that personal identity should be a central focus in the exploration of the development of leadership skills because it provides a structure

around which knowledge is organized, is a source of motivation and direction, and provides access to personal stories and values that can be used to understand others. The authors commented that leader self-regulation is influenced by individual level identities, relational identities (definition in terms of roles or relations to others), and collective identities, and that as leaders develop, they move from an individual focus to a more collective identity. In my study, students spoke about their personal identities' relationship to leadership, as well as how positive relationships with others bolstered leadership self-efficacy. In addition, their collective identities as members of the LGBT community provided a greater sense of empathy and voice. Relationships with others as a contributing factor to leadership identity development was also suggested by Thompson (2006) as related to peers, and Logue, Hutchens, and Hector (2005), as related to the concept of team.

### *Self-Efficacy*

Self-efficacy, as previously defined by Bandura (1977), is an individual's perception of his or her ability to complete a specific task. "Perceived self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). Since self-efficacy is domain specific, this study asked students to identify their beliefs about leadership to define the domains of self-efficacy in which they operated and which they were developing. As students defined leadership around the domains of relationship building, being change agents, serving others, being inclusive, and being connected to values, these domains were used to frame the process of developing their leadership self-efficacy. While leadership self-

efficacy for a different group of students might have been about managing conflict or being in charge, for these students, it was framed in their understanding about leadership.

Self-efficacy is concerned with judgments of personal capacity within a specific domain, while self-esteem is concerned with broader judgments of self-worth (Bandura, 1997). Self-confidence is a more generalized sense of competence, but not tied to a task-specific capability (McCormick, et al., 2002). An individual may have low self-efficacy about his/her ability to engage in a task, but still have high self-confidence about his/her abilities in general or high self-esteem about overall self-worth. As demonstrated in this study, being out contributed to higher overall self-confidence for the students. In addition, for a student like Kincade, increased self-confidence gave her greater self-confidence to engage in leadership.

The participants in this study were willing to take on leadership roles in organizations, tackle organization dilemmas like starting new groups, overcame adversity without dwelling on problems, and made conscious choices to engage in meaningful way. These behaviors, as evidenced in the students, can be viewed through the framework of Bandura's (1995) lists of processes he suggested are influenced by self-efficacy; cognitive processes, motivational processes, affective processes, and selection processes (Bandura, 1995). In general terms, those with high levels of self-efficacy take on tasks that promote more complex thinking (cognitive), are more motivated to complete tasks at which they feel they can excel (motivational), view threats to succeed as manageable and do not dwell on deficiencies (affective), and make choices to engage in activities that promote further self-efficacy (selection).

Students in the study identified the processes in which they developed their self-efficacy to engage in leadership, each of which is demonstrated in the existing literature. Bandura (1989) described the process of reciprocal influences of personal and environmental factors in self-efficacy development. An individual's beliefs regarding his or her self-efficacy come from four primary sources: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological and emotional states (Bandura, 1995). Mastery experience refers to personal success at a task, which promotes personal success and builds a great deal of self-efficacy. This was a clear theme in the study, as students described success at a task as building their self-confidence for leadership. Vicarious experiences describes the influence of role models and how seeing others similar to themselves succeed raised personal beliefs in capacities. The students in this study spoke a great deal about role models, including parents who imparted lessons about confidence and other gay and lesbian peers in their organizations. Social persuasion, when others suggest or persuade us that we have the ability to accomplish something, resulting in greater personal confidence in that task, was shown in this study through the numerous examples of support and encouragement the students received from others. The final source is physiological or emotional state. Students here spoke about how self-efficacy was built when they had positive relationships with others and when they felt that their sexual orientations had worth in the eyes of others. In addition, elements of their sexual orientation identities related to comfort, voice, and empathy speak directly to issues of emotional states. Physiological states are often more important for tasks involving endurance and were not shown to be relevant to these students' experiences.

### *Leadership Self-Efficacy*

Leadership self-efficacy, a “student’s beliefs about his or her abilities to exercise their leadership knowledge and skills in a given situation” (Denzine, 1999), was the focus of my study. High leadership self-efficacy can motivate individuals to “pursue action, contribute more towards these actions, and persevere to a greater degree in the face of obstacles” (Anderson, et al., 2008, p. 595). Anderson et al (2008) identified a number of dimensions of leadership self-efficacy, many of which directly speak to the experiences of the students in my study. Students spoke of the importance of several of these dimensions, including serving others, creating change, communicating with others in a productive manner, and forging positive relationships. Students in my study were clearly led to pursue actions (such as starting new student organizations), contributing more (such as stepping into a TA role when needed), and persevered in the face of obstacles (such as finding comfortable leadership settings after noticing less welcoming environments). Students also were more willing to engage in self-development activities, as suggested by Day, Harrison, and Halpin (2009).

College experiences such as discussions about socio-cultural issues, mentoring, campus involvement, participation in community service, positional leadership, and involvement in formal leadership programs were all positively associated with leadership outcomes (Segar, et al., 2008). Many of these themes played out in the stories from this study as well. Students such as Dexter and Mary spoke about the importance of formal leadership programs and training as Resident Assistants. Aaron and JB shared their experiences with service to others in international service experiences. Many of the students held formal leadership positions and were active in mentoring other students,

such as Aaron's role at the counseling call center and Liam's position at the student newspaper.

### *Lesbian and Gay Leadership Self-Efficacy*

Renn and Bilodeau (2005) demonstrated ways in which leading a LGBT-focused organization contributed to LGBT identity development for college students. As many of the students in my study worked directly with LGBT organizations, this research is particularly relevant. The journey is described in a process model using D'Augelli's (1994) framework for LBG identity development. The processes are Exiting Heterosexual and/or Traditionally-Gendered Identity; Developing a Personal LGBT Status; Developing an LGBT Social Identity; Becoming an LGBT Offspring; Developing LGBT Intimacy Status; and Entering an LGBT Community. Movement through the stages is marked by an increasing comfort and awareness of personal identity, increased commitment to LGBT issues and individuals, increased awareness of the importance of identity, and at the final stages, involvement in creating and sustaining communities for others.

The students in the study described their process and experiences in similar ways, particularly in the last stage. Many of the students were positively influenced by the support and encouragement of role models and identified their sexual orientation as providing them visibility and voice. They saw the value in this, and because their views of leadership were related to inclusion, duty to others, and relationships, they had a commitment to ensuring that LGBT organizations of which they were a part were successful and that they were creating the next generation of leadership within those groups.

While there is scant research connecting lesbian and gay identity, leadership, and self-efficacy, “core to the self and identity approach to leadership effectiveness is an understanding that the way that we perceive ourselves, our self-concept or identity strongly informs our feelings, beliefs, attitudes, goals, and behaviors” (van Knippenberg, et al., 2005, p. 496). Porter (1998) studied gay and lesbian college students’ capacities to engage in transformational leadership in the context of groups that were or were not primarily gay or lesbian in composition. While he did not find that progression in gay and lesbian identity explained any significant variance in leadership self-efficacy nor any gender differences related to self-efficacy for transformational leadership between gay and lesbians, he did note that gay men had higher self-efficacy “to possess idealized influence in a primarily gay and/or lesbian student organization compared to a primarily heterosexual organization” (p. 137). There was no comparable difference for lesbians. Idealized influence is described by Bass and Avolio as behaviors that “result in their being role models for their followers” (p. 3). This result is challenging to compare to my study, as it studied a particular kind of leadership (transformational) and sought to compare and contrast by gender and by type of organization. Even so, the importance of role modeling from others and for others was a consistent theme both for Porter and in my study.

#### *Summary of Relationship to Existing Literature*

The findings from this study resonate with the existing literature about the gay and lesbian student experience, the process of developing a leadership identity, and the development and functioning of self-efficacy, particularly related to leadership engagement. Students’ descriptions of the influence of support, successful experiences,

and deep and broad involvement directly reference the self-efficacy literature, while the growth and development of identities both as leaders and LGBT individuals is also supported through the literature.

### *Implications*

The results of this study offer insights with implications both for student affairs practitioners and for future research. These implications speak both to the gay and lesbian student experience, but also to the concept of self-efficacy development.

#### *Implications for Student Affairs Practice*

The emerging theory of leadership self-efficacy development for lesbian and gay college students engaged in leadership provides some implications for current and future student affairs practice. One implication relates to the timing of the coming-out process for students. While students in this study were exemplars and may not be representative of all lesbian and gay students, most of these students had come out to themselves and others prior to entering college. Many had come out to a great number of individuals and entered college as out students. College support services for the LGBT population might assume that the coming-out process is a collegiate experience, but if the students in this study are an indication, it increasingly seems to be a high school experience. Student affairs practitioners should use greater care in developing programs designed to assist students during the coming out process to recognize the range of “outness” that exists for incoming first-year students.

One result of this study that has an implication for student affairs practice was the importance of deep meaningful involvement as a positive influence on the process of developing leadership self-efficacy. It is increasingly important to provide opportunities

for students to be engaged in a range of ways, from participation to engagement to coordination, allowing them to be highly involved in a variety of activities. High-impact leadership opportunities must be developed to give students deep, meaningful exposure.

While this study was initially designed to explore lesbian and gay leadership self-efficacy development, students presented a more complex set of identities. Students identified as queer or gender queer or sexually fluid, identities that are not as easily categorized and not as well understood in the general population. Student affairs practitioners should understand the complexities of identity and that although the labels used are important, they can also be limiting. The language used to provide support needs to be inclusive to a range of identities.

Finally, students in this study spoke to the importance of having role models, supportive infrastructures in place, and the value placed on sense of worth. Campuses should continue to develop LGBT support services, give LGBT faculty and staff a visible presence for sexual orientation minority students, and actively use language in policies and publications that support the LGBT population on campus. Students indicated that greater comfort led to greater involvement, so creating spaces of comfort, even when not in a LGBT-focused organization, is important to increased involvement and the process of developing leadership self-efficacy.

#### *Implications for Future Research*

Through this study, several implications for future research emerged. These implications were related to identity saliency, identity labels, organizational affiliation, and to factors that diminish leadership self-efficacy.

As this study identified students who were exemplars in leadership engagement and who were already highly self-efficacious in their leadership abilities, it would be advantageous to see what influenced the process of self-efficacy development were for students who had low leadership self-efficacy or whose self-efficacy was diminished through their collegiate experiences. Students in this study were out in most of their environments, so researchers could examine if students who were not out had a different set of influences to leadership self-efficacy or might explore the degree to which not being out influenced the process of leadership self-efficacy development.

Student affairs research studies typically only explore the collegiate experience, but as demonstrated in this study, the high school experience needs to be better understood. Does the timing of the coming out process have an effect on gay identity development or self-efficacy to engage in leadership? For this study, there seemed to be a relationship, but exploring development of identity and the related influences prior to college will be increasingly important. It should be considered that leaders come into situations with worldviews based on their previous experiences, especially related to their core identities and that “those worldviews have a major impact on the preferences and selection of behaviors” they engage in (Fassinger, Shullman, & Stevenson, 2010, p. 211).

Almost every student in this study was involved in one or more LGBT-focused organizations, often in a leadership position. While type of organization did not emerge as an important theme in their descriptions of the development of leadership self-efficacy, future research may want to explore how different types of organization have differential relationships to growth of leadership identity or self-efficacy for LGBT students. Anecdotal evidence suggests that LGBT-focused organizations are important to personal

identity development, but questions are worth explored to examine other kinds of growth for students.

Future research related to identity saliency is also encouraged. This study focused on the gay and lesbian experience, but students spoke about other identities they held, particularly related to race and religion. Further exploration of the role of multiple identities on the coming-out process or the development of leadership self-efficacy would provide a more complex picture of the LGBT college experience.

This issue of saliency in my study was particularly relevant related to religion. Sexual identity development models and research should seek to incorporate the influence of religion. Religion is often simplified to “spirituality,” which may be deemed more compatible with a gay or lesbian identity (Yarhouse, 2001). As many organized religions view a LGBT identity as incompatible with their religious doctrines, the relationship between religion and issues of support, community engagement, and identity synthesis and integration would be ripe for additional exploration. Research is beginning to focus on issues of spirituality and gay identity for college students, describing the process of identity reconciliation and the interrelationship between the concepts (Love, Bock, Jannarone, & Richardson, 2005)

As this study was limited to lesbian and gay college students, researchers could also compare the experiences of LGBT students to their heterosexual counterparts. Issues of worth, comfort in groups, the importance of support, and identity being integral to involvement may not only be attributable to the LGBT experience. The degree to which they differs for heterosexual students may help identify targeted initiatives for LGBT students.

Future research is encouraged to parse out the experiences of the subpopulations of the LGBT community. A great deal more research is needed related to the transgender populations on campus, as well as the queer or gender queer populations. Bisexual students were not explicitly explored in this study. I hope that future research will continue to delve into the potentially different experiences of each of these subpopulations. I would also encourage more research that uses critical perspectives to tell the stories of subordinated identities' relationships with dominant cultures. This is particularly important to queer theory, as it will allow a more nuanced understanding of the student experience.

#### *Considerations and Strengths of the Study*

There are some important considerations to keep in mind before others use the theory emerging from this research to guide practice or research. This study was conducted on a single campus with a small number of participants. The purpose was to develop a theory that explored the experiences of these students and was not designed nor meant to be generalized to all LGBT college students. The campus on which this study was conducted was a large, public, diverse campus with a variety of LGBT support services. Generalizing the experiences of these students to a campus with a different student or organizational profile would not be advisable.

This study explored the experiences of students who were highly involved, highly self-efficacious related to leadership, and who were out in most environments. Generalizing these findings to all LGBT students or to any involved student would be problematic. This study does not seek to speak for all highly involved students or all

LGBT students. Acknowledging this does not diminish the findings of this study, but it does place it within the context of the environment in which it was conducted.

As with any qualitative study, the role of the researcher must be explored and considered. I developed the study, framed the questions, interviewed the students, conducted the coding, and determined the emerging theory. If another researcher had sought to conduct a similar study, had done the coding for my study, or had interpreted the data, it is possible different outcomes or conclusions would have been reached. Critical to the role of the researcher in qualitative research, though, is creating a safe space for the participants to openly share their beliefs and experiences, and this was accomplished in this study.

The strengths of this study lie in its adherence to measures of trustworthiness for qualitative methodologies. This issues of trustworthiness include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility, the evaluation of whether or not the research findings represent a reasonable interpretation of the data collected from participants, was demonstrated through triangulation of the data and member-checking. Triangulation of the data is proven through multiple data sources (in this case, multiple students) sharing similar experiences and that conclusions are drawn from more than a singular source. Member-checking was conducted with the students in the study through an optional focus group, but also through sharing of results and soliciting feedback and confirmation of findings at multiple stages in the research process.

Transferability is the degree to which the results of the research can be applied to settings outside of this one individual study. The issues of leadership self-efficacy are

important to the field of student affairs as LGBT students exist on every campus. A more complete understanding of these students' experiences can help inform student affairs practice. The results from this study contribute to the existing literature and build upon previous research.

Dependability refers to the quality of the processes of data collection, data analysis, and theory generation, referred to as replicability in quantitative research. Since the results of a qualitative study cannot be replicated, dependability can be viewed through collection of all archival data from the study and explicit details of all processes. The coding for this study was conducted using HyperResearch, a CAQDAS program (computer assisted qualitative data analysis software). While this program does not generate theory, it does allow for the archiving and retrieval of data. In addition, all interviews were transcribed and all processes documented, so that if necessary, the theory generated could be checked against the available data collected.

Confirmability is a measure of how well the findings can be supported by others and can be seen as coming directly from the data and not as a result of researcher bias (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). Confirmability was done through member-checking (previously described), but also through the use of rich thick descriptions of student experiences using the voices of the participants. In addition, I engaged a peer-debriefer to confirm that the theoretical findings resonated with another qualitative researcher.

### *Conclusion*

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss the findings and emerging theory from this study and place that information in the context of the research questions and relevant literature, in addition to providing some insight into implications for research and

practice related to LGBT students and leadership self-efficacy development. Limitations and strengths of the study were also discussed.

The lesbian, gay, and queer students in this study grew in their leadership self-efficacy during college. While many of them came to college self-confident in their abilities to make change and engage with others, they all found that their sexual orientation influenced their views of leadership, the ways in which they engaged with others, and the self-confidence they felt to engage in leadership and be involved in activities and organizations. There were a wide variety of factors that bolstered their leadership self-efficacy and a much smaller number that diminished it. The saliency of their sexual orientation identity was mitigated by the former integration of their leadership and sexual orientation identities, the seeming importance of identity to the task of the organization, and the saliency of other identities.

I came to this study with the hopes of better understanding how lesbian and gay students engaged in leadership and how they came to see themselves as confident in their leadership engagements. Through the brave stories of these 10 remarkable individuals, this study provides one more piece of a very complicated puzzle of the intersection of identity, involvement, leadership, and self-efficacy. I am left with an appreciation of the gifts of these stories and hope they lead to further exploration.

## Appendix A: Electronic Letters to Nominators

\_\_\_\_\_, 2009

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am writing to solicit nominations of [college name withheld] students who are gay or lesbian for my dissertation research. The purpose of this study is to understand, through interviews with students, the process by which gay or lesbian college students come to develop leadership self-efficacy, how this may change over time, and what environmental factors influence this development.

Please nominate undergraduate students who are attending the [college name withheld] who you believe have considered what it means to be a leader or to be involved in leadership processes. I am seeking a wide range of viewpoints and perspectives. Any specific conclusions they have reached about leadership is less important than the fact that they have begun reflecting on their experiences with leadership. These students may have engaged in discussion on this topic with you, you may have observed them discussing this with other students, or they may have explored this through academic work or co-curricular involvement. I am seeking a wide diversity of college students both in social group membership (e. g., race, ethnicity, class, ability, or religion) and college experience (e. g., involvement in greek organizations, athletes, resident assistants, commuters, engineers, musicians, military, or peer educators).

Please send the names and email addresses (if possible) of gay or lesbian students who come to mind by [date two weeks from date sent]. You can provide this information to me via email at [email address withheld]. The students will be informed that you personally nominated them unless you would prefer that you not be identified to the student.

If you wish to contact me with questions or for any other reason I can be reached at:

Campus Mailing Address: [address withheld]  
Office Phone with Private Voice Mail: [number withheld]  
Cell Phone: [number withheld]  
Email: [email address withheld]

I look forward to hearing from you and thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Daniel T. Ostick  
Doctoral Candidate  
College Student Personnel Administration

Dr. Susan R. Komives  
Professor  
College Student Personnel Administration



Appendix B: Electronic Letter to Nominated Participants

\_\_\_\_\_, 2009

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Hello! My name is Daniel Ostick. I am a doctoral student at the University of Maryland conducting a research study on lesbian and gay students' leadership self-efficacy. You have been nominated by [Name of Nominator] who believes that you have thought about what it means to be a leader and to be involved in leadership processes. It is my hope that you will consider being a part of this study, as you have the potential to make an important contribution!

The study will consist of three individual interviews, each approximately an hour long, to be conducted over the next few months. You will also be invited to participate in an *optional* focus group meeting with the other participants near the conclusion of the study. During these interviews we will have the opportunity to discuss how you have come to understand what it means to be a leader, how that may have changed over time, and the various influences on that process. If you are interested I can send you some of the initial questions in advance. Your participation will remain confidential as you will have the option to select a pseudonym for the purposes of this study. Participants will receive a \$50 gift certificate upon completion of the study.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may chose not to participate at any point in time. If you are interested in participating, please complete the attached interest form and return it to me. I will select participants based on the forms that are completed and then be in touch with selected participants about scheduling an interview. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

If you wish to contact me with questions or for any other reason I can be reached at:  
Campus Mailing Address: [address withheld]  
Office Phone with Private Voice Mail: [number withheld]  
Cell Phone: [number withheld]  
Email: [email withheld]

I am very excited about this project and pleased that you would consider participating as well. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Daniel T. Ostick  
Doctoral Candidate  
College Student Personnel Administration

Dr. Susan R. Komives  
Professor  
College Student Personnel Administration

Appendix C: Interest Form

(Please note: all information on this interest form will be kept confidential)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address (Local or Campus): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Will you be available for interviews during the Spring of 2010? \_\_\_\_\_

Participants in this study will be selected to represent a wide range of identities and college involvements. Any information you can provide with regard to the areas below will be helpful in identifying participants for this study.

College Involvement (fraternity or sorority, resident assistant, student groups, etc.)  
List all that apply.

\_\_\_\_\_

Have you lived on campus? If so, where and when? \_\_\_\_\_

Major/Minor/Certifications: \_\_\_\_\_

What are your plans after graduation (career, grad school, etc)?

\_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Disability: \_\_\_\_\_

Race: \_\_\_\_\_

Ethnicity: \_\_\_\_\_

Sexual Orientation: \_\_\_\_\_

Religion: \_\_\_\_\_

Socio-economic Status (Class): \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this completed form to: Daniel T. Ostick, [address withheld] or via email as an attachment at [email withheld].

## Appendix D: Student Consent Form

**Project Title:** LGBT Leadership Self-Efficacy: Grounded Theory Inquiry

### **Why is this research being done?**

This is a research project being conducted by Susan R. Komives and Daniel T. Ostick at the University of Maryland - College Park. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you are at least 18 years old, and have been nominated by a faculty or staff member at [University name withheld from publication] as a gay or lesbian college student who has considered what it means to be a leader or to be involved in leadership processes. The purpose of this research is to understand the development of leadership self-efficacy for lesbian and gay college students engaged in leadership.

### **What will I be asked to do?**

The procedures involve participating in three interviews during the spring/summer/fall of 2010 and an optional focus group meeting near the conclusion of the study. Each interview will be approximately an hour long. The interviews will be guided open-ended conversations rather than formal question and answer sessions. During the interviews you will be asked to discuss how you have come to understand what it means to be a leader or involved in leadership processes, how that understanding has changed over time, and the environmental factors that have influenced your self-confidence to engage in leadership. All interviews will be conducted at times and locations on campus or another private location convenient for you. In addition, all interviews will be digitally recorded and transcribed for analysis. You will be given a summary essay based on your interviews for your review and comment before the third interview.

### **What about confidentiality?**

We will do our best to keep your personal information confidential. This research involves making digital recordings of the interviews to provide a complete record of our interviews. To help protect confidentiality, your interview tapes, transcripts, and documents will be coded with a pseudonym you select. These documents will be kept separate from the demographic information on the interest form. Only the researchers will be able to link the research materials to a specific person. All transcripts and digital recordings will be kept in a secured file cabinet at the home of the student researcher. All computer files related to the study will not include any identifiable personal information. Only the researchers will have access to the digital recording and they will be destroyed in May 2012. Your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible in any report or article based on this research. Your information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland - College Park or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.

### **What are the risks and benefits of this research?**

There are no known risks of participating in this research project. This research is not designed to help you personally, but you will have the chance to reflect on yourself as a leader. This process may impact your perceptions of yourself and inform your future

personal and professional decisions. The results may help the investigators and others learn more about how lesbian or gay individuals develop self-confidence as leaders.

**Do I have to participate? Can I stop participating at any time?**

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you would otherwise qualify.

**Do I receive any compensation for participating?**

You will receive a \$50 gift certificate to the University bookstore at the conclusion of the study as appreciation for your participation.

**What if I have questions?**

Susan R. Komives and Daniel T. Ostick from the Department of Counseling and Personnel Services at the University of Maryland - College Park are conducting this research. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact one of the investigators:

Susan R. Komives  
Professor  
CAPS Department  
3214 Benjamin Building  
University of Maryland  
College Park, MD 20742  
301-\_\_\_\_\_  
Komives@umd.edu

Daniel T. Ostick  
Doctoral Candidate  
0110 Stamp Student Union  
University of Maryland  
College Park, MD 20742  
301-314-1347  
lgbtdiss@gmail.com

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact the following office:

Institutional Review Board Office  
University of Maryland  
College Park, MD 20742  
301-405-0678  
[irb@deans.umd.edu](mailto:irb@deans.umd.edu)

This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland -College Park IRB procedures governing your participation in this research.

**Statement of Age and Consent**

Your signature indicates that:

- you are at least 18 years of age,
- the research has been explained to you,
- your questions have been fully answered, and
- you freely and voluntarily choose to participate in this research project.

Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

(Please print)

Signature of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix E: Interview Protocol

### FIRST INTERVIEW

#### **Introduction**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study on gay and lesbian students' leadership self-efficacy. I look forward to getting to know you better and to learn about your experiences. To begin, I would like you to read and sign an Informed Consent form. This form will give you information about this study and asks you to sign indicating that you agree to participate. [Student reads and signs consent form.] Before we move on, do you have any questions about the form or the study?

I look forward to discussing your thoughts about leadership, how you developed as a leader, and what has influenced your self-confidence to lead or be engaged in leadership processes. I hope that we can begin this conversation today and continue it in one or two more conversations.

I am going to record this conversation so that I can listen to it later and transcribe our conversation. Before the third interview, I will summarize our first two conversations in writing so that you can be sure that we are both as clear as possible about what you shared. In our next meetings we'll discuss a little of what we discuss here today as well as any additional thoughts you may have between now and then. At the conclusion of the study, you'll also have the option of discussing this with other participants in a focus group meeting. Do you have any questions?

In order for this to be as confidential as possible I'd like you to select a pseudonym (if you would like) that I will use in any written material related to this study. The pseudonym can be any name of your choosing. You are also welcome to give this some thought and let me know at the end of our discussion today or at a later point in the process. [Participant selects pseudonym (if ready)]

#### **Questions**

The first interview will focus on introducing the participants to the study/topic and getting their initial thoughts and getting them thinking and reflecting on their leadership experiences. The following questions reflect the topics to be discussed in the first interview.

#### Potential Questions/Topics:

- Tell me about yourself and your background.
- Why you agreed to participate in this study?
- Discuss and clarify the demographic information the participant provided (as needed)
- How have you come to understand what leadership means? What did you used to think leadership meant and what do you think it is now?
- How would you describe society's definition of what it means to be a leader? How does that fit or not fit for you?
- Are there particular leadership qualities or traits that you believe are strengths or weaknesses for you? How so?

- What influences your self-confidence to engage in leadership?
- Describe how your self-identity as a gay man, lesbian, or bisexual has developed. How “out” are you and to whom? [note – I would include bisexuality here, as the student may decide to identify as such]
- Has your sexual orientation impacted your self-confidence to be engaged in leadership? How so? Do you believe this is different from the experiences of heterosexual students?

## SECOND INTERVIEW

The second interview will focus on the participants’ responses in the first interview and exploring those topics in greater depth and exploring the participants’ reflections since the first interview.

### Potential Questions/Topics:

- What significant people, places, or events (good or bad) were critical in changing how you understood what leadership means?
- Are there particular examples or instances that have impacted your self-confidence to lead? (this question may solicit follow-up questions about each of the experiences shared)
- How has your conception of yourself as leader changed in college?
- Where do you see yourself engaged in leadership?
- Are there differences in your self-confidence to lead based on the kind of group or whether the group as LGBT members? How so?
- What impact, if any, has your sexual orientation had on others within these settings?

## THIRD INTERVIEW

The third interview will focus on following up with any remaining questions or topics to be explored from the previous interviews as well as discussing with the participants the overall picture that is emerging from their responses and the overall study as a means of member checking.

### Potential Questions/Topics:

- You have reviewed the summary notes from the previous two interviews. Do you have any comments about that you would like to share, either in writing or in person?
- What has it been like for you to participate in this study?
- Have you learned anything about yourself through our conversations? If so, what?
- Have you noticed any changes in yourself as a result of these conversations?
- What questions do you have?
- How would you describe lesbian and gay college students’ process of leadership self-efficacy?
- How have you come to understand what it means to be gay/lesbian and engaged in leadership?

## OPTIONAL FOCUS GROUP MEETING

The optional focus group meeting will focus on the participants discussing the emerging themes from the study as a group. At this meeting, the following will be discussed:

- Introductions of individuals
- Presentation of general findings from the study and emerging themes
- Discussion with group about the themes – Are they in agreement? Do the themes appear true to their individual experiences? Are there missing issues or ideas they think should be included? Does the information bring to light any additional themes that may not be visible to the researcher?

## Appendix F: Summary Essay Cover Letter

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thanks again for your willingness to participate in this study. As I mentioned previously, I am attaching a summary essay of our previous interviews based on the transcripts. I ask that you carefully review this essay, providing commentary or clarification on anything you feel I may have missed or misrepresented. Please include any additional insights, ideas, or comments that are triggered in this process. Please feel free to comment directly in the margins or on additional sheets.

Once you have finished reviewing the essay, please let me know via email or phone so that we can arrange the best way for me to receive your comments. In our next interview we will discuss some of the issues raised in our previous interview as well as any corrections and/or additions you might have.

Thanks again for giving your valuable time to this effort. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns. I look forward to hearing back from you as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Daniel T. Ostick  
Doctoral Candidate, College Student Personnel  
[Email:](#) [withheld from publication]  
Phone: [withheld from publication]

Appendix G: Electronic Letter to Nominated Participants Who Were Not Selected to Participate

\_\_\_\_\_, 2009

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you for your interest in participating in a research study on lesbian and gay students' leadership self-efficacy. The study is nearing completion and we were fortunate to have more participants than we needed, so your direct participation is no longer necessary. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

If you wish to contact me with questions or for any other reason I can be reached at:

Campus Mailing Address: [withheld from publication]

Office Phone with Private Voice Mail: [withheld from publication]

Cell Phone: [withheld from publication]

Email: [withheld from publication]

Thank you for your interest and willingness to participate in this study.

Sincerely,

Daniel T. Ostick  
Doctoral Candidate

College Student Personnel Administration

Dr. Susan R. Komives  
Professor

College Student Personnel Administration

## Appendix H: Initial Code List

Listed below are the initial codes (575) developed using the HyperResearch program:

Ability to involve people in organization  
Able to bond with others quickly - WOO  
Accidental - Fell into leadership - did not intend going in  
Accidental - Fell into leadership through social ties  
Accidental - pushed into leadership roles  
Accidental involvement in LGBT activities  
Accidental leadership  
Actions without words and words without action - neither are enough  
Activism more important for LGBT individuals  
Activist in college  
Adaptable communication style to match circumstance  
Adapts quickly from trial and error and absorbing  
Adjusting communication style to fit situation  
Advancing LGBT support with sub-groups  
Affected by criticism from others  
African identity affects how he works with other queer people - SE  
Agnostic  
Agnostic now - but grew up in religious household  
Alter self to be more accepted  
Always been confident as leader  
Always involved in something  
Anxiety in ability to solve problems  
Avoid being effeminate to keep it business-like  
Avoidance of being stereotypically gay  
Avoided greek life  
Avoided sports involvement  
Avoids conflict with strangers and family  
Being gay broadens perspective of world  
Being gay is a non-issue in most regards  
Being gay is just part of identity  
Being gay provided greater opportunities for involvement  
Being informed is important  
Being out didn't impact SE in group  
Being out gives you credibility as a person  
Being out increases self-confidence in all areas  
Being out makes you more comfortable with self and others  
Being out makes you more immune to rejection  
Being out requires level of confidence  
Believes in grassroots leadership  
Beneficial to be known as a person before as a gay person  
Came out in fifth grade - knew to keep it to self  
Came out in HS

Came out in HS - limited  
Came out late in HS  
Came out later - sees others more developed in LGBT identity  
Came out more fully in college  
Came out to close friends in HS  
Came out to dad in HS  
Came out to self before HS  
Came out to self in middle school  
Came to college confident to engage in leadership  
Can see multiple perspectives as a minority - gay  
Cares about larger social justice issues  
Challenged with being social  
Changed high schools  
Changing view of leadership due to stress of unsuccessful leading  
Changing view of leadership towards relationships  
Collectivist culture background  
Comes out naturally - doesn't require action really  
Comes out selectively depending on perceived environmental support  
Comfort leading conversations with peers  
Comfort leads to greater involvement and more pushing of comfort zones  
Comfort with being out  
Comfort with identity leads to integration and comfort with leadership  
Comfortable integrating identity to leadership  
Comfortable managing change  
Comfortable talking and sharing ideas  
Comfortable with gay identity in HS  
Comfortable with identity prior to HS involvements  
Coming out was easy - little drama  
Commitment to serving others - through major and involvements  
Communication as strength  
Communication important in leadership  
Communication skills grew through involvements  
Compelled to engage  
Complacent to gay struggles in society  
Complicated family developed logistical skills  
Complicated family life at home  
Complicated family life developed navigation skills  
Concerned about ability to be people person  
Concerned about identity's impact on others - test the waters  
Concerned how others view her in community  
Confront challenges to rise to the challenge  
Considered involvement in LGBT orgs in college  
Contradiction in how leadership shows up differently  
Courses in LGBT studies  
Dated opposite gender for acceptance purposes  
Dating F to M

Definition influenced by MOSAIC retreat  
Depression in coming out  
Developed queer identity  
Did not feel connected to non-LGBT orgs early in college  
Different ways to be a leader - depends on scenario  
Differentiation between African and Black American identity  
Does not lead with sexual orientation identity  
Does not want to be seen as gay first  
Doesn't think about leadership much - if ever  
Doesn't think of self as leader  
Doesn't trust the ability of others  
Don't indoctrinate others  
Drawn to groups that allowed him/her to be more open  
Duty to engage in leadership  
Eager to be involved in college  
Earning Oxygen  
Ego needs to be kept in check  
Emotionally intelligent  
Empathy for community issue led to involvement  
Encouraged to be involved by others  
Encouraged to be involved in LGBT org through personal connection  
Encourages others to speak up  
Engagement was different due to organizational focus - not sexual identity per se  
Enjoys being a leader  
Evolution of conception of leadership to growth of others  
Explore all option before making decisions  
Explored identity safely before publicly  
Explored identity through internet in HS  
Explored involvement opportunities when new to college  
Exploring multiple opportunities  
Family - found stability with grandparents  
Family confused about her identity  
Family struggles with identity  
Family worried about him being gay - safety  
Father as role model for achievement  
Finding value in not being in charge - being helpful  
Finding voice and providing space for other voices  
Force things through  
Found courage to come out in uncomfortable setting  
Found personal passion for art through opportunities in HS  
Found supportive workplace in HS - at Sears  
Found way to contribute to group  
From manipulation & control to inclusiveness  
Frustrated by voice not being heard  
Frustrated with others' lack of investment  
Gained skills in logistics and seeing big picture

Gay as only part of personal history  
Gay gives perspective as minority  
Gay identity contributed to faster maturation  
Gay identity doesn't matter to involvement in HS  
Gay identity is important - but only part of identity  
Gay identity not tied to gay involvement in groups  
Gender and sexual orientation complicated  
Gender queer as gender  
Gender queer as gender identity  
Gets things done through education and networking  
Good communicator with others  
Greater comfort around queer people  
Greater sense of diversity within LGBT population  
Grew as activist in college  
Grew as activist in HS6  
Grew as leader through intensive involvement  
Grew politically aware in high school  
Grew up in very religious household - Jewish  
Growing comfort with giving constructive criticism  
Growing up in a predominantly Black community  
Growth of activist identity  
Hard worker  
Hearing multiple voices in group - PLC  
Hesitant to trust others to do their work  
Honors commitments  
Identifies as sexually fluid  
Identified as bisexual in high school  
Identified as lesbian in most of college  
Identifying important issue and creating org to address it  
Identity cannot be ignored  
Identity confusion in HS  
Identity influences relationships with others  
Immigrated to US as a young child  
Impact of hearing others' stories  
Importance of having a good team  
Importance of having a point of view  
Importance of paving the way for others  
Importance of role models with gay identity  
Importance of support of family  
Important to be educated about LGBT and political issues  
Important to be knowledgeable about issues  
Important to be proud and share identity  
Important to engage in issues that aren't yours  
Important to understand what's going on in others' lives  
Important to welcome everyone  
Including multiple viewpoints

Increased confidence in identity leads to greater SE  
Increased involvement in Pride Alliance  
Increasing involvement - help center  
Increasing salience of race and gender in new job  
Input from others is critical  
Interest in exploring personal identity - focus comes and goes  
Introspection important but a struggle  
Invested in institution  
Investment in group more important than position  
Involved before coming out  
Involved in Jewish community  
Involved in leadership in middle school  
Involved in LGBT issues in HS - but not out  
Involved in LGBT orgs before anything else  
Involved in LGBT orgs in college  
Involved in orgs based on racial identity  
Involved in publicly gay activities  
Involvement choices not impacted by SO or outness  
Involvement completed tied to identity  
Involvement driven by passion for issue  
Involvement due to awareness of injustices  
Involvement flowed from HS involvement  
Involvement grew as acceptance of self and from others grew  
Involvement in BES focused on organizational management  
Involvement in LGBT issues greater than race  
Involvement in LGBT orgs grew as personal comfort grew  
Involvement in smaller groups primarily  
Involvement influenced by personal history- but not always  
Involvement led to greater understanding of leadership  
Involvements need to speak to personal passions  
Involvement in LGBT events later in college  
Involvement in LGBT orgs as way to make connections  
Jewish background  
Journey from lesbian to queer identity  
Journey from bi to gay to sexually fluid  
Large immigrant family  
Lead by example  
Leaders need to not be silent  
Leadership about creating comfortable spaces for others  
Leadership about more than your one issue  
Leadership adjusts given the situation  
Leadership as accountability  
Leadership as actually doing something of importance  
Leadership as authenticity  
Leadership as being a good force in others' lives  
Leadership as being willingly led

Leadership as bringing people together  
Leadership as caring about things  
Leadership as catalyst to get something done  
Leadership as collaboration  
Leadership as commitment and investment  
Leadership as communication - persuasion  
Leadership as community involvement  
Leadership as connections with people  
Leadership as creating change  
Leadership as creating sustainability in organization  
Leadership as developing other leaders  
Leadership as effectively working with different groups  
Leadership as egalitarian  
Leadership as empathy  
Leadership as engagement with community  
Leadership as engaging with others  
Leadership as enjoyable activity  
Leadership as equality in decision making  
Leadership as facilitating people together  
Leadership as facilitator  
Leadership as finding saliency  
Leadership as getting things done with people  
Leadership as group process  
Leadership as having followers  
Leadership as having responsibility  
Leadership as helping group meet its goal  
Leadership as helping people develop as leaders on their own  
Leadership as horizontal structure  
Leadership as inclusion  
Leadership as influencing self and others  
Leadership as inspiring others to want to do things  
Leadership as listening to others  
Leadership as logistics  
Leadership as maximizing impact  
Leadership as meaningful experience - serious  
Leadership as mentoring  
Leadership as natural maturation  
Leadership as networking  
Leadership as networking behind the scenes  
Leadership as organization development  
Leadership as path to get into college  
Leadership as personal responsibility  
Leadership as positional in HS  
Leadership as positive reinforcement  
Leadership as relatability to people  
Leadership as resource

Leadership as responsibility  
Leadership as role to facilitate and delegate  
Leadership as seeing important need and addressing it  
Leadership as series of infinite steps  
Leadership as setting an example  
Leadership as social change model  
Leadership as social justice tool  
Leadership as someone who steps up  
Leadership as sustainability of organization  
Leadership as taking initiative  
Leadership as talent identification and use  
Leadership as valuing the work of others  
Leadership as vision  
Leadership as working with people and compromising  
Leadership balances logistics - representing others - and understanding others  
Leadership can come from anyone  
Leadership comfort doesn't change according to type of organization - but style might

Leadership connected to values  
Leadership courses in college  
Leadership demands action  
Leadership doesn't change based on LGBT focus of organization  
Leadership engages others in the process  
Leadership from big people with recognition to small things and non-recognized things

Leadership from positional to relational  
Leadership group or self directed  
Leadership growth through multiple involvements  
Leadership in HS as being in charge and making decisions  
Leadership in HS as charismatic - personality based  
Leadership in HS as control and manipulation  
Leadership in HS as getting things done  
Leadership in HS as hierarchy  
Leadership in HS as most involved - directive  
Leadership involves many roles  
Leadership is about others - not you  
Leadership is developing others  
Leadership is more than roles being fulfilled  
Leadership is natural - not an obligation - for him  
Leadership is situational - each org is different  
Leadership needs aptitude and passion both  
Leadership promoted by strong connections with others  
Leadership was being in front of people  
Leadership was inevitable for him  
Leadership was just involvement  
Leads the same in LGBT group and non-LGBT group

Learn from experience and grow  
Learned confidence at an early age  
Learning through failure  
Learning to rely on others  
Leaving your mark is important  
Lesbian label doesn't fit  
Less likely to take lead in politically engaged queer group  
Less rigid view of leadership  
LGBT identity integral to personal identity  
LGBT identity intersects with organizational relationships  
LGBT identity provides comfort talking about uncomfortable things  
LGBT involvement as springboard for other involvements  
LGBT leadership focused on social and activism  
LGBT org involvement helped him see role as supporter of others  
LGBT studies courses  
Lived with father primarily after divorce  
Looking for communities of identity in college  
Looking for involvements where he could make a difference  
Magnet type HS experience  
Maryland Leadership Workshops  
Maturation from being gay due to adversity  
MICA office  
Minority status in high school  
More comfort being true or full self when out in a group  
More comfort talking to opposite gender  
More confident with straight people due to race  
More likely to take lead when necessity occurs  
\_\_\_\_\_ leadership conference  
Multiple identities - double minority  
Natural leadership personality  
Nature of group determined degree of outness  
Navigating multiple identities  
Need to defend yourself - drives education  
Negative impact of discrimination  
New to college - looked to establish gay network of friends  
No community narrative from being gay growing up  
Not active in gay orgs - but attentive  
Not being out didn't impact SE in group  
Not being out hindered personal connections with others in groups  
Not experienced much discrimination  
Not involved in LGBT organizations  
Not involved in LGBT organizations in HS  
Not involved in LGBT orgs in college  
Not involved in third-party activities due to fiscal conservative nature  
Not out at first when group didn't seem to be about that  
Not out in HS

Not out on floor as freshman  
Not out to family in HS  
Not out to parents  
Obligation to be activist  
One of only Jews in high school  
Open to sharing about identity  
Others assumed LGBT identity  
Others assumed she was gay  
Others' performance is reflective of his leadership  
Out from beginning of college  
Out in every organization  
Out selectively in groups  
Out to everyone  
Out to everyone - does not announce it  
Out to family now  
Out to some family and not others  
Parents divorced  
Participatory leadership  
Passion is important in involvement  
Peer Leadership Council  
Personal awareness important prior to being a leader  
Personal comfort builds confidence in other settings  
Personal coming out as part of puberty - over course of one year  
Personal issues pale in comparison to world issues  
Personal persistence  
Placed self in opportunities important to her  
\_\_\_\_\_ involvement  
Political involvement predates queer identity  
Power in coming out and controlling degree of outness  
Power of words  
Pride Alliance involvement  
Pride Alliance involvement came early and rose quickly  
Pride Alliance involvement came later in college  
Pride Alliance TCOM involvement  
Private school  
Problem seeker  
Public and private school upbringing  
Queer identified  
Questioning capitalism  
Race more salient in gay settings  
Raised Catholic  
Raised to believe you are exceptional  
Range of choices in college leadership - easily to drop in and out  
Rebellious streak  
Recognizing privilege of Jewish community  
Recognizing that what she was doing was valid and valuable

Rejection is not an impediment to leadership  
Relationships impacted by not being out in situation or organization  
Representative leadership involvement  
Resiliency is strong  
Respect others' time  
Role model of father  
Role model parent and family  
Role more important than promoting sexuality  
Saw importance of voices being heard  
SE - Confidence breeds more confidence  
SE - Confidence leads to wanting to help others  
SE - Greater comfort with identity leads to more confidence to lead  
SE affected by ability to be true to self with others  
SE affected by being in the closet  
SE affected by insecurities - not SO  
SE affected by intense involvement over time with one organization  
SE affected by Jewish heritage  
SE affected by non-LGBT settings  
SE affected by not being able to be full self  
SE affected by perception of visibility or value of queer identity  
SE affected by personal passion and felt need  
SE affected by physical state in the moment  
SE affected by SO  
SE affected by success or failure  
SE affected by supportive environment  
SE as a double-edged sword  
SE bleeds into other aspects of life  
SE bolstered by ability to engage in conversation  
SE bolstered by broad exposure to different environments  
SE bolstered by confidence in identity  
SE bolstered by efficiency  
SE bolstered by encouragement - you can do it  
SE bolstered by general self-confidence  
SE bolstered by growing in your self-identity  
SE bolstered by having a positive impact on campus  
SE bolstered by having support of others in efforts  
SE bolstered by immersive experience  
SE bolstered by intensive leadership experiences  
SE bolstered by investment of others  
SE bolstered by others' positive views of group success  
SE bolstered by outlets that allow her to be herself  
SE bolstered by positive energy from others  
SE bolstered by positive feedback  
SE bolstered by resources and network  
SE bolstered by seeing organization grow  
SE bolstered by seeing value in what you are doing

SE bolstered by strong convictions  
SE bolstered by success  
SE bolstered by successful risk-taking  
SE bolstered by support system  
SE bolstered by working in different settings  
SE bolstered by working with others  
SE bolstered through practice  
SE bolstered through successful skill building  
SE bolstered when he knows everything is taken care of and people are communicating with him  
SE for gays no different than for heterosexuals  
SE grown through experience  
SE grows in comfortable spaces  
SE hurt by adversarial relationship and feedback  
SE hurt by extreme criticism  
SE hurt by failing  
SE hurt by foot in mouth  
SE hurt by identity confusion or struggle  
SE hurt by lack of investment from others  
SE hurt by others discrimination - even if not overt  
SE hurt by visibility - being in front  
SE hurt by wanting to be perfect  
SE impacted by being out - not being a lesbian  
SE leads to reaching out without worry of ridicule  
SE mostly unconscious until brought to mind through conversation  
SE not affected by outness if not relevant to setting  
SE not connected to being out in situation  
SE not connected to SO  
SE not different than for straight people  
SE not impacted by LGBT involvement  
SE not linked to gay identity  
SE tied to relationships with others  
SE tied to SO  
Secret relationship in HS  
Seeks involvements with opportunities to learn  
Seeks support and guidance  
Seen as leader in friend groups  
Selectively apply elements of personal life into settings  
Self-advocate for involvement  
Self-confidence  
Self-reflective more recently  
Self-silenced  
Serves as advice giver with friends  
Sexual orientation not a help or hindrance to leadership  
Small things matter and can have big impacts  
SO allows full self to be shown - increased confidence

SO as part of mental toolbox in engaging in leadership - only part  
SO created confidence in HS as only person who saw need for change  
SO created empathy and drive to create change for minorities  
SO identity not as salient as religious identity  
SO impacted type of organization involvement - ones about issues or creating change

SO influenced types of involvement  
SO is basic part of who you are  
SO just a part of whole identity - past belief  
SO not central to heterosexual's identity or involvement  
SO not related to SE in liberal college environment  
SO not relevant to Senate experience  
SO not relevant to SGA experience  
SO seen as more important to identity now - part of minority  
Social change as vehicle for effective leadership  
Social responsibility to being out  
Society has no common view of leadership - depends on who you ask  
Society sees leader as guider  
Society sees leaders as agitators  
Society sees leadership as being in charge - very structured  
Society sees leadership as being the boss  
Society sees leadership as charismatic  
Society sees leadership as foresight - filling a void needed  
Society sees leadership as heroic  
Society sees leadership as hierarchical  
Society sees leadership as leader-centered  
Society sees leadership as paperwork  
Society sees leadership as strong willing strong communicator  
Society sees leadership has secretive and shady  
Spiritual but not religious  
Sport team in HS  
Started LGBT organization  
Steps up when needed  
Strength of starting initiatives  
Stress affects positive feelings towards involvement  
Strong passionate confident personality - can put others off  
Strong personal confidence  
Structure should flex depending on type of organization  
Struggle seeing other ways of doing things  
Struggle with degree of vocal outness  
Struggle with multiple leadership styles  
Struggled with love interest in HS  
Struggles when people aren't on the same page  
Struggles with confidence to perform sometimes  
Subtle gay - not overt  
Success at balancing involvements led to more involvement

Success encouraging reaching beyond campus leadership  
Support made gay identity less salient or relevant  
Support of identity from others leads to greater comfort  
Supportive family  
Supportive infrastructures  
Tackle things that matter - personal issues pale  
Takes on too much - gets stressed out  
Takes responsibility very seriously  
Time alone as child - somewhat isolated as only child  
Timing of involvement matters  
Traditional family setting  
Using delegation and inspiration in college  
Values as part of leadership  
Values inclusion of others' opinions  
Values inclusive decision-making  
Values investment of others  
Valuing differences is unconscious  
Valuing differences more complicated than SO alone  
Valuing if involvement is worth the time  
Very involved in college  
Very involved in high school  
Very involved in Jewish community in college  
Very involved in leadership training program through college  
Very organizing - the go-to person for information  
Visibility and voice is important  
Visibility of identity is important  
Waste of time if not in leadership position  
Went back into closet freshman year  
Wondering how SO will impact future work world  
Would like to be more involved in LGBT groups or issues  
Would not be in organization where being out would be uncomfortable

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