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Gender Equity in Outdoor Adventures: How Gender Constructs Shape Engagement at the University of San Diego

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Abstract

Outdoor Adventures (OA) at the University of San Diego bridges the industries of outdoor education and higher education. This action research investigates the constructions of gender that inform programming and relationship building within OA. Through a survey and focus groups, I collected data from OA professional staff and student leaders. The purpose of this research was to explore how different genders engage with experiential learning in an outdoor setting through a lens of queer theory, by evaluating the engagement of OA professional staff and participants. My findings indicate that the constructs of gender inform the ways students experience their capacity for leadership, authenticity and belonging in Outdoor Adventures. From the data collected, I recommended that Outdoor Adventures and the University of San Diego continue to pursue gender inclusive practices that center the rights of all genders.

Introduction

Throughout my life I have always loved being outdoors and have discovered in recent years that the outdoors is one of the most impactful places for learning and growth. Although, when I was in outdoor spaces and eventually the professional outdoor industry, there was always a sense that I was less than because of my cisgender female identity. Through my experiences I learned that to be respected and successful in the outdoors you had to be male or embody masculinity. That realization reinforced the shame I was feeling regarding my gender identity, which is a social identity where I hold a large amount of privilege especially in comparison to my gender-expansive community members. My educational journey inside and outside the classroom are rooted in systems of power that mirror the patriarchal dominance that exists in many different industries, including, historically, higher education.

When I started working at the University of San Diego (USD), I was in awe of the female leadership that dominated Outdoor Adventures, which was in such contrast to my previous experiences. I also noticed that our office, while valued for its openness and encouragement of the LGBTQIA+ community, was lacking space for non-gender conforming, genderqueer, transgender or gender-expansive students. As a cisgender female queer person of color the outdoors and higher education has sometimes been an intimidating place for me to be my authentic self. This is the driving force into my inquiry of gender. I value equity in this research because I honor that gender is a multifaceted identity that requires a multifaced response in order to provide students with a fair opportunity to be successful in the collegiate system. For these reasons, the question guiding my research was: how can I promote equitable gender engagement in Outdoor Adventures?

My research question is structured around the idea of student engagement, which led me to the question: what is student engagement and why am I approaching engagement as a value?

Quaye and Harper define student engagement in the higher education setting and sets it apart from involvement, in that it encompasses an element of learning, enrichment, experience and challenge, all words that are pillars of an outdoor experience (2014). Student engagement, according to Quaye and Harper, is not solely on the student, but a responsibility of practitioners and the institution as a whole (2014). Engagement is the structure of my research and using this definition I can investigate in what ways does gender enhance, impact or inform the way that students navigate Outdoor Adventures.

Through my research I focused on fostering a greater sense of gender equity for all genders, especially marginalized genders, by examining the barriers that exclude the participating male-identified and female-identified students from engaging authentically in experiential education settings. I encouraged students and staff to reflect on the gender constructs that inform their collegiate reality and to hold space for other students that face greater danger when they are living their gender truths. The purpose of this study was to discover ways that gender had an impact on our program, that we may not know about, and to access if gender plays a role in student engagement. This study is my journey towards showing that responsible recreation in the outdoors is a space for people of all genders

Gender Discourse

As I explore how I can promote equitable gender engagement in OA, I want to acknowledge that the language in this research can seem bianaristic. Gender is not only a social identity that is used to sort and draw distinction between people, but it is also a "set of ideas about relations and behaviors" (Aikhenvald, 2016, p. 1). Gender is rooted in our language and is tied to linguistic categories that mirror our social and cultural stereotypes, which reflects the dominate male and female dichotomy (Aikhenvald, 2016). Nicolazzo (2017) offers that

> Language and categories are insufficient to capture the fluid nature of the various permutations of gender identities, expressions and embodiments that show up in various spatial and temporal locations. However, their seeming inadequacy, such categories are in many ways necessary in their ability to make individuals and populations culturally intelligible (Butler, 2006) as well as to help individuals find communities of support.

This research offered me, the researcher, space to improve the ways that I talk and communicate around issues of gender. Language is limiting because current terminology does not fully capture the fluid nature and various permutations of gender expression and identity (Nicolazzo, 2017; Renn, 2017). Throughout this project I use the term minoritized genders or gender-expansive to represent gender non-conforming, agender, bigender, gender fluid, genderqueer and transgender students in a way that might not always feel fully representative to who they are and for that I apologize. I will be using words such as male identified, male, men and masculine interchangeably. Sometimes these words will be used to describe individuals that embody characteristics of the gender binary that is associated with a cisgender male experience. I will also be using words such as female-identified, female, women and feminine in a similar fashion. I recognize that these words may not feel fully representative of the ways that cisgender students experience their gender and for that I apologize. Language will continue to be a limitation of this type of research and my apology is an acknowledgement that some language used has the potential to cause harm. The language we use is constantly shifting and evolving, but for the purpose of this research I will be operating from definitions of key terms that can be found in Appendix N.

There is great complexity to way that we use and employ notions of gender in our educational systems and social systems. It is important to me to recognize that our gender identities are inherently tied up in our understanding of sexual orientation, sex and issues of

privilege and oppression. I recognize that I discuss the differences that individuals face regarding gender it might feel natural to call it sexism. Sexism being the prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination, typically against women, on the basis of sex. But I would like to acknowledge that a person's sex is different from their gender and would like to instead use a relatively new term. I will use genderism to address "critiques of normative and binary social discourses of gender" (Nicolazzo, 2017, p. 10) and try to encompass the systems of power that guides the discourse throughout this research.

Literature and Theory

Historically the outdoor industry has been considered a "boys club" starting with the mountaineering in the 1700's through the dude ranches in the late 1800's and until recently there has been a shift towards empowering women in the outdoors (Martin, Breunig, Wagstaff & Goldenberg, 2017). The rising popularity of programs like REI's Odessa which focuses on empowering women in the outdoors and creating exclusively female spaces have added to the ecofeminism movement that centered issues of inequality between binary genders (Delay, 2003). Media content created for the outdoors has historically featured male achievement and encourages men to explore and dominate the field, while women who enter the field are criticized for prioritizing adventure over family duties (Delay, 2003). Delay (2003) also noted that when women are granted leadership positions in outdoor organizations they often are granted leadership because they embody the "right" (p. 8) traits to be a leader, those traits are considered more masculine and include things like technical skills, physicality, assertiveness and authoritarian leadership styles. Understanding the importance of the gender dynamics in the outdoor industry is important to this study because Outdoor Adventures (OA) represents an intersection of the outdoors and higher education.

A study found high involvement in extracurricular activities had a positive impact on students' evaluation of their college career (Woo & Bilynsky, 1994). This study defined involvement by time commitment to campus activities. Researchers administered a self-report measure of adjustment, the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (Woo & Bilynsky, 1994), to first-year college students at a predominantly White, state-supported institution. Students who had high or moderate time commitment to a group gained positively with respect to social adjustment and attaining academic goals. Males were the primary beneficiary of involvement in terms of their overall adjustment to college, social adjustment, and overall sense of belonging. Females relied more on personal support networks for adjustment to college than relying on organized activities. Males who reported low time commitment to campus activities scored consistently lower on all dimensions of adjustment (Woo & Bilynsky, 1994).

One of the limitations in studying engagement of diverse gender populations on campus is the way that data is gathered about gender. In much of the discourse around gender, there is a conversation about the gap between male and female students in higher education, but the literature rarely looks beyond this binary Yakaboski's (2011) research finds that,

> The National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) projected that, by 2014, the total female enrollment would increase to 58% of the 19.5 million students enrolled in higher education (Hussar, 2005, p. 8). The increase is expected to come mostly from traditional-age female students (24 or younger); while men will increase 12%, women are expected to increase by 21% (Hussar, 2005, p. 8–9).

The gap in gender is almost always presented as a problem that exists between two genders, delegitimizing the identity and importance of students with other genders (Wilchins, 2014). This demonstrates how research which strives to question the equality of opportunities afforded between genders can perpetuate the oppression of the TGNB students and leave out the

severe gap that exists in the admittance and retention of gender expansive students (Nicolazzo, 2017).

Researchers in higher education are tracking a shift in male engagement at colleges and universities, which also has a history of being dominated by males. Enrollment of women in higher education has significantly increased compared to males and there is a rising trend that males are under participating in college activities (Bowman & Filer, 2018). Male identified students are involved in higher instances of negative conduct and academic instances and high engagement in alcohol and substance abuse (Woo, 1994). Researchers suggests that men are expected to adhere to a code of rules and that this rigid conception of male gender norms creates a male gender role conflict that limits engagement in activities that would fall outside what is male (O'neil, 1981).

In OA we have a culture that blurs the influence of these two industries and that culture influences the individual experience our programming. We ask our students to use a verity of leadership styles, technical and interpersonal skills to build community. Our program asks students to voluntarily step into roles and tasks that are incongruent to their gender role because we have prioritized a feminist style of leadership. Leadership is traditionally associated with stereotypical male traits and behaviors (e.g., hierarchy, dominance, competition, authoritarianism, and task orientation) and is less often associated with stereotypical female values and qualities (e.g., harmony, concern for people, unity and spirituality, caring, and relationship orientation; Henderson & Bialeschki,1991). The nature of our program asks guides to embody some of all of those traits listed.

However, Wittmer reported that women in the outdoor field who experience gender role incongruency are more likely to be viewed negatively by participants (2001). Gender congruency theory explains the reinforcement of gender expectations in leadership roles and Wittmer

suggests that it is the responsibility of outdoor programs to develop competent, reflective outdoor leaders in order to create social change around gender expectations (2001). OA acknowledges the oppression of women in the outdoor industry throughout history and has committed to a feminist style of leadership that addresses this inequity. Feminist leadership "is the forms of leadership that focus on the correction of the invisibility, inequality, marginalization, and oppression that women have experienced in society" (Martin, Breunig, Wagstaff & Goldenberg, 2017).

Context

In my first few weeks in my position as a graduate assistant at the University of San Diego (USD) I was tasked with attending the Healthy Masculinities Summit that was held the summer of 2017. There we discussed the national and USD related trends around masculinity and brainstormed action steps we could take in our offices to promote male engagement. At the time I was extremely frustrated that as an institution we were discussing male identified people and their experiences with such care and yet I was still sitting with the ways I have hidden my femininity to be more successful in the outdoor field. During that summit I wondered how this conversation could be approached in OA that would allow students to talk about the leadership attributes or traits that make a successful outdoor leader. I wondered if those traits would be connected to the construct of masculinity. I also wondered what it meant that the leaders I saw most regularly and were the most involved tended to identify as cisgender female.

As a graduate assistant at University of San Diego's Outdoor Adventures, I will be engaging with my own gender identity as a cisgender female and examining how I perpetuate the socialization of gender roles in my office. I wish to see OA as a welcoming and diverse place for all students, but the unfortunate reality is university demographics, expectations of success placed on our office, and barriers, especially financially, impact our office's ability to recruit and

sustain diverse students of all social identities (Carrigan, 2017). One of the roles I have taken on in the office is to develop and maintain diversity and inclusion trainings for OA guides. While serving in that role I have noticed that gender diversity is the most visible of the social identities present in the student population we serve. The population of students we have historically and currently serve have been "primarily homogenous, particularly regarding racial and socioeconomic status" (Carrigan, 2017, p. 2).

There are varying levels of engagement opportunities in OA. In my role I support OA programming which consists of year-round adventure trips, the pre-orientation program and the guide program. If you are a student who has decided to register for a trip and do not have a leadership role on the trip you are considered a participant. Our student guides, who fulfill all leadership duties on a trip, range in level from new guide, apprentice guide, assistant guide and lead guide. The guide role is considered a volunteer role where students are compensated for their time by not paying for the trip they are guiding, discount rentals and preferred trip registration. Students in guiding positions are ranked by experience and certifications, not necessarily by number of years at USD or age.

My research is built on a legacy of two previous action research projects: first completed in 2014 about how students experience belonging and mattering during our pre-orientation adventures and the second completed in 2017 about fostering visual inclusivity (Carrigan, 2017; Chiddik, 2014). My research aims to deepen OA's understanding of inclusion and diversity through the lens of engagement. When students feel like they belong and matter to an institution they are more engaged in purposeful activities and persist through to graduation (Harper & Quaye, 2014). The sense of belonging and mattering is enhanced when students feel like their institutions care about their identities and unique challenges (Harper & Quaye, 2014). Haper and

Quaye's observations inspired me to look deeper into how students felt connected to our programming and if they felt supported in their gender identities.

I knew through conversations with my students that women identified students felt a strong sense of belonging in our program and that engagement benefited them in other aspects of their college experience. My experiences here at USD have lead me to do a lot of reflection around my understanding of gender and how it is used to target and program for students. I wanted to use my action research to honor the values of myself and those of the queer community to emphasis that gender is a construct that has dictated systems of power in our educational experiences, inside and outside. I wanted a way to recognize that we have developed a program that encourages strong female leadership, while also acknowledging that the males that participate in our program are not as engaged in our efforts. I also wanted to explore the ways that we perpetuate binary gender expectations in our office, whether that be mandating a splitting of genders in overnight sleeping arrangements or by valuing "masculine" traits in guides and devaluing "feminine" traits. The professional leadership of OA has been extremely supportive of my research and hopes that through this research we will be more equipped to recognize when gender is playing a role in our decision making.

Research Methods

Through this research I wanted to focus my practice as a higher education practitioner and an outdoor educator. McNiff and Whitehead model of action research allows me to follow cycles of observe, reflection, plan and action that calls upon my own buy in (McNiff & Whitehead, 2016), but also the participation and buy in of those that are apart of Outdoor Adventures. Using participatory action research as the method of exploration allowed me to design a research project that was driven by my values. McNiff and Whitehead talk about how a person's values become the guiding principles of research and that action research is a means for

testing the validity of the researcher's ability to live up to those values (2016). I was drawn to using action research to help me align my values with the lived practice of those values throughout my work.

When I was planning what my research I kept returning to my identity as a queer woman of color and my allyship with the gender expansive community. I identified early on that my research on gender would uphold my ontological value of gender being a fluid and socially constructed. I wanted to keep a queer lens throughout my research to the best of my ability. Luckily for me action research by nature queers the institutional relationship between the researcher and the researched and challenges the institutionalized dominance that exists within theory, data collection and claims to knowledge (Browne & Nash 2010). The nature of action research reflects the queer values that have guided me through this work. When designing my research I relied on the flexibility that exists within the structure of action research that deconstructs the rigidity in which knowledge is produced and validates the relational mechanism in which truths emerge. This play and flexibility is not only the way I approach the construction of my research, but also the exploration of gender that is centered in my work.

Queer Theory

While building the focus of this research I was having a hard time resisting the institutional norms of representing gender on a binary. I anticipated that it will be hard to hold space for students that exist outside the binary that are not currently visible within Outdoor Adventures. I decided to use queer theory as a tool to deepen the exploration of gender identity development. Browne and Nash explain that "queer scholarship in its contemporary form is anti-normative and seeks to subvert, challenge and critique a host of taken for granted 'stabilities' in our social lives" (2010, p. 7).

It is important to me that my research communicates how queer theory can offer liberation for all genders to operate without the oppression of gender. I assumed that students in OA would have not spent much time thinking about how their gender shapes their experience because most students identify as female or male and attend a university that offers programming and services for these specific identities. I expected that student will need to take time to reflect on their gender and how it plays a role in their engagement and leadership. My positionality as the researcher and a member of the OA community allows me to make space for to prime these conversations and highlight the importance of analysis gender as a social identity. One challenge that exists throughout this is my own identity and assumptions that I have developed through my own experience of educational spaces. It is important that the questions I ask of participants avoid the perpetuation of my own gender biases and does not mislead the answers that I receive. I anticipated I may use language and ask questions that obfuscate the diversity of all genders that could exist at USD and perpetuate binary thinking.

Design

The spirit of action research will also allow me to use the structure of Kolb's (1984) theory of experiential learning to layer structure to my inquiry as I move through the cycles offered by the model of action research. Something that is important about the nature of our work in OA is that we develop students through experiential learning. Facilitation of experiential learning is one of the core competencies of being an outdoor leader (Martian, 2017). For this study it would be appropriate to apply Kolb's cycle of experiential learning to enhance and structure my interventions with similar language that is already used in the outdoor field. Kolb's expression of learning as a continuous process where theories are formed and reformed through experience will allow me to discuss the learning that is done during and between cycles (Kolb, 1984). Kolb's cycle consists of being a part of an experience, taking the time to reflect on the

experience, abstract conceptualization and then active experimentation (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2016). Kolb's theory of experiential learning is the structure that guided the design of the research as a whole.

The experience of being in Outdoor Adventures and a member of our community will act as the concrete experience stage of Kolb's (1984) cycle. Participants, guides and staff members in OA are all actively taking part in an experience together and are engaging in the culture we create together. The reflect and observe cycle will be driven by the data already collected by OA and insight provided by the survey's that will be administered in Cycle 1. Pulling from the data from the community I planned to host focus groups that represent different gender identities to formulate the abstract conceptualization cycle of Kolb's theory. The last cycle of my research will consist of the whole community gathering to do active experimentation around what has emerged in the previous cycles. Throughout the design process I relied on a group of critical friends that were assigned to us during the design page to help me clarify the intention behind each cycle and to help me think through my decision making. Their willingness to ask questions and give suggestions strengthened my cycles and helped me stay committed to the goal of this action research.

Participants

Originally when designing this research, I had the intention of reaching out to the greater USD community in order to understand why students decided not to interact with our office. I wanted to focus my efforts on getting data from the queer community and particularly students who identified as TGNB. I intended on leveraging the relationships I have built with students at the USD SPARK LGBTQIA+ and Allies Retreat to get insight on why they were not engaged with us. After reflecting on how I would go about approaching these students I realized that my cycles were focused on active guides in our programs. I concluded that approaching the

LGBTQIA+ community at USD to collect data on why they have not decided to engage in our program was me assuming that students who identified within that community do not already participate. I also felt like that approach also continued to perpetuate the idea that gender inclusion is work that the LGBTQIA+ community is responsible for. I felt that reaching out to LGBTQIA+ groups on campus would continue the tokenism of their voices and experiences, when the intention of my research was to promote gender equity in OA

These reflections energized me to refocus my research on the community of active guides that currently participate in OA. The active guides had made a commitment to be engaged in our program and every guide had a gender identity that was worthy of exploration. Guides that I reached out to represent all levels of guides and new guides. Some have participated in one trip, others participate in 2-3 trips a semester with us, or operate as lead guides. All students that participated in the cycles had engaged with us on some level and were exposed to the culture that OA cultivates. In order to represent the dynamic levels of responsibility to culture that exist in OA, my participants included OA guides and professional staff of OA. I invited people to participate directly through my pre-established relationships. I invited participants through various email and word of mouth communications to participate (see Appendices B and C).

The Cycles

Overview

I used mixed quantitative and qualitative methods to gather data throughout my cycles. My primary methods for gathering data was through focus groups, survey data and observations. The progression of my cycles became more relational over time and reflections included not only my own reflections but those of my community members. After my initial reflections and needs assessment I decided that I would use Kolb's experiential learning model as a tool for organizing my research and rely on McNiff and Whitehead's action-reflection cycles to conduct my cycles (2016, p. 9). My cycles included observations, administering a worksheet, semi-structured focus

groups and concluded in a community reflection. A visual representation of those cycles is represented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Research Cycles Guiding Gender Equity in Outdoor Adventures

Cycle	**Action**	**Intention**
Pre-cycle	Review data on past guide participation and develop gender worksheet	Situate the concreate experiences of guides in the Outdoor Adventures program
Cycle 1	Administer gender worksheet as a survey and observe a weekly guide meeting.	Capture the reflections and observations that guides have about the traits of outdoor leaders and their gender.
Cycle 2	Host focus groups for different stake holders in OA.	Facilitate groups through conceptualizing how OA impacts the gendered experience.
Cycle 3	Create a space for community reflection	Encourage the community to envision how to apply concepts that emerged.

Each of my cycles will be described in three stages: Action, reflections and realizations. This format was used by Carrigan in his research on fostering inclusivity and I choose to use it because of its effectiveness in centering the researcher's experience and learning throughout each cycle (2017). In my *action* section I will describe what was done in each cycle that was administered. The *reflection* section will serve as a place to report my initial reactions and personal learning. Finally, the *realization* section I will articulate how that learning informed any changes I made to the following cycles or to my practice. The findings from all the cycles will be reported in the analysis of themes section after the initial reporting of the cycles themselves.

Pre-cycle: Review of Data and Development of Gender Survey

Action. Outdoor Adventures keeps a guide contact sheet that lists currently active guides in the program. The guide contact sheet includes guides' names, email, phone, class standing,

guide level, student identification number, home city, and certifications. All participants of OA are required to fill out an assumption of risk form and health form. On the health form any participant of our program is asked to fill out personal information that includes a place to circle a M or F option, which is assumed to refer to some sort of sex or gender identification, however it is not clearly labeled on our form. Using health forms and the assumptions OA has made about gender I compiled a list of guides in our program and their guide level. Simultaneously, I developed the worksheet I would administer to participants of my research to collect data on their personal identifications including gender identity, gender expression and their experience of gender.

Reflection. Currently, in OA a majority of our student leaders are female-identified and they continue to challenge the historic male precedent that has been set by the outdoor industry We consider the most engaged students in our guide programs to be active guides and students who we haven't seen in a while or haven't reached out to us over a long period of time as inactive. In all of our programming for the 2017-2018 school year, which included day trips, overnight trips and training trips we had a participation rate that was 68% female and 32% male. In 2016-2017, that rate was 69% female and 31% male identified students. The data around low male engagement in higher education reflects the participation we see at OA. The gender breakdown of active guide participation over the past two years is represented in represented in Table 2.

Table 2

Active Guides Participating in Outdoor Adventures Throughout 2016-2018 by Gender

Guide Status:	Female 2017-2018	Male 2017-2018	Other Gender 2017-2018	Female 2016-2017	Male 2016-2017	Other Gender 2016-2017

4th Year (or more) Returning Guide	11	1	-	10	6	-
3th Year Returning Guide	16	8	-	12	1	-
2nd Year Returning Guide	19	7	-	12	2	-
New Guides: Mixed Year Status, Majority 1st Year:	32	10	-	34	19	-

Note: that the "other gender" category is represented by a line and not a 0 because there has been inadequate tracking of students who might identify other than male and female.

While I was compiling this data, it was hard for me to avoid generalizing or assuming the gender of our active students due to the inadequate ways we have collected information. Another tool for gathering information about a student's gender that we use is Salesforce, which is an online database where we can access the demographic information that students report to USD. The options for gender on salesforce are male, female, none or not applicable. The gender of a student is used on a regular basis to plan sleeping arrangements, help determine the kind of gear we provide to a student and to assign guides to trips. There was a dissonance for me as a researcher during this cycle because the limited ways that we collected information on gender enforced the rigidity of gender constructs. For the most part students' gender was evaluated based on the visual expression of an individual and their name. If a student was not clearly identifiable then we would rely on a student's health survey or information on Salesforce to help clarify. This a direct contradiction to the way that I have defined gender, gender identity and gender expression in alignment with the inclusion of diverse genders.

Realizations. In the creation of my worksheet, that I would use as a survey, I knew that I wanted to experiment with allowing students a chance to report their gender, gender identity and expression in more detail. I assumed that by creating space for students to accurately describe their genders some of that dissonance I felt earlier would be alleviated. I created a worksheet that allowed students to report their gender identity and gender expression on multiple continuums. I

also allowed students to report their sex assigned at birth as male, female, other/intersex, separate from their gender identities. I was intentional in leaving out sexual and romantic attraction from the worksheet, which is usually included in diversity trainings, under the assumption that gender had no relation to one's sexual orientation. The pairing of sexual orientation and gender was an early assumption of Lev's (2004) gender identity model that assumed a binary heterosexual experience of gender. Lev proposed that within that binary system the sex of a person informed their gender identity, expected gender role and ultimately their attraction to the opposite sex (2004). My intention was to avoid falling into the same fallacy that was represented in Lev's work as well as mainstream assumptions around gender by conflating sexual orientation and gender.

Cycle 1- Leadership Development and Gender Development in OA

Action. In my first cycle I administered the worksheet that I had created as a paper survey and observed a weekly guide meeting that was held on October 16th, 2018. The theme of that week's guide meeting was what skills and traits were needed to effectively guide in the program. This guide meeting was open to anyone who participated in the guide program. It was a significant meeting because the students leading it were returning guides and the purpose of the meeting was to orient new guides and refresh other returning guides around the spirit of leadership that was embodied within OA. The meeting began with me getting consent of the students in attendance, no students in attendance refused to participate, to be a part of my survey (see Appendix G). Then I administered the survey and observed the rest of the meeting as planned by the return guides.

In the first part of the survey I asked students to report their gender demographic information (see Appendix I). Then I paired the second part of the survey to compliment the theme of the guide meeting by asking students four questions. The first question was: *What are*

your earliest memories of gender? The second question was: *What are three qualities of a guide?* (see Figure 1). The second question was: *How much do you feel like your gender has affected whether or not you have these qualities and why?* (see Figure 2).

My intention with the sequence of questions was to reflect the way gender identity development occurs over a lifetime. I asked students to reflect on their earliest memory as a way to identify the experiences that helped students learn their gender. Bussey (2011) asserted that "gender identity is informed by knowledge of one's biological sex and of the beliefs associate with gender, how one is perceived and treated by others depending on one's gender, and an understanding of the collective basis of gender" (p. 608). The other questions were meant to reveal if students' gender identity informed the way that they were treated and perceived as qualified leaders in the outdoor program.

A total of thirty-seven out of the thirty-seven attendees at the guide meeting participated in my survey giving it an 100% response rate. A complex visual representation of the gender identities and gender expressions that students reported can be found in Appendix J. The advantage of administering the survey in person at the meeting was that I was able to capture a large amount of responses from guides at one time and had a high response rate mostly because I had a captive audience. I do believe that the amount of responses to my survey would have been about the same, if not more if I sent it out as an electronic survey to the guide population as a whole. A limitation of this technique was that I only was able to capture the voices who could attend the meeting so students that had other obligations during that time, like class, were unable to provide feedback. However, the survey was enhanced by the observations that I gathered from the rest of the meeting's activities. I decided not to send the survey electronically to guides who were not in attendance at the guide meeting because the students who attended that meeting represented a large portion of the OA population already.

When I compiled the answers to what qualities make an OA guide I expected there to be more words related to technical skill and ability. A majority of the words that guides mentioned were interpersonal in nature. Below is a word cloud of the responses from that question (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Word Cloud from Gender Survey Responses. A majority of the words that guides mentioned were interpersonal in nature.

Compassion, leadership and empathy were the words that were repeated with the most frequency in answers that guides provided. A majority of the words were aligned with the relational values that are associated with the interpersonal skills of leadership. Words like compassion, caring, helpful and kindness align with traits that are associated with a bianaristic stereotypes in outdoor education leadership that are labeled as feminine (Bond Rogers & Rose, 2019). Rodgers and Rose (2019) identify that feminine leadership is defined by collaborative and communal leadership that focuses on the emotional wellbeing of a group. A study done by Haber (2012), in the higher education field reflects the findings in outdoor educational leadership, concluding that

college women more often "defined leadership as a collaborative process resulting in positive change and associated admirable personal character traits and qualities with leadership" (p.37). When asked to identify their gender in an open-ended way 70% of survey respondents wrote that they identified as a female and 30% wrote that they identified as male and 0% responded outside of the binary. It was nearly impossible to tell if the qualities of answers are because of the gender socialization of women and perceived assumptions about female leadership or if the nature of our programing values those traits, based off the survey alone.

Reflection. In response to whether or not students felt like their gender has made an impact on their ability to have the qualities of a guide students answered on four-point scale from *most of the time* to *never*. The responses to the second question are reported in Figure 2. Forty-nine percent of respondents answered that some of the time they felt like their gender had affected whether or not they had the qualities they listed a guide should have.

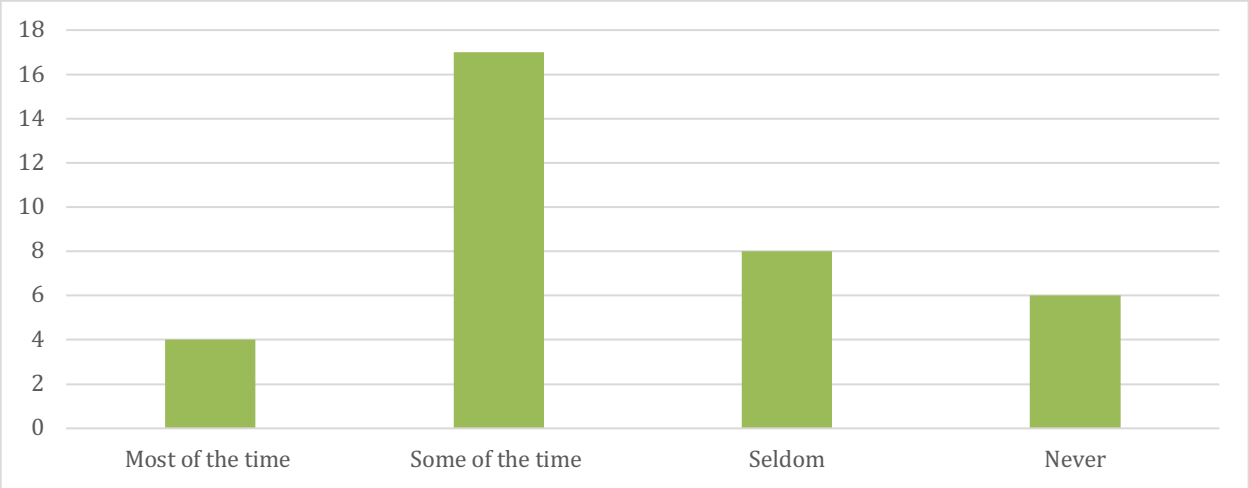

Figure 2. Participant answers to survey question, "How much do you feel like your gender has affected whether or not you have these qualities?"

When asked why they rated genders influence on their leadership qualities participants reported there was a wide range of answers. Fourteen students answered that to some extent they were socialized to uphold certain norms and behaviors associated to their gender and that

influenced how they embodied the leadership traits they listed. Eight students responded by saying they felt that gender was not an indication of whether or not they had the qualities they listed or that gender did not indicate anything about a person's leadership ability. One student's response to this question was "women are subconsciously geared more empathetic traits as that is the way they have been raised by society." Another student mentioned that "I feel women are expected to be compassionate, and men are sometimes shamed for showing emotions, but feel it is expected and welcomed when I show compassion."

Realizations. While I was preparing for this cycle and reviewing the materials I had prepared I wrote a reflection about the strong sense of fear I had about the work I was doing. I was struggling to hold the paradox that was created by my espoused values about gender identity and the expectation of gathering data in practice. I wanted to create a space for people to express their full gender identity and be able to do that openly, but I worried that that information could not be quantified or categorized easily. I felt pressure to conform to ways of knowing and presenting gender that felt familiar or comfortable. I felt that if I were to honor people's complicated gender identity fully that it would negate the institutional validation and importance of my research. I settled on an imperfect way to capture gender during the survey partially out of convenience for me as the researcher.

Although this was only a small snapshot of the guides that participate in our program, it was telling by the responses from students that they felt like the leadership traits that guides expected themselves to have paralleled feminine leadership. Feminine leadership styles emphasize building relationships, enhancing organization, encouraging group decision making and empowering others, according to Haber-Curran and Sulpizio (2017).

The survey, while offering perspective on the environment that OA cultivates, lacked information on the ways students felt supported in their gender identities through our

programming. I was surprised by how students' answers highlighted how external forces such as parents or society dictated students' understanding of their own identity. One student responded, "I feel that my parents and peers encouraged these values" for why they felt their gender affected whether or not the had open, welcoming, respectful and friendly traits. Other students pointed to relationships they had with male family members for why they had an adventurous trait.

Cycle 2: Focus Groups with OA Stake-holders

Action. Originally, I had planned for this cycle to be focus groups that were specifically focused on different stakeholder groups in Outdoor Adventures. I intentionally created a professional staff member focus group separate from the students based off Carrigan's (2017) reflection on his second cycle. He said that if he were to design his research again, he would have included an opportunity for professional staff members to examine the influence they have on students' development throughout the program.

During a meeting with the faculty advisor overseeing my research I was challenged on my decision to have gender specific focus groups. It was brought to my attention that if my research was focused on the queering of constructs, a gender separation could contradict that intention. After much reflection I recommitted to having gendered focus groups for students because Wilchins (2014) concludes that "gender stereotypes cause real, profound and pervasive social suffering and hardship" (p.153). My thought process was that if students had a space to gather with those that shared similar identities they would be more open to expressing vulnerability with one another. Harris and Lester (2014) recommends that colleges develop reflection opportunities for students make sense of their gender identity development and recognize that in "some cases these groups may need to be homogenous in nature, given the unique needs and challenges students may face" (p.110). As the cycle progressed I was glad that

I had chosen this path as I felt that students were able to focus on the sameness of their shared experience rather than make space for those that identified different from themselves.

Professional Staff. The first focus group I hosted was attended by the entirety of the four-professional staff of Outdoor Adventures; The Assistant Director, Program Coordinator, part time Program Support and myself. I had participants sign consent forms (see Appendix A) and reminded them that their participation was completely voluntary and that they could end their participation at any time. I then distributed a modified version of the worksheet so that participants had time to reflect on their gender (see Appendix H). On the worksheet were definitions of gender identity, gender expression and sex assigned at birth that were pulled from Trans Student Education Resource's Gender Unicorn activity. A table with the gender identities, gender expressions and sex assigned at birth can be found in Appendix J. From there I asked the attendees all of the questions that were listed on the focus group script for Professional Staff (see Appendix D). These questions differed from the other script because it asked questions like: How have you experienced your gender in your professional careers? Is there a pattern of students you are drawn to creating close mentoring relationships with? And how have you seen gender shape the focus of our programing and leadership? The conversation was mostly structured however participants would respond to each other and ask questions of each other periodically. I participated in the focus group a member of the professional staff and interjected in the conversation to share my personal experience.

Reflection. Based off feedback that I have received during the focus group I decided to write the questions out for all participants to see as well as read them aloud so that various learning styles could be accommodated for in the other focus groups.

Gender expansive, Transgender, Genderqueer, Agender, Bigender, Gender Non-Conforming/Binary, and Two-Spirit Focus Group. A week before the three focus groups met

for students I sent out a reminder email to the guide program the sequence of focus groups and invited them to attend whichever they felt fit their identity the best. In the email I sent out the most comprehensive list of other genders I could create with my knowledge and invited students to attend the first focus group. I also sent out a reminder email on each day of the focus group to the entirety of the guide program email list and reminded folks by word of mouth. I held the focus groups every Wednesday night during the month of February. This focus group was not attended at all by anyone in the guide program.

Reflection. I had anticipated that no guides would show up to this focus group based on my observations over the past two years being involved in the program and from the mostly binary data I had received from previous cycles**.** My assumption is that there is no student currently active in our program that identifies with these genders. It could be entirely possible that students in our program do identify this way, but they are not out or want to disclose that information, especially if they pass on the binary. The other possibility is that there are students who identify this way but were unavailable during the time that this focus group was scheduled.

Female Gender Identity Focus Group. For this iteration of the focus group I had six guides reached out to me before the meeting to confirm that they would be in attendance through email and three confirmed verbally. Eleven guides participated in the focus group and one guide who was unable to attend due to time constraints submitted answers to the questions by email later that week. All of the guides who attended this meeting identified themselves as female. Similarly, to the professional staff focus group we started by having participants consent to the study (see Appendix A) and fill out the gender demographics worksheet (see Appendix H) and then followed the scripted questions tailored for the student experience (see Appendix E).

The conversation was fairly structured, but participants engaged each other in clarifying questions or to offer comments in response to the experiences shared. I limited my engagement

in the conversation but added to the conversation where I had experienced something in OA as a female-identified member of the community.

Reflection. There was a feeling on kinship that was overwhelming as the group shared and I noticed that I was not able to be in that space without sharing in that kinship due to my shared identity with the participants. It was not possible for me to run these focus groups without my own gender identity and gender expression impacting the way that the participants were experiencing me as the researcher. However, the authority that I carry as a graduate assistant was mentioned on a few occasion's by participants who were sharing experiences where professional staff members had influenced OA culture or impacted their identity development.

Male Gender Identity Focus Group. I had four males confirm with me through email and two in person, that they would be attending the focus group earlier in the week. Seven students all of whom identified as male attended the focus group which was structured exactly the same as the previous one. However, in this focus group the participants had questions regarding the worksheet and asked to be directed on how to fill out their gender identities and expressions. A student asked if wearing a dress on Halloween would inform their gender expression and another student clarifies that it would depend on the intention behind wearing the dress. The first student decided that a dress on Halloween did not indicate a feminine gender expression in that instance. Another male student asked for clarification about the definition of gender expression and wanted to understand if gender expression only visible or audible. As a group we concluded that based off the definition on the worksheet gender expression are external or physical manifestations of one's gender identity. From there the conversation followed the script of focus group questions that were the same for all three student groups (see Appendix E).

Reflection. Although I facilitated the flow of this final focus group, I did not interject in this conversation as much because I was very aware of the fact that I do not identify or share the

same experiences of the students who identified as male. There was no way for me to re-enact the exact same environment for these focus groups because I was unable to change my gender identity to match that of the group. I thought about have a male pro-staff member facilitate the conversation, but unfortunately, they were unavailable. I am curious if the conversation would have been different if it was a male exclusive space.

One of the students stayed after the focus group and gave me some feedback on the Likert scale I had chosen for the gender worksheet. He told me that he thought he felt a hesitation to circle *almost never true* on the feminine and other gender continuums because it was not an absolute, like *never true* would have been. I had purposefully chosen a scale that ranges from *almost never true* to *almost always true* to represent the concept of an endless gender continuum. I did not expect that my decision to honor the fluidity of gender would deny him the ability to accurately report their gender identity. This student also said that because of his experience of masculinity he felt that others would feel uncomfortable with the ambiguity that *almost never true* created. He expressed that if the option was *never true* that it would indicate a masculine identity expression that was purer. He spoke to the fact that he had been socialized in some sense to not show or embody any characteristics other than masculinity in his gender and that even having a slight association was tied to the homophobia that had been reflected in those around him.

Overall Realizations. The multiple focus groups in this cycle was rich with personal storytelling about gender that offered a very layered understanding of the gendered experience. l I realized that while gender is a complex identity that can be hard to address, it was a conversation that people wanted to engage in. Many participants expressed a gratitude for having the space to have conversations about gender that usually are not held regularly.

The most profound learning for me was the moments where the queering concept of gender was met by the rigidity of binary gender constructions. In the male-identified focus group students shared that they felt like the expectation to uphold and perform the purest form of masculinity did not allow themselves or peers an opportunity to express the type of flexibility this research was focusing on. I think that there is so much more information and knowledge to be explored at the boundary where the normative gender practices meet the subversion of that normality.

I also realized the impossible nature of isolating gender from other identities that we hold. Throughout the focus groups and in conversations held after the focus groups participants talked about their sexual orientation informing their understanding of gender differences. A professional staff member asked if it was possible to change their gender worksheet after reflecting on multiple times they were assumed to be gay by people in their life. Their conclusion was that they must present more femininely than they originally indicated because of their mistaken sexual orientation. A participant in the male focus group shared that their bisexual/gay sexual orientation heavily informed their understanding of their gender and how they chose to perform that gender on a daily basis. The intersection of gender with other identities was unescapable during this research and leaves space for more exploration in future attempts.

Cycle 3: Community Reflection

Action. In this cycle I invited OA guides and professional staff members of any gender to join in a community reflection on the cycles up to this point and to envision how this information could be used moving forward. The community reflection was attended by six students and I was the only professional staff member present. The other professional staff members had scheduling conflicts that kept them from attending the community reflection. One of the six students had not been present at one of the other focus group sessions, but the other five had already participated

in either the female or male identified focus groups. At the beginning of the reflection I presented on the themes that had emerged from the previous two cycles and provided a brief primer on queer theory. The primer was used as a means to clarify the lens that I had been using to approach the work and to explain the queer related themes that I had identified. After the presentation we silently created a mind map with the word gender as the starting point of the map. The cycle concluded with a dialogue about the experience and recommendations that OA could adopt moving forward.

Reflection. The final cycle of this research was not as well attended as I had originally envisioned. The lack of other professional staff members at the reflection was a limitation of the cycle that ended up narrowing the focus of the reflection to the students' personal experience, rather than to OA as a whole. I am unsure if it was the unknown structure of the reflection or the content of the reflection, but students seemed less engaged in this cycle then the previous two. It seemed to me that there was hesitancy during the mind mapping and dialogue portion that was not as present in the focus groups.

I got the sense that the word queer still carried a stigma and direct connection to LGBTQIA+ community. These observations reminded me that queer theory is not widely utilized or accepted beyond marginal academic communities due to its philosophical nature (Wilchins, 2014). It also could be that the word queer is not yet a verb for many people. Queer is a descriptor reserved LGBTQIA+ bodies born from the gay and trans rights movements. Wilchins writes that "almost everything about gender transgression is surrounded by shame and discomfort for many people" (2014, p. 166). Hearing the word queer applied to a cisgender experience may be uncomfortable for a majority of the students who participated.

Realizations. My approach and radical acceptance of queer theory in this cycle ultimately ended up creating an environment that I perceived to be just beyond student's comfort

levels right after the third cycle. Originally, I had set out to promote gender equity in Outdoor Adventures through my cycles and the results of this last cycle left me feeling like I had not accomplished what I wanted. I have to admit that even as the researcher, I struggled to articulate the intricacies of queer gender theory without inevitably failing to hold the complexities of gender. My own socialization as a cisgender female and gender expression as such created barriers throughout this project. I felt like I had not created the impact that I was hoping for in this last cycle and it felt like a disappointment. When I was transcribing the session however I heard that the students were receptive to using queer theory as a lens to approach gender in OA. I realized that I had internalized the fear and shame that surrounded queerness and I was reflecting that onto my participants during my reflection of the effectiveness of the cycle.

At its core queer theory is about individuals being authorized to articulate who they are, how they see themselves and how they want the world to see them (Wilchins, 2014). In Outdoor Adventures our programming strives to develop the personal growth and leadership through a greater understanding of one's self in relation to the environment around them. During the reflection a student said that "queering fits right in into nature and the outdoors as a place that is limitless and being an OA guide is about being compassionate, as the word cloud showed [from Cycle 1]". Queer theory to me compliments the journey of student development that is upheld in the student affairs field and this exploration into gender will inform my engagement with students moving forward.

Students during the reflection had recommendations for OA to continue the conversation about gender after the conclusion of this research. They recommended that OA keep the conversation going by creating designated trainings to talk about gender identity and the role it plays in guiding. They recommended training students on how to articulate the impact of gendered interactions and why those are key to the inclusion of all genders. A student referenced

how they felt policed to use inclusive language and shamed using “hey guys.” They recommended that guides be more specific about how language can impact others when educating and pointing out the use of “hey guys.”

Analysis of Themes

Based on the responses from participants throughout the three cycles several themes emerged. The following themes are organized through Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model, which describes environments as contexts of development (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The model describes five systems: individual, microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems, and macrosystems. Evans et al. (2016) emphasizes the impact that environment or ecology that surrounds a student can play a major role in gender development, especially higher education institutions. Bronfenbrenner’s model will give insight to the way different systems inform each other and shape how students experience gender.

Individual

Gender as an identity reflects “the interface between the individual and the world” (Josseleson, 1987, p.8). Wilchins writes that people “do gender as a way of expressing and communicating: This is who I am, this is how I see myself, this is how I want you to see me” (2014, p.150). Participants articulated throughout the study the various ways gender was an expression of their individual experience. These experiences fell into two main categories: Self authorship of gender and the intersection of gender and sexuality.

Self-authorship of gender. OA’s pre-orientation trips were referenced often by participants as a time of transition where defining one’s sense of self was crucial. One participant shared, “I think something that is really special about OA pre-o’s is that coming out of high school and feeling like I had been presenting myself a certain way for so many years and getting the chance to present myself in a way more authentic way from the beginning.” Authenticity in

one's sense of self in relation to their gender came up as participants shared stories about how the college allowed them to explore who they were. Participants shared that throughout childhood they would embody characteristics or participate in activities that were outside their gender expectations. This deviation from gender norms made some of the participants feel less or categorized outside their gender. One participant said that "OA gives you a space to be more than what you look like. That is how they support you in all of your identities and not just our gender identity but in our sexuality and in how we are and how we perceive ourselves." Some participants shared that they came to accept their deviations as a part of who they were that they were able to express themselves authentically.

Gender Identity separated from Sexual orientation. Social justice education on gender suggests that there be a distinction between gender issues and how those are different from the experiences of lesbian, gay, and bisexual students. Nicolazzo suggests that it is important to be able to hold the similarities and distinctions between these two identities as student affairs professionals create and maintain inclusive spaces (2017). They argue that cultivating the ability to hold the complexity and intersectionality of the trans* experience will help to broaden the discourse in higher education. Participants in the study spoke often about the intersection of these two identities and how together they have informed student's understanding of their gender identity. One participant said that "the female environment [in OA] has made it easier for me to express not only my gender identity, but it is weird to say my sexual identity to. Coming here where it is like being gay is just a part of you and it is discovering that I am not just the token gay kid anymore." Some participants referenced having attraction for the opposite sex or there being societal expectations to like the opposite sex as some of the first times they because aware of gender difference.

Microsystems (OA)

In this research OA represents the most immediate and smallest environment that the participants in this study interact with. A participant shared that out of all the spaces they frequent on campus "OA is the place where I talk about gender the most, but it is also the least important." The following section will explain how OA culture, structure and policy has influenced participants understanding of gender.

Role models and gender representation. Having a role model that shared the same gender identity came up in every focus group. In the male-identified focus group a student shared that "one of the big reasons I wanted to join this program is because of the guides I have had on the trip, specifically some of the male guides on my pre-o. I looked up to them and noticed we had similarity traits." In the female-identified focus group women talked about how much empowerment they felt when they were surrounded by other women who were role modeling what it looks like to be leading outdoor wilderness trips" The Assistant Director of OA shared that **"**there have been hiring choices around grad students, around everyone that has been a part of the pro-staff here" to make sure that there are role models representing gender diversity.

Gender representation is not only important on the professional staff team, but also is a mentality when staffing guides for trips. Participants shared the following about their experiences with guide placement on trips:

- "There are not many male guides in our program, which is atypical from other outdoor programs from what I've heard about other schools. Because of this, if a male is as qualified and able to guide a trip, they are more likely to be assigned to guide. This can be frustrating when you feel two guides are equally qualified but one of them seems to get more opportunities because of their gender."

- "My frustration is that with the ratio being so skewed in OA. I have been making the guide teams for two years now in OA and probably the trips that you have been on I have made those guide teams and we really try to get representation from male guides on trips because especially for pre-o trips it is really about every participant being able to say I identify with that person I see something in them that allows you to feel like students I see are just like me. It is all about that transition theory."
- "I think that the female guides on my trip were a little surprised and perplexed at my ability to think through the logistics and do the problem solving with their plans and disagree with what was going on and the logistical holes that I saw. I am not sure if that is because of who they are as people because they are both highly motivated and detail oriented and all the other awesome stuff that they are, but I also saw that there was a component of me being a male guide in a lead role at that point where there wasn't any exposure to that."

While having role models on trips for students to connect with was named as a value for OA, the mechanism for creating that representation on trips had created conflict within the program. Male guides in the program expressed feeling commodified for their gender identity and felt like they were put on trips not because of their gender not because of their skills or abilities.

Inclusive Language. Participants identified OA's encouragement of inclusive language as a way that they felt supported in their gender identity. One participant who identified as female shared that during a trip "a professional staff member said I need strong people and didn't specify boys, which in the past it has always been followed by a male assignment, so I don't know why that has always stuck out in my head so much, but in my head, I was like she gets it."

Participants identified that small language shifts were noticeable and different from the messages received in other spaces, particularly around traits like strength, which is not always associated with a female presenting body. Inclusive language gave a chance for leaders and participants to explore a fluidity within themselves that could have been limited by less inclusive language.

Periods. Because of the nature of this research and my inquiry into gender equality OA made the decision to send information about menstruation to everyone who signed up for a trip regardless of gender to encourage the inclusivity of the gender expansive community. The intention behind that decision was to benefit marginalized gender identities and remove assuming participants needs based on perceived gender. Having access to information about menstruation had a profound impact on students of all genders. One participant shared that, "for [the shame about periods] to be alleviated and for it to be like something normal is happening in my body. I just need my first aid kit. To have that be relieved and for there to be the pressure taken off something that can be so anxiety causing especially on a pre-o or a backpacking. To take that away was just like dang. That is big!" Another participant said

> I feel like I always felt in the past it was always a hush hush topic and you had to deal with it yourself quietly and so I felt really supported getting that email. I was like okay I can talk about this and also be educated on this to help participants and be open about it.

Even male participants noted that by having access to this information they felt more empowered to support those that have different needs than themselves and how it encouraged them to be more engaged in caring for others.

OA's high standard of engagement and culture of respect. Participants in Cycle 2 identified that OA culture and dedication to intentionality made them feel connected to themselves in a way that simultaneously embodied and challenged their identities. A participant in cycle 2 reported "I feel like the past four years I have had amazing women as role models that

showed me that I don't need to 'tone down' my femininity to be a guide, and I don't need to exaggerate my femininity to be a woman." Another participant explained that in "OA you are coming into a group of pretty strong women who are going to be leading. They are going to your pro-staff, and they will be leading your trips and if you can't hang with that and you are not okay respecting and obeying a powerful women leader you are going to get out because that is what OA is." Participants were able to identify the women empowerment that has been encouraged by the feminist culture that OA embodies. OA's feminist approach was celebrated in every stakeholder focus group.

One participant in the female gender identity focus group spoke about OA's twenty-four-hour topics, which are trip behavior expectations that are presented to trip participants in the first twenty-four hours of a trip. She explicitly acknowledged that the "sex, drug and rock and roll twenty-four-hour topic" where we ask students to refrain from using drugs or alcohol, being disruptive to the natural environment and refrain as much as possible from engaging in exclusive relationships that could foster exclusivity on our trips. OA guides are trained to ask students to refrain from "dating, mating or cohabitating" for the duration of the trip to preserve the group mentality throughout the trip. My original assumption of this twenty-four-hour topic was that it was to encourage participants to refrain from sexual behavior while on a trip. However, the research participant shared that this talk made her feel that the cultural expectation to see members of the opposite gender as a romantic interest, or to see herself as someone to be interested in romantically was alleviated. The participant said "You can just be together and be in the outdoors and you don't always have to think about what do they think of me. There isn't a stress of a us vs. them mentality of gender, treat everyone with respect and have more of an emphasis on the individual person."

Tents. On trips students have the option to sleep in tents provided by OA or to "sleep out" on a tarp without a tent. On trips, we gender designate our tents for privacy and safety, this gender designation is particularly prevalent on our pre-orientation (Pre-O) trips where we have students that can be under the age of 18. One research participant shared that during her "Pre-O we had gender assigned tents. I had two of my friends who identified as females in my gender assigned tent, but it was a really different experience going on a training trip where we slept under tarp structures that we build and everyone was just in a mosh pit and it didn't matter like how tall you were or what gender you are. You just found a spot and hunkered down for the night. That one left me feeling, not more welcome per say, but I really enjoyed that environment better. I was just next to my friends. It didn't matter who they were or what they identified as. It was just a better bonding experience across genders. So, like I said I don't think that gender divided tents are a bad thing, but I liked the mixing better." OA has struggled with how to approach tents in the most inclusive way possible, although currently at USD there are limited examples of mixed gendered sleeping arrangements, especially in housing. It is one of the few places where the gender binary and gender designations are preserved on trip settings.

OA assumes that students will be the most comfortable sleeping with other students that share the same gender identity, although throughout this research there were five trips that had a student that requested to sleep in a tent with students that had a gender different than their own because that is where they felt the most comfortable. In two cases the request was from heterosexual couples wanting to sleep in the same tent as their significant other and in the other three male students who identified as gay wanted to sleep in a tent with female friends they felt more comfortable with. This was one of the places in my research that sexual orientation complicated gender conceptions explicitly. Sorting tents by gender perpetuates heteronormative

assumptions about students and creates othering experiences for students with varying gender identities, gender expressions or sexual orientations.

Mesosystems (USD)

College is important because students experience fundamental identity development during their college years (Chickering, 1969; Chickering and Reisser, 1993). Colleges aim to help students explore and develop their identities through academics, involvement opportunities, and leadership (Renn, 2017). Bilodeau (2005) finds that identity development is a dynamic rather than sequential process and that many individuals arrive at the final stage of identity development during early adulthood. Students' ability to flourish as they go through this process is impacted by the resources available at institutions.

USD is an integral part of students developing their gender development and participants of this research are all informed by the environment of the institution. One participant indicated that the higher ratio of women-identified students at the university impacted their experience. She said, "USD is such a girl dominated school, like the percentage is so high. I remember I was going to Pre-o and thinking that is was going to be really dominated by boys and like you expect like the guys are going to take charge all the time and I feel like the guys are a lot more receptive to that because of the how many girls are in the group comparatively and they are like really respectful then you would expect in normal situations."

One participant shared that OA's culture encourages students in experiences that might be incongruent with the gendered expectations that exist throughout campus. He shared that the "perception of students at USD are really girly girls and really bro-y dudes and I feel like that is where OA is more in the neutral, more in the middle. I think that we have students who fit those stereotypes on campus but here they can let go of those stereotypes." Participants mentioned that they were challenged in some ways to embrace behaviors and cultural norms that feel beyond

their societal gender expectations, but also supported by the OA community and inspired by role models of their same gender that embraced a wide variety of gender expectations and expressions.

Psychological Safety. A key theme that was repeated in each cycle was how participants felt that engaging outside of gender expectations subjected them to a certain level of risk and judgement. A member of the professional staff shared that she "operated out of a place of wanting to prove myself in often a male dominated work setting or even in hobbies." She also shared that she is "constantly fearful of when I do have emotion in the workplace as being seen as an emotional woman as opposed to just an emotional person, for fear of not being taken seriously for when things are critical or when problems need solved. I never want to be seen as a hyper-emotional female because I think that is a bad thing." Her status as a competent outdoor leader felt threatened if she were to act in congruence with behaviors of her gender, but were seen as incongruent to the masculinity associated with outdoor work.

In the male gender identity focus group participants, they also acknowledged the positive influence of leadership from those that identified as female but expressed that a feminine leadership style could be a potential reason for the alienation of males. Male participants expressed the following about male involvement:

> "It seems like people with aggressive or competitive attitudes is seen as embodying a male stereotype. Biologically attracting mates and all that stuff. It is typically a male characteristic. So, if people feel like that is what makes a man then having to embody other styles of leadership them off from participating the program."

In every cycle participants shared that there was risk associated with expressing gender fluidity, by embodying traits associated with other genders, doing work that had been gendered in some way or moving past ways they have been shamed about their gender. I connected this

idea of emotional risk experienced through gender identity and expression to the behavioral risk we attempt to mitigate on trips through risk management. A key element of risk management is reducing opportunities for loss or injury by prioritizing safety. This connected with a theory that my supervisor had shared with me during the research phase called psychological safety. Usually employed in psychology and group behavior fields, psychological safety is "being able to show and employ one's self without fear of negative consequences of self-image, status or career" (Kahn, 1990, p. 708). An example of OA facilitating a psychologically safe environment for women connects to the stories shared about menstrual inclusivity. However, it became apparent to me throughout the male gender identity focus group that males are still facing challenges in engaging in the OA environment because engaging would put them at risk. The males that participated in the focus group hypothesized that other males chose not to engage because they were unwilling to engage in risky behavior or were unsure of their psychological safety in the OA culture.

Exosystems (Nature and Family)

While not directly connected to the collegiate environment, participants shared links to other settings that had informed their understanding of gender. Below are a few examples of how different settings informed their engagement in the collegiate setting.

Gender policing. Many of the stories that participants shared about their first memories of gender involved times when they were policed by family members about how to act according to the expectations of their gender. The stories involved times when boys were told not to wear their mother's shoes while playing pretend because that was not an article of clothing that was made for them. The things that people experience policing around included but were not limited to clothing, hobbies, friends, restrooms, colors, habits, tendencies and people they were allowed to be attracted to.

Nature as a queer environment. In contrast to the gendered experience that physical spaces on university campus offer, natural spaces that we frequent on trips seemed expansive. It was noted that the only spaces that were gendered on trips were tent spaces, by our own design, not that of nature. One of the most challenging parts of backcountry trips is not having bathroom facilities that we are accustomed to in the front country. Although participants noted that relieving themselves in nature made them more aware of how much gender dictated going to the restroom in the front country.

Participants noted that being on outdoor adventure trips alleviated the pressures to uphold the expectations of appearance that were associated with their gender. I have highlighted the following reflections participants shared during the focus groups;

- "On my pre-o it was one of the first times I truly felt comfortable in my own skin and didn't feel like I had to wear certain clothes or do my hair in a certain way to look presentable for those around me and there were no mirrors so you weren't ever looking at yourself thinking oh this is what everyone else was seeing. It was more like they were seeing who you were not what you looked like, because you couldn't see yourself, which is how I kind of experienced it and I think that goes along with the gender as well."
- **"**We are not out there to be cute, we are out there to stay warm and be gross and filthy."
- **"**With my experience being outside the focus is always on what you can do and not on your appearance. It is about your abilities and learning new things and trying new things and being active. The focus is on the activity rather than having there be the pressure to look a certain way or behave a certain way because it is all about learning and performing and trying new things."

Macrosystems (Culture and Society)

Participants' reflections of their gender experiences highlighted Bronfenbrenner's (1994) theory that the macrosystems inform patterns that exist on every other systemic level of their environment. The overarching assumptions, beliefs, knowledge and customs of gender that exist within our culture emerged throughout the data gathered. Below I have highlighted the patterns that emerged throughout all of the cycles.

Colors Representing Gender. Participants of this research were asked to reflect on their first memories of gender, many of which included reflections about being assigned colors or activities that did not fit their interests but because of their gender. When I was compiling the data and creating charts to represent the gender identities and expressions of the participants I caught myself coding the data in blue and pink for male and female for my personal processing ease. This was one of my most impactful reflections to emerge for me as a researcher. It brought to light how engrained those colors are to my understanding of gender and how the simplicity of that categorization is hard to resist when faced with the challenge of accurately and effectively capturing the complexity of gender.

Physical spaces as a reinforcement of the gender binary and exclusive. In participants' reflections they identified that bathrooms are where some of their first memories of gender occurred. One participant shared that their first memory of gender was when they were no longer able to accompany their mother into the restroom because they did not share the same gender identity as their mother and had reached an age that was deemed inappropriate for them to continue doing so. Physical spaces that were designed with separation in mind continue to enforce the differences that exist between two dominate genders and limit the exploration of gender differences in a broader and more inclusive framework.

Limitations

Several limitations emerged as a result of this study. First, the population of participants in this study limited what voices were captured by this work. Every person that participated in the study identified as a cisgender individual with a lived experience that existed heavily on the binary, including the researcher. This limitation is particularly important because it may be highlighting the very issue that this study attempts to address. It centers gender work around the lived experiences of cisgender students because of the lack of students that identify otherwise. There is a contradiction to the work done in this study when the participants represent the groups with the most gender privilege. There was also the limitation of my own identity of a cisgender woman playing a role in the way that different genders felt connected to or othered by my presence in focus groups. I could not escape the reality that I have lived experience as a cisgender woman and that could have affected the data that I was able to gather from participants.

Throughout the design and execution of this research I was fighting my own urge to simplify the notion of gender. Keeping gender complicated throughout the entirety of this project was laborious when there were pressures from many external systems to make gender fit into the nice boxes of man, woman and other. I felt that pull more intensely when it came time to negotiating how to report a fluid identity. I ultimately was inspired by a Rainbow Educator training that was hosted at USD in the fall of this year. At the training activist, Robyn Ochs facilitated her Beyond the Binary workshop where we assigned numbers to the continuum that existed between homosexual and heterosexual. The workshop was a way of complicating our understanding of sexual orientations and tracking its fluidity in various ways. Her playfulness and commitment to experimentation connected back to the heart of this work. By applying a

Likert scale to the continuums of gender identity and gender expression betrays the truly unique and expansive nature of gender, but I chose to test the experiment anyway.

In my two years as a graduate assistant I have observed how crucial data collection and assessment, especially about student identity, is to an institution. Data is used as a means of grouping students and benefits the decision making that is made at all levels of an institution about the needs of its student population. My racial identity will never nicely fit into a box or be captured on a few short words, but it is an identity that has negotiate erasure and assimilation anytime I am asked to identify my race. I know I experience only a glimpse of the vast amounts of erasure, assimilation pressure, harassment and violence that TGNC people face on a daily basis. My experimentation with reporting a complex identity was an imperfect approach at attempting to satisfy the demands of institutional structures as well as honor queer theory to the best of my ability.

Beyond gender identity, a second limitation to this study, as mentioned earlier, was my decision to only collect data from students that were already engaged in OA programming. This decision limited the prospective of students that do not choose to participate with us due to reasons that include gender or for other reasons. Outdoor programming is not an activity that satisfies the needs of all students, but outside perspectives on the culture that OA perpetuates could have provided insightful data. I also want to recognize that the students who did participate in the research may have volunteered due to not only my positional authority as a part-time professional staff member, but also because of the personal relationship I have built with students throughout my time with the program.

A third limitation to this study was the amount of time that action research requires of the participants and the researcher. Compensation for the participants, as well as the researcher in some capacity could have expanded the scope of the researcher and could have impacted the

significance of this work in the multiple fields that it spans. I was lucky enough to have a fairly supportive office that encouraged me to spend time working on my research during my work hours. I am extremely thankful to be on a team that supported the work that I was interested in pursuing. That being said I still felt throughout this project that I could have devoted more time to the research process. I am also aware that students committed their time to this study without compensation. The hours that they spent sharing their experience and envisioning ways to create an improved environment for gender equity can never be repaid and for that I thank them.

Final Reflection

Through this process I was able to recognize how gender as a system and an identity plays a role in my leadership and decision making. I also deepened my understanding of how gender can inform how I can influence spaces that students engage in. Baxter Magolda and King (2004, as cited in Harper & Quaye, 2014) argued that the process of self-reflection is critical to the practice of a student affairs professional before developing methods to resolve issues that students are dealing with. This self-reflection allows professionals to understand their strengths and limitations when enhancing student engagement. My practice as a professional has been enhanced through the spirit of reflection that action research has provided to me.

This research provided me with more data to understand how students experience gender in a collegiate outdoor experiential program that focuses on self-development and is committed to improving its inclusion practices. Ultimately this research allowed myself and fellow members of the OA community the chance to engage authentically with their gender identity and create more space for others to do the same. OA is often referred to as a home away from home, and I have always thought of home as those places where I can show up and be my most authentic-self. I am grateful to all those that supported me improving my practice in this process and for the many long conversations people had with me on this topic.

Recommendations

Based on my findings I have several recommendations for Outdoor Adventures, as well as the University of San Diego. These recommendations are focused on the expansion of queer practices for the benefit of all genders.

Recommendations of Outdoor Adventures

Firstly, I am proud of the ways in which OA has embraced queer inclusion during the evolution of this process. My recommendation to OA would be to continue this work by continuing a commitment to cultivating gender consciousness throughout the program. More inclusion practices could be cultivated for our gender expansive students and can be in place as that community continues to grow on campus. Radical inclusion looks like holding space for folks before they even arrive, so that inclusion is not reactive to the identity but a part of the culture. The following paragraphs are steps OA can take to normalize a non-binary experience.

I encourage OA to review the various forms and systems that participants and guides interact with. I would start with the health form that all students are required to fill out in order to participate with us and clarify if we are asking for people's gender identity or sex. As a staff we should reflect on why this information is necessary for our program and how if ever it is used. If sex is the most applicable to the health survey in the event that a student has to seek medical attention on a trip it would be best to expand the options other than M/F. Ultimately the conclusion could be that gathering data on sex and/or gender is unnecessary for our purposes.

I would also suggest that if we do want to make sure there is a balance of genders on trip for guide teams or participants we become explicit about asking for people's gender identity with a blank write in-option. That way a student will not accidentally be misgendered and it would allow for participants on the trip the flexibility of a write-in option every time they are asked. In our forms we could provide a list of genders, such as; women, non-binary, men, agender,

genderqueer, etc. Listing various genders is a visible way that OA could validate gender diversity and honor a commitment to making space for diverse students.

The gear in our office is also a gendered experience. We have sleeping bags and wetsuits that are generalized to fit the construction of men and women. I suggest that when we are teaching office staff about the gear we rent out to people we train them on the specific differenced that the gear has to offer so that students can avoid gendering a person based of appearance. We can encourage students to practice asking what the renter's preferences are and they can recommend based off that information. This approach validates the different sizes and shapes that all genders represent and encourages a culture of care around each individual.

Outdoor Adventures has an opportunity to build a thoughtful policy or recommendation for sleeping arrangement that values preference and consent over gender. Multiple times throughout this research the age of participants was mentioned as a reason for having rigid gender separations, especially during our pre-orientation adventures. More literature and resources are being offered to the development of transgender students in K-12 settings, which should support OA moving to inclusive options, regardless of age.

Beyond policy changes, OA could encourage our community to be more consistent about normalizing the pronouns during introductions. It is a habit that should be cultivated within guide teams and professional staff members on a more frequent basis. I notice that pronoun introductions are usually reserved times when working with the LGBTQIA+ community or there is a community member with that habit pre-established. I have my pronouns in my email signature and I am curious about what the impact would be for students if other professional staff members in our office did the same.

My final recommendation for OA would be to identify gender neutral restrooms on campus and the various locations that we frequent and consistently offer that knowledge to

students. I believe that it is especially important for us to know the closest gender-neutral bathroom to our office in the University Center so that we can efficiently direct any student to facilities that best support their identity. I would recommend that when we do guide trainings we take the time to educate our students on the small, yet impactful ways that we can create the most inclusive environments. I think a key collaboration OA could foster moving forward is to do trainings or gather resources from USD's Pee in Peace group. Pee in Peace advocates for the bathroom rights of individuals who don't identify with a gender binary. Pee in Peace is,

> Concerned primarily with the construction and promotion of gender inclusive restrooms on the USD campus, Pee in Peace aims to provide not only a Safe Space for gender diverse individuals but also families, disabled persons and any other person who desires/requires a single-occupancy style restroom ("Pee in Peace").

It is crucial that OA continues to foster the relationship it has with offices and clubs on campus

Recommendations for the University of San Diego

The lived experiences of TGNB students on campuses across the country are defined by the oppression that faces individuals who fall outside the dominant binary. Gender categorization has perpetuated the systematic oppression that afforded privileges to cisgender individuals (Ayvazian, 1995). Ayvazian (1995) states that being in the dominant category offers the "role of an ally: the opportunity to fight like hell with others like us and interrupt the cycle of oppression" (p. 2). In order to change the current lived reality of TGNB students, allies must be willing to work on multiple systemic and relational levels, and fight like hell. Nicolazzo (2017) suggests that institutions work to move beyond instituting and recommending best practices for TGNB students, as most of them are limiting and offer complicit solutions that perpetuate TGNB oppression. The fight against TGNB oppression should be an ongoing, reflective process that liberates the most oppressed. Offering solutions such as allowing people to select "other

gendered" on surveys is a starting place for individuals and institutions, but they must be willing to grow and truly embody sentiments of diversity and inclusion.

A starting point for leaders at the University of San Diego is to continue educating themselves and learning about the needs of TGNB individuals. As is the painful process of addressing any privilege, educators should be willing to face the reality of the privilege they hold because of their gender identity. In service of making change for TGNB students, student affairs practitioners across campus need to be willing to address the ways in which binary gender construction is perpetuated within physical spaces but also in concepts, language and assumptions about students. Nicolazzo (2017) offers that culturally reinforced notions of gender are naturalized and pressed on everyone in the college environment. As a community we should actively work to reorient away from this restrictive mode of thinking and work toward addressing gender in more fluid ways without perpetuating socialization of gender norms.

My final reflection would be for the University to start addressing that "gender rights are for everyone, regardless of their gender" (Wilchins, 2014). My suggestion is that as a university we avoid grouping the gender oppression that TGNB students face as an issue for LGBTQIA+ community. We can honor the intersectionality of those identities but grouping them creates a separation from the system of gender oppression that effects all genders. I suggest we start addressing how the gender system works and name the mechanisms that effect a student with a gendered identity. These recommendations are made in an effort to do the best we can for our students. So, the most impactful recommendation might be to empower students, listen to their stories and ask for what they need in order to create meaningful, student-centered change.

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APPENDIX A: Focus Group Consent Form

University of San Diego
Institutional Review Board

Research Participant Consent Form

For the research study entitled:
Equitable Gender Engagement at University of San Diego's Outdoor Adventures

I. Purpose of the research study

Lauren Wong is a student in the M.A in Higher Education Leadership program at the University of San Diego. You are invited to participate in a research study she is conducting. The purpose of this research study is: to search for effective leadership values that increase gender equality at the University of San Diego, starting with Outdoor Adventures.

II. What you will be asked to do

If you decide to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Draw/Write a short statement regarding inclusivity and leadership.
- Participate in a 120-minute focus group discussion about gender at the University of San Diego and Outdoor Adventures.
- Fill out a demographic information survey.

You will be audiotaped during the interviews.

Your participation in this study will take a total of 4 hours.

III. Foreseeable risks or discomforts

Sometimes when people are asked to think about their feelings, they feel sad or anxious. If you would like to talk to someone about your feelings at any time, you can call toll-free, 24 hours a day: San Diego Mental Health Hotline at 1-800-479-3339. To speak with someone on campus you can call the University of San Diego Center for Health and Wellness: 619-260-4618.

A voice recording will be made of you during your participation in the study. We may wish to present some of the video recordings from this study at professional meetings or as demonstrations in classrooms. Your voice will be used and you potentially could be recognizable by listeners of the voice recording.

IV. Benefits

While there may be no direct benefit to you from participating in this study, the indirect benefit of participating will be knowing that you helped researchers better understand how to create a more inclusive environment at Outdoor Adventures and the University of San Diego.

V. Confidentiality

Any information provided and/or identifying records will remain confidential and kept in a locked file and/or password-protected computer file in the researcher's office for a minimum

of five years. The results of this research project may be made public and information quoted in professional journals and meetings and for educational purposes.

VI. Voluntary Nature of this Research

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You do not have to do this, and you can refuse to answer any question or quit at any time. Deciding not to participate or not answering any of the questions will have no effect on any benefits you're entitled to, like your health care, or your employment or grades. **You can withdraw from this study at any time without penalty.**

VII. Contact Information

If you have any questions about this research, you may contact either:

1) Lauren Wong
Email: lwong@sandiego.edu
Phone: 949-433-3817

2) Dr. Cheryl Getz
Email: cgetz@sandiego.edu
Phone: 619-260-4289

I have read and understand this form, and consent to the research it describes to me. I have received a copy of this consent form for my records.

Signature of Participant _____ Date _____

Name of Participant (**Printed**) _____

Signature of Investigator_____ Date_____

APPENDIX B: Email to Perspective Participants

Hello!

My name is Lauren Wong and I am the Graduate Assistant for Outdoor Adventures. I am also in the Master's in Higher Education Leadership program here at the University of San Diego. I am emailing you to discuss an opportunity to participate in a research study that will intend to promote gender inclusivity at the USD's Outdoor Adventures. The purpose of my study is to understand how OA encourages different genders to participate and take up leadership.

The total time of participation would not exceed five hours over the course of several months. These five hours would be separated into following segments

Meeting 1: Gendered focus group: 2 hours
Meeting 2: General focus group: 2 hours

(Possible additional surveys if you attend an Outdoor Adventures trip: no more than 1 hour)
Total time for ALL study activities: 5 hours, 0 min.

While there may be no direct benefit to you from participating in this study, the indirect benefit of participating will be knowing that you helped researchers better understand how to create a more gender inclusive environment at Outdoor Adventures and the University of San Diego.

If you are interested in participating, please email Lauren Wong at lwong@sandiego.edu

APPENDIX C: Announcements for Meetings

Hello!

My name is Lauren Wong and I am the Graduate Assistant for Outdoor Adventures. I am also in the Master's in Higher Education Leadership program here at the University of San Diego. I am emailing you to discuss an opportunity to participate in a research study that will intend to promote gender inclusivity at the USD's Outdoor Adventures. The purpose of my study is to understand how OA encourages different genders to participate and take up leadership.

The total time of participation would not exceed five hours over the course of several months. These five hours would be separated into following segments

Meeting 1: Gendered focus group: 2 hours
Meeting 2: General focus group: 2 hours

(Possible additional surveys if you attend an Outdoor Adventures trip: no more than 1 hour)
Total time for ALL study activities: 5 hours, 0 min.

While there may be no direct benefit to you from participating in this study, the indirect benefit of participating will be knowing that you helped researchers better understand how to create a more gender inclusive environment at Outdoor Adventures and the University of San Diego.

If you are interested in participating, please email Lauren Wong at lwong@sandiego.edu

Appendix D: Focus Group/Listening Session Script- Professional Staff

Introduction: Hello everyone! Thanks so much for agreeing to participate in this group dialogue. This is a reminder that the purpose of my research is to understand how OA encourages different genders to participate and take up leadership at the University of San Diego starting with Outdoor Adventures.

The intent of this group dialogue is to begin a conversation regarding how gender plays a role at Outdoor Adventures and the University of San Diego in general. This focus group will be recorded with audio dialogue, but I will assign pseudonyms to each participant here.

Please treat each other with respect during our time together, and also share when you feel called to share. Remember that your participation in this activity is voluntary and you may choose to end your participation at any time without consequence. I have provided the "Semi-Structured Video Interview and Focus Group Questions." Please choose 5-7 questions from the questions to discuss as a group. You may or may not use these questions to facilitate this conversation. I encourage you to engage with each other as you share your thoughts and do your best to allow the conversation to flow naturally.

1. Can you tell us your name and position, and number of years at USD?
2. How would you identify your gender identity and pronouns?
3. Of the identities that you hold, which do you feel most connected to?
4. How have you experienced your gender in your professional careers?
5. Have you had any positive experiences at USD in regard to gender? In what way were they positive?
6. Have you had any negative experiences at USD in regard to gender? In what way were they negative?
7. Is there a pattern of students you are drawn to creating close mentoring relationships with?
8. How have you seen gender shape the focus of our programing and leadership?

Appendix E: Focus Group/Listening Session Script- Gendered

Introduction: Hello everyone! Thanks so much for agreeing to participate in this group dialogue. This is a reminder that the purpose of my research is to understand how OA encourages different genders to participate and take up leadership at the University of San Diego starting with Outdoor Adventures.

The intent of this group dialogue is to begin a conversation regarding how gender plays a role at Outdoor Adventures and the University of San Diego in general. This focus group will be recorded with audio dialogue, but I will assign pseudonyms to each participant here.

Please treat each other with respect during our time together, and also share when you feel called to share. Remember that your participation in this activity is voluntary and you may choose to end your participation at any time without consequence. I have provided the "Semi-Structured Video Interview and Focus Group Questions." Please choose 5-7 questions from the questions to discuss as a group. You may or may not use these questions to facilitate this conversation. I encourage you to engage with each other as you share your thoughts and do your best to allow the conversation to flow naturally.

1. Can you tell us your name and your major/position, and year (if applicable) at USD?
2. How would you identify your gender identity and pronouns?
3. Of the identities that you hold, which do you feel most connected to?
4. Of which populations on campus, if any, do you consider yourself a member? (Could be racial or ethnic groups, organizations, teams, etc.)
5. What are some memories when you realized you had a gender?
6. How have you experienced gender on an OA trip?
7. Have you had any positive experiences at USD in regard to gender? In what way were they positive?
8. Have you had any negative experiences at USD in regard to gender? In what way were they negative?
9. What are the quality of relationships you have with other genders at USD?

Appendix F: Focus Group/Listening Session Script- General

Introduction: Hello everyone! Thanks so much for agreeing to participate in this group dialogue. This is a reminder that the purpose of my research is to understand how OA encourages different genders to participate and take up leadership at the University of San Diego starting with Outdoor Adventures.

The intent of this group dialogue is to begin a conversation regarding how gender plays a role in Outdoor Adventures. This focus group will be recorded with audio dialogue, but I will assign pseudonyms to each participant here.

Please treat each other with respect during our time together, and also share when you feel called to share. Remember that your participation in this activity is voluntary and you may choose to end your participation at any time without consequence. I have provided the "Semi-Structured Video Interview and Focus Group Questions." Please choose 5-7 questions from the questions to discuss as a group. You may or may not use these questions to facilitate this conversation. I encourage you to engage with each other as you share your thoughts and do your best to allow the conversation to flow naturally.

1. Can you tell us your name and your major/position, and year (if applicable) at USD?
2. How would you identify your gender identity and pronouns?
3. Of the identities that you hold, which do you feel most connected to?
4. After our last conversation, what reflections have you had around gender?
5. What are ways that you feel OA could do better in regard to including all genders in what we do?
6. What can you commit to as a leader in Outdoor Adventures moving forward?

Appendix G: Survey Consent Form

University of San Diego
Institutional Review Board

Research Participant Consent Form

For the research study entitled:
Equitable Gender Engagement at University of San Diego's Outdoor Adventures

I. Purpose of the research study

Lauren Wong is a student in the M.A in Higher Education Leadership program at the University of San Diego. You are invited to participate in a research study she is conducting. The purpose of this research study is: to search for effective leadership values that increase gender equity at the University of San Diego, starting with Outdoor Adventures.

II. What you will be asked to do

If you decide to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Answer the following survey
- Fill out demographic information

Your participation in this study will take a total of 1/2 hours.

VIII. Foreseeable risks or discomforts

Sometimes when people are asked to think about their feelings, they feel sad or anxious. If you would like to talk to someone about your feelings at any time, you can call toll-free, 24 hours a day: San Diego Mental Health Hotline at 1-800-479-3339. To speak with someone on campus you can call the University of San Diego Center for Health and Wellness: 619-260-4618.

IX. Benefits

While there may be no direct benefit to you from participating in this study, the indirect benefit of participating will be knowing that you helped researchers better understand how to create a more inclusive environment at Outdoor Adventures and the University of San Diego.

X. Confidentiality

Any information provided and/or identifying records will remain confidential and kept in a locked file and/or password-protected computer file in the researcher's office for a minimum of five years. The results of this research project may be made public and information quoted in professional journals and meetings and for educational purposes.

XI. Voluntary Nature of this Research

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You do not have to do this, and you can refuse to answer any question or quit at any time. Deciding not to participate or not answering any of the questions will have no effect on any benefits you're entitled to, like your health care, or your employment or grades. **You can withdraw from this study at any time without penalty.**

XII. Contact Information

If you have any questions about this research, you may contact either:

3) Lauren Wong
Email: lwong@sandiego.edu
Phone: 949-433-3817

4) Dr. Cheryl Getz
Email: cgetz@sandiego.edu
Phone: 619-260-4289

I have read and understand this form, and consent to the research it describes to me. I have received a copy of this consent form for my records.

Electronic Consent: Please select your choice below.

Clicking on the "agree" button below indicates that:

- **you have read the above information**
- **you voluntarily agree to participate**
- **you are at least 18 years of age**

If you do not with to participate in the research study, please decline by clicking on the "disagree" button.

- **Agree**
- **Disagree**

Appendix H: Gender Worksheet

GENDER AND THE OUTDOORS

This worksheet will help us frame the conversation around our gender and how that has influenced our experiences at USD and OA!

Any information in this worksheet will remain confidential and will be reported in my research without any identifiers that would indicate any specific person.
Reminder! Participation in my study is completely voluntary and consensual.
You can choose not to participate or answer any specific question at anytime.

Name:

Role and number of years at University of San Diego:

Role and number of years involved with Outdoor Adventures:

What gender does USD use to identify you:

What gender do you identify as:

What pronouns do you use:

Gender Identity

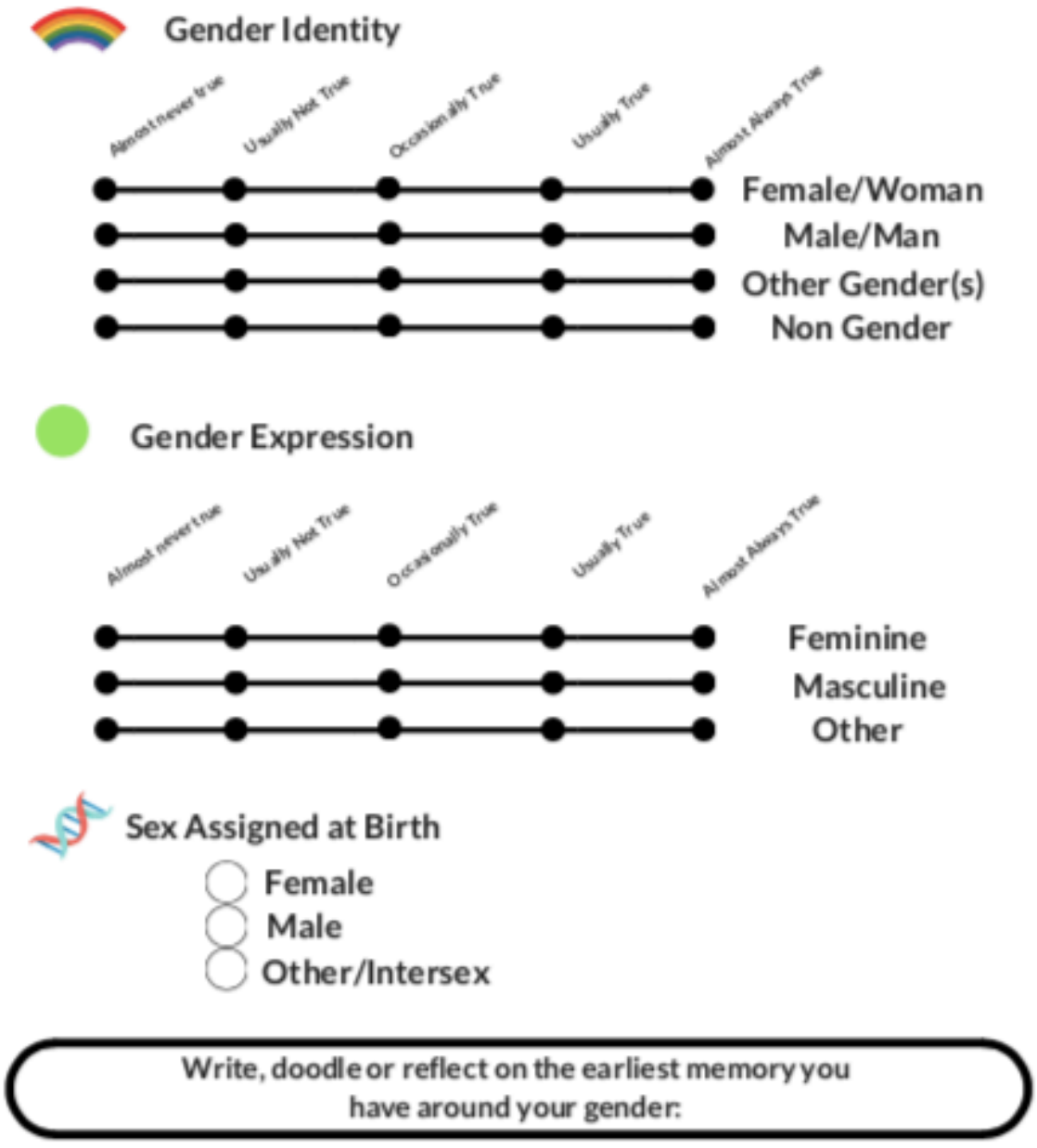
Gender identity is one's internal sense of being male, female, neither of these, both, or another gender(s).

Gender Expression

Gender expression is the physical manifestation of one's gender identity through clothing, hairstyle, voice, body shape, etc. (typically referred to as masculine or feminine)

Sex Assigned at Birth

The assignment and classification of people as male, female, intersex, or another sex assigned at birth often based on physical anatomy at birth and/or karyotyping.


Gender Identity
Almost never true
Usually Not True
Occasionally True
Usually True
Almost Always True
Female/Woman
Male/Man
Other Gender(s)
Non Gender
Gender Expression
Almost never true
Usually Not True
Occasionally True
Usually True
Almost Always True
Feminine
Masculine
Other
Sex Assigned at Birth
Female
Male
Other/Intersex
Write, doodle or reflect on the earliest memory you have around your gender:

Appendix I: Cycle 1- Gender Survey

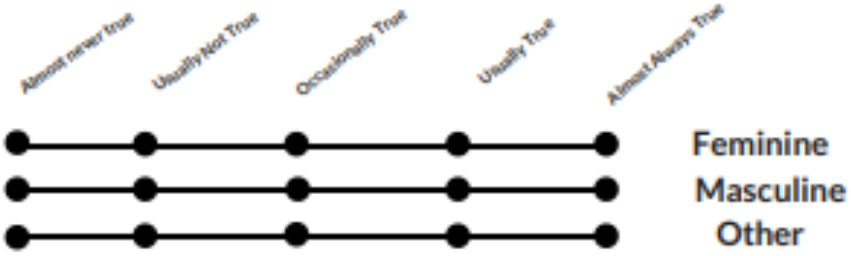
GENDER AND THE OUTDOORS

Any information in this worksheet will remain confidential and will be reported in my research without any identifiers that would indicate any specific person.
Reminder! Participation in my study is completely voluntary and consensual.
You can choose not to participate or answer any specific question at anytime.

Name:
Number of years at University of San Diego:
Role and number of years involved with Outdoor Adventures:
What gender does USD use to identify you:
What gender do you identify as:
What pronouns do you use:

Gender Identity

Gender Expression



Sex Assigned at Birth

◯ Female ◯ Male ◯ Other/Intersex

Write, doodle or reflect on the earliest memory you have about your gender:

What are 3 of the most important qualities of a guide?

How much do you feel like your gender has effected whether or not you have these qualities?

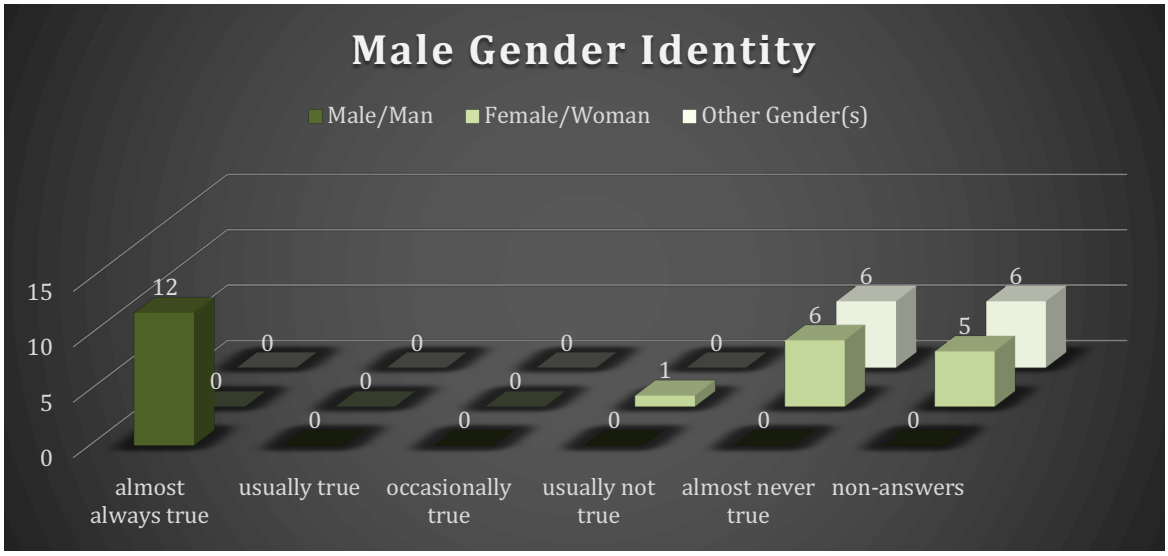
Never Seldom Some of the time Most of the time

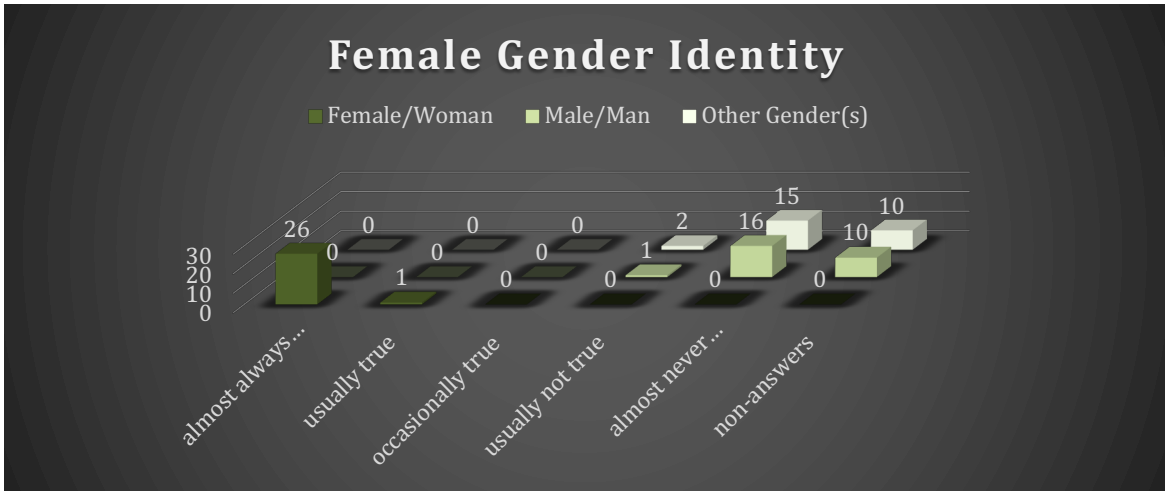
Why?

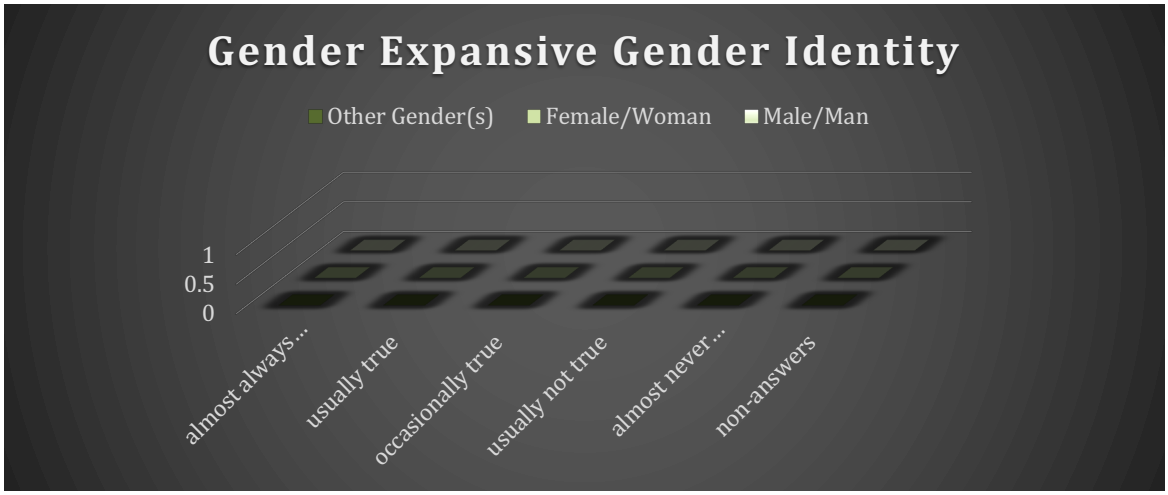
Appendix J: Graphs of Survey Respondents from Cycle 1

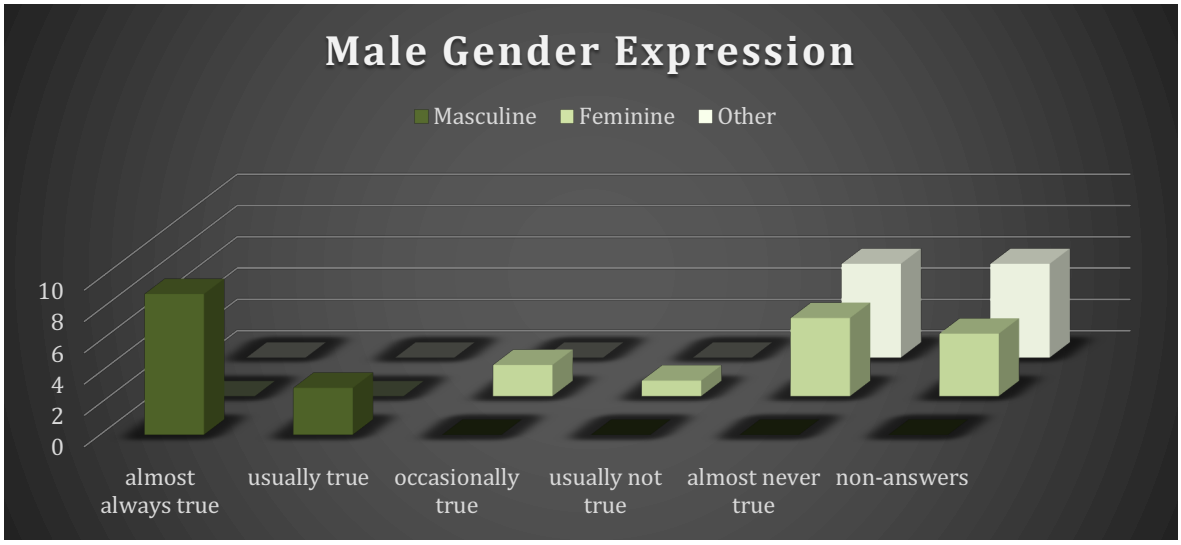
Male	Female/Woman	Male/Man	Other Gender(s)	Male	Feminine	Masculine	Other
almost always true	0	12	0	almost always true	0	9	0
usually true	0	0	0	usually true	0	3	0
occasionally true	0	0	0	occasionally true	2	0	0
usually not true	1	0	0	usually not true	1	0	0
almost never true	6	0	6	almost never true	5	0	6
non-answers	5	0	6	non-answers	4	0	6
Female	Female/Woman	Male/Man	Other Gender(s)	Female	Feminine	Masculine	Other
almost always true	26	0	0	almost always true	22	0	0
usually true	1	0	0	usually true	5	0	0
occasionally true	0	0	0	occasionally true	0	1	1
usually not true	0	1	2	usually not true	0	4	1
almost never true	0	16	15	almost never true	0	12	14
non-answers	0	10	10	non-answers	0	10	11
Other Genders	Female/Woman	Male/Man	Other Gender(s)	Other Genders	Feminine	Masculine	Other
almost always true	0	0	0	almost always true	0	0	0
usually true	0	0	0	usually true	0	0	0
occasionally true	0	0	0	occasionally true	0	0	0
usually not true	0	0	0	usually not true	0	0	0
almost never true	0	0	0	almost never true	0	0	0
non-answers	0	0	0	non-answers	0	0	0

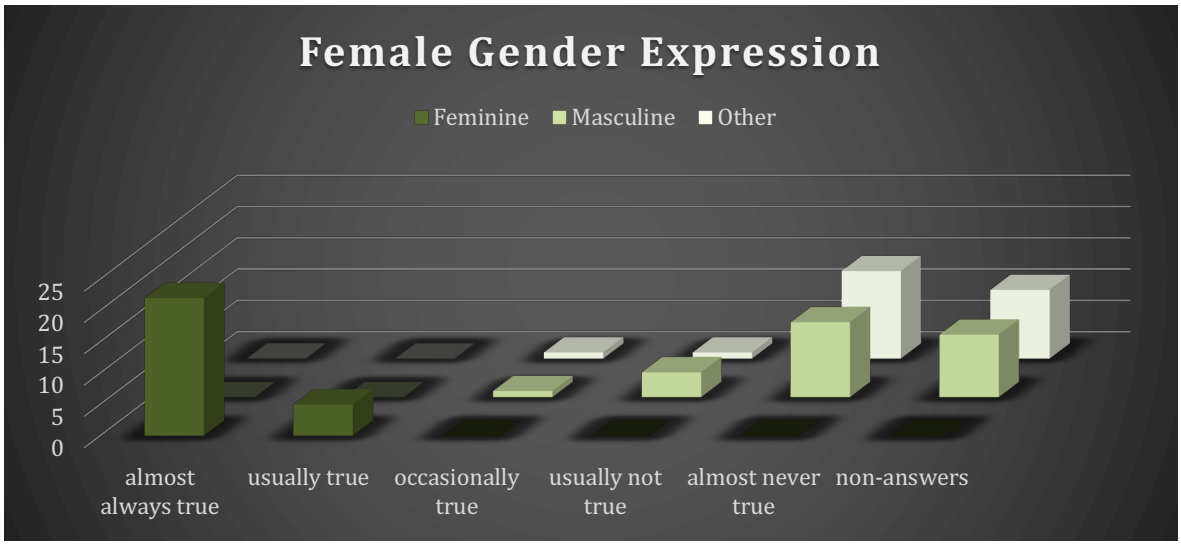
Appendix K: Graphs of Survey Respondents from Cycle 1

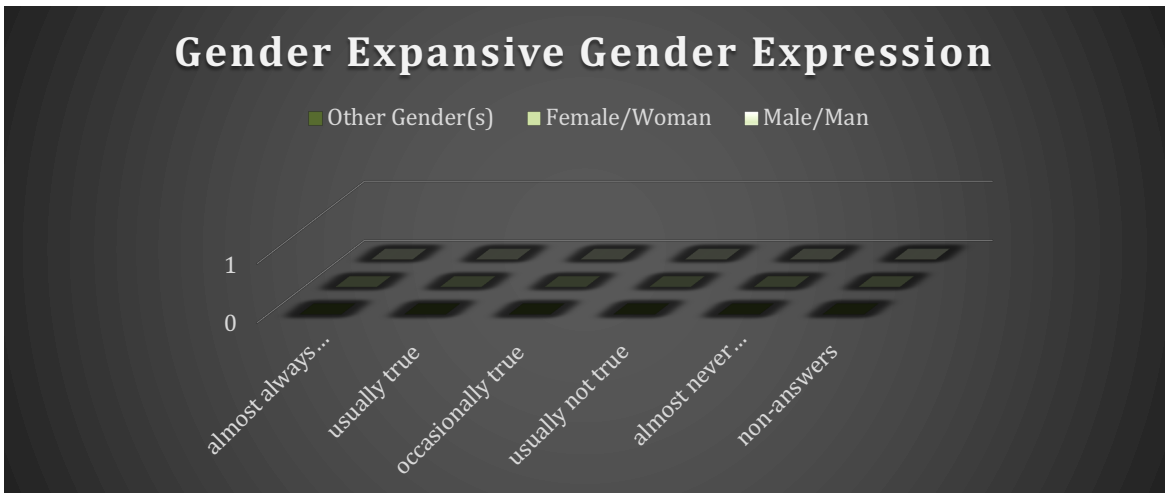




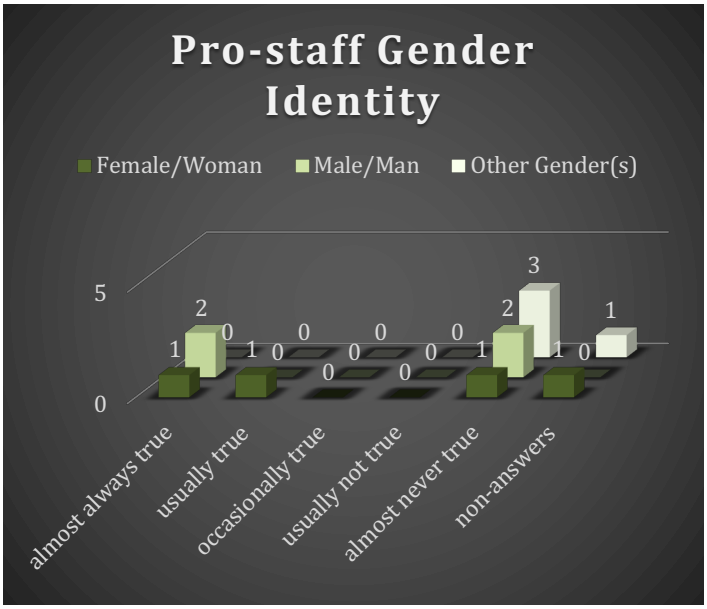


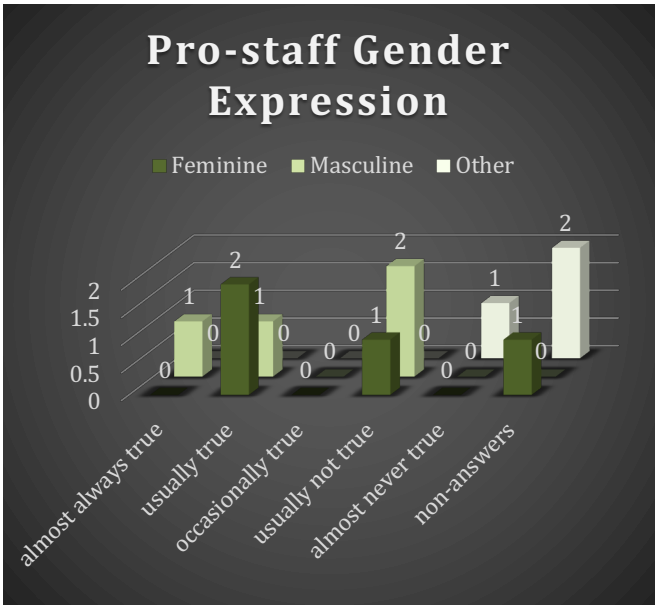

Male Gender Expression
Masculine
Feminine
Other
10
8
6
4
2
0
almost always true
usually true
occasionally true
usually not true
almost never true
non-answers

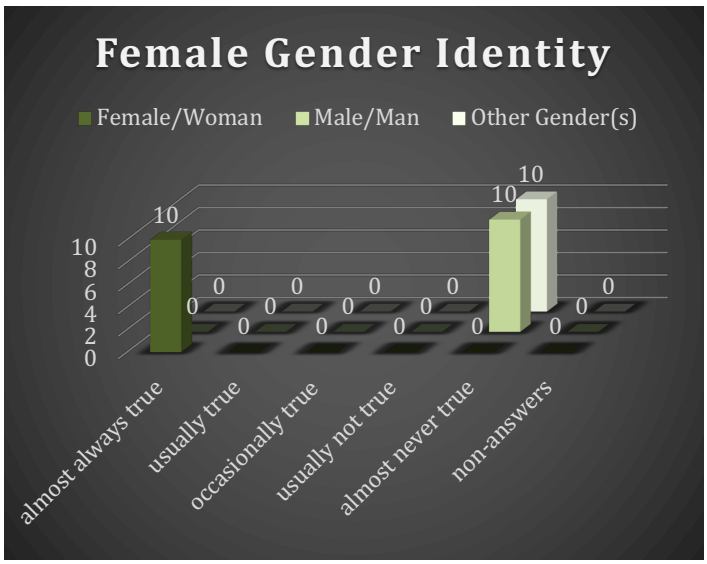

Female Gender Expression
Feminine
Masculine
Other
25
20
15
10
5
0
almost always true
usually true
occasionally true
usually not true
almost never true
non-answers

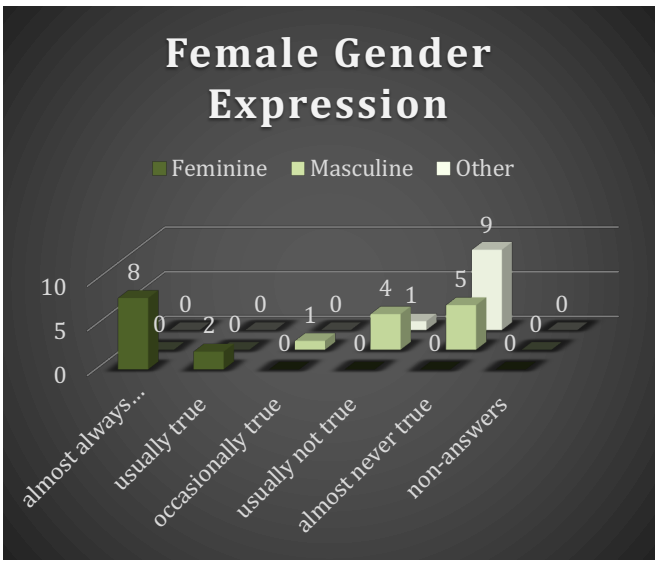

Gender Expansive Gender Expression
Other Gender(s)
Female/Woman
Male/Man
1
0
almost always…
usually true
occasionally true
usually not true
almost never …
non-answers

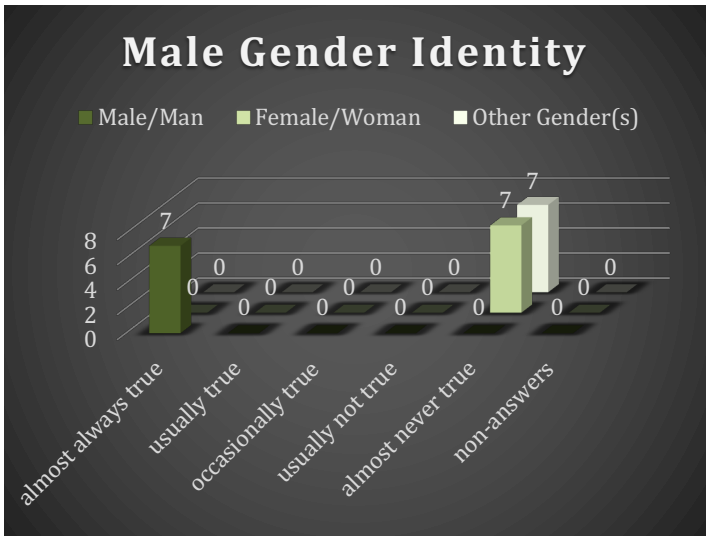
Appendix M: Cycle 2 Participants Gender Identity and Expression Graphs

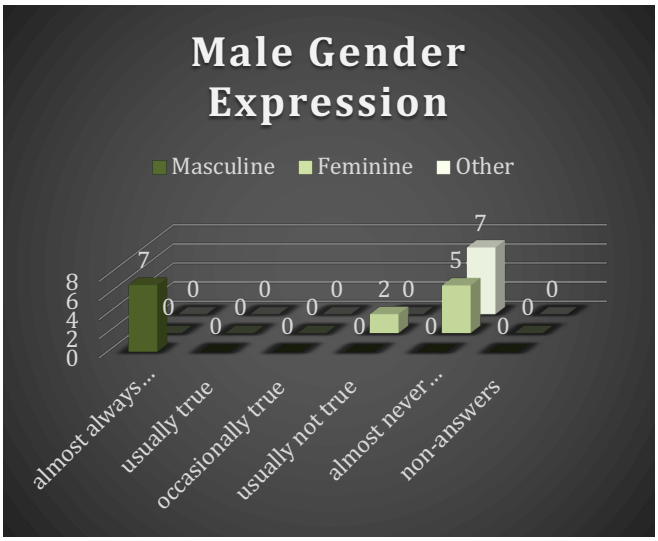


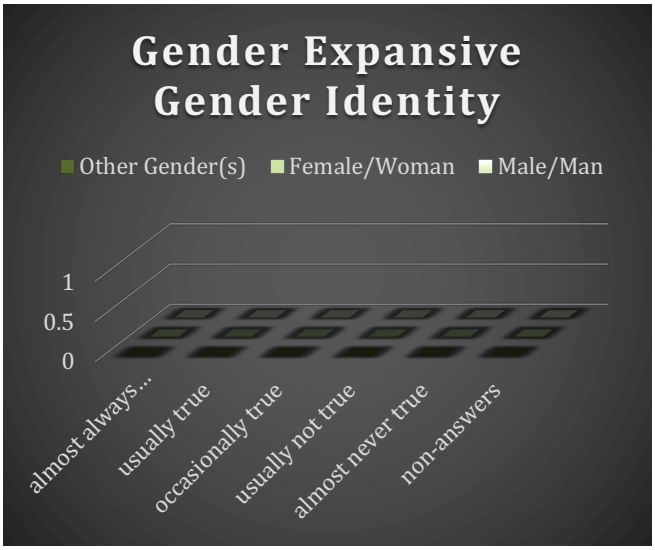


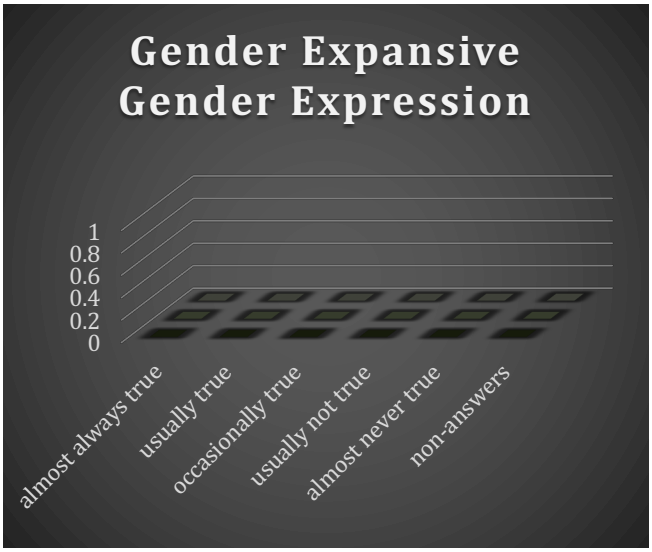









Gender Expansive Gender Identity
Other Gender(s)
Female/Woman
Male/Man
1
0.5
0
almost always…
usually true
occasionally true
usually not true
almost never true
non-answers


Gender Expansive Gender Expression
1
0.8
0.6
0.4
0.2
0
almost always true
usually true
occasionally true
usually not true
almost never true
non-answers

Appendix N: Key Terms List

Agender: A person with no (or very little) connection to the traditional system of gender, no personal alignment with the concepts of either man or woman, and/or someone who sees themselves as existing without gender. Sometimes called gender neutrois, gender neutral, or genderless.

Bigender: A term that refers to those identify as two genders.

Cisgender: A term for someone who exclusively identifies as their sex assigned at birth. This term is derived from the Latin word meaning "on the same side".

Gay: Experiencing attraction solely (or primarily) to some members of the same gender. Can be used to refer to men who are attracted to other men and women who are attracted to women. Also, an umbrella term used to refer to the queer community as a whole, or as an individual identity label for anyone who is not straight (see LGBTQ and queer)

Genderqueer: A term utilized by people who do not identify or express their gender within the gender binary.

Gender Binary: A system of constructing gender as solely of two, opposite categories, termed "male" and "female", in which no other possibilities for gender are believed to exist.

Gender Fluid: A term used to describe a changing or "fluid" gender identity.

Gender Identity: *How I identify.* One's internal sense of being male, female, neither of these, both, or another gender(s). For transgender people, their own internal sense of gender identity and their sex assigned at birth are not the same.

Gender Expansive: A term used when a person's identity or behavior is broader than the commonly held definitions of gender and gender expression in one or more aspects of their life.

Gender Expression/Presentation: *How I look and express myself.* The physical manifestation of one's gender identity through clothing, hairstyle, voice, body shape, etc. Most transgender people seek to make their gender expression (how they look) match their gender identity (who they are), rather than their sex assigned at birth.

Gender Non-Conforming/Binary: A gender identity label that indicates a person who identifies outside of the gender binary. Often abbreviated as "GNC."

Other Genders: Often used to indicate the many genders that other people might identify as, express themselves as, and be attracted to. Examples of these genders include: Agender, Bigender, Genderfluid, Genderqueer, Transgender, Non-binary, Gender Non-Conforming and Two-Spirit. Other genders as a term has been criticized by some in the community for continuing to perpetuate gender hegemony.

Queer: An umbrella term to describe individuals who don't identify as straight and/or cisgender. Also, a slur used to refer to someone who isn't straight and/or cisgender. Due to its historical use as a derogatory term, and how it is still used as a slur many communities, it is not embraced or used by all LGBTQ people. The term "queer" can often be used interchangeably with LGBTQ (e.g., "queer people" instead of "LGBTQ people").

Trans*: An umbrella term covering a range of identities that transgress socially-defined gender norms. Trans with an asterisk is often used in written forms (not spoken) to indicate that you are referring to the larger group nature of the term, and specifically including non-binary identities, as well as transgender men (transmen) and transgender women (transwomen).

Transgender and Gender Non-binary (TGNB): Shorthand for a gender expression descriptor that indicates a non-traditional gender presentation (masculine woman or feminine man) or an umbrella term for anyone whose sex assigned at birth and gender identity do not correspond in the expected way (e.g., someone who was assigned male at birth, but does not identify as a man).

Two-Spirit: Is an umbrella term traditionally within Native American communities to recognize individuals who possess qualities or fulfill roles of both feminine and masculine genders.

LGBTQIA+: Shorthand or umbrella terms for all folks who have a non-normative (or queer) gender or sexuality, there are many different initialisms people prefer. LGBTQ is Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and Queer and/or Questioning (sometimes people at a + at the end in an effort to be more inclusive).

Sex Assigned at Birth: *The sex classification that I was assigned at birth.* The assignment and classification of people as male, female, intersex, or another sex based on a combination of anatomy, hormones, and chromosomes. This is usually decided at birth or in utero, and is usually based on genitalia.

Some language borrowed from TSER: Trans Student Educational Resources