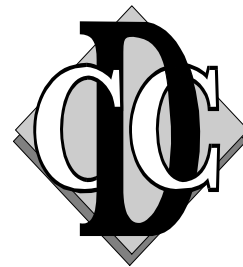




Career Resources for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Students

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Introduction

As a gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender (GLBT) student preparing to enter the workforce, you may have questions related to career planning and your sexual orientation. The campus environment is for the most part a supportive atmosphere with active student groups and an administrative backed non-discrimination policy. The workplace can be quite different in terms of openness and support of GLBT employees. This guide is designed as a starting point for reflection and discussion of work related issues facing GLBT individuals. Feel free to address questions or concerns with a career counselor in the CDC.

To be Out or Not Out, That is the Question!

Everyone has issues or questions when searching for a job or considering career changes. GLBT people have additional concerns related to their sexual orientation and career choices. Most people spend a majority of their time in a work related environment. It can be emotionally and intellectually draining to be on constant guard of who you really are in a homophobic climate. You must do what is comfortable for you. Remember, you can always change your decisions down the road.

The easiest place to start is to consider, how out do I really want to be? Pondering the following questions can help you decide.

- Are most of your friends, peers and support networks GLBT?
- Are you active in BiLaGA or any other GLBT organizations?
- Do you enjoy going to GLBT events such as the Pride Dinner?
- Do most of your friends and family members know that you are GLBT?
- If you have a partner, is he or she out in most situations?

Would you say?

- A. Being out is who I am. Being visible will provide me with equal treatment and support.
- B. Sexual orientation is only a small part of what defines me as a person. I prefer to be selective with whom I tell and don't tell.
- C. I am not comfortable sharing information about myself. Very few people know my sexual preferences.

Your answer can help you decide whether to:

- A. Target GLBT friendly companies.
- B. Lean toward GLBT companies but keep other options open.
- C. Choose an environment where you can maintain your privacy.

Researching Company Policies and Climate

In preparation for your job search you should try to research the company's official policies and resources. The web sites included in this handout can help you gather information concerning non-discrimination policies, domestic partner benefits, GLBT employee groups, and help you get a general idea of the level of acceptance of the company culture. If your job will take you to a different geographical area, researching local and state policies can help you get an idea of the overall tone of acceptance or at least tolerance of the region.

Resume/Interview Considerations

Many GLBT students wonder how to present the skills they have developed through involvement in GLBT activities on their resume or in a job interview. This decision can be based on whether you have chosen to be totally out (A) selective with whom I tell (B) or not out at all (C).

The following is an example of a "chronological" resume activity description:

The Pride Alliance, Co-Chair

- Allocated budget of \$1500 to support campus events, including National Coming Out Day Rally and Queer Articulations film festival.
- Co-lead weekly discussion group for lesbian and bisexual women.

Another strategy is the use of a "functional" resume to highlight accomplishments according to skill rather than organization. For example:

Skills

Leadership

- As President of a student organization, worked with a team of seven officers to plan educational outreach, social activities, and mentoring events.
- Acted as special events committee chair, organizing education meetings and public rally's on campus.

Communication

- Delivered public addresses at several campus functions and events.
- Facilitated small weekly discussion groups.

The key point is to decide how out you want to be during the interview process so you can be prepared to handle questions related to the information presented on your resume. You don't want to be caught off guard, unprepared or even embarrassed about your background. Many people wait to come out until after starting a new job where people can come out to coworkers on their own terms. Again, the bottom line is you must do what is comfortable for you.

Coming Out on the Job

The strategies you have chosen to use on your resume and interview preparation will determine your level of openness when beginning a new position. In general, it is a good idea to focus on establishing yourself as a professional while “testing the waters” to get an idea of the level of acceptance of your coworkers. Many people believe when coming out to anyone, in any situation, you should just use your best judgment and comfort level. As people get to know you first, the coming out process may evolve over time through day to day discussions and interactions. In any case, no matter what you decide, it is important to do your homework first. Know what legal protections you have based on where you are employed. Laws against employment discrimination based on sexual orientation are limited, and if not specifically stated, it is perfectly legal for an employer to ask if you are gay, and then make a decision whether to hire or fire you based on your answer.

Online Resources

Human Rights Campaign (<http://www.hrc.org/index.html>)

The best source of information on workplace and corporate policies related to sexual orientation and gender identity. It includes information about non-discrimination policies, organizations with domestic partnership benefits, municipalities that have laws banning employment discrimination, and career articles. Search the WorkNet Employer Database for information about several hundred organizations’ policies, LGBT employee group contacts, and more. This site pays the most attention to transgender issues in the workplace. Also includes a wonderful bibliography of additional resources.

Gay Financial Network (<http://www.gfn.com/>)

The GFN Career Center has an excellent, diverse selection of articles about job search issues, domestic partnership benefits, successful job interviewing, and more. The site also features some profiles of LGBT-friendly profiles.

Gay & Lesbian Professionals (<http://www.glpcareers.com/>)

A job search engine providing employment opportunities and resources to the GLBT job seeker in the US.

National Organization of Gay & Lesbian Scientists & Technical Professionals

(<http://www.noglstp.org/>)

NOGLSTP is a national organization of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people (and their advocates) employed or interested in scientific or high technology fields. NOGLSTP's goals include dialogue with professional organizations, disseminating information, improving our members employment and professional environment, opposing anti-queer discrimination and stereotypes, educating the queer, scientific, and general communities, and fostering inter-city contacts among our members. We are a non-profit educational organization under IRS section 501(c)(3), and are an affiliate of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Network of Business and Prof Org. (NYC) (<http://www.nbpo.org/membership.html>)

The Network of Business and Professional Organizations, commonly referred to as The Network, acts as the umbrella organizations for various GLBT professional groups in NYC. We are a 501c3 not-for-profit organization whose membership is comprised of individuals from our member group organizations and members of The Friends of the Network. Each group has serves a specific industry, but under the conglomerate of The Network, all organizations can become a part of a service organization that volunteers time and raises money for charitable groups with a focus on GLBT issues in NYC.

Planet Out Corporate Pride Directory (<http://www.planetout.com/money/cpd/>)

Articles about typical workplace issues; descriptions of gay-friendly companies; message boards.

Gay Work (<http://www.gaywork.com/>)

Job listing with LGBT-friendly organizations and links to company information (so you can research potential employers and their policies). This site also has career articles about LGBT issues and the workplace, as well as an excellent list of LGBT employee groups at companies around the country.

Pro Gay Jobs (<http://www.progayjobs.com/>)

A recruiting portal that provides diversity-focused employers with opportunities to post jobs and advertise to the GLBT workforce, and provides resources to GLBT jobseekers to find jobs with companies that embrace diversity.

Federal Government GLBT employees (<http://www.fedglobe.org/>)

Federal GLOBE's chartered purpose is to eliminate prejudice and discrimination in the federal government based on sexual orientation by (1) developing and providing educational programs, materials and assistance mechanisms which address the distinctive concerns and problems of lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals in the federal government and (2) educating the general public, policy makers, and federal employees about issues of concern to lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals.

Out & Equal Workplace Advocates (<http://www.outandequal.org/>)

Is a non-profit organization that provides workplace advocacy and programs to LGBT individuals. Each year they educate employers through their Diversity Training Program and their National Workplace summit conference.

National Gay & Lesbian Task Force (<http://www.thetaskforce.org/>)

Founded in 1973, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Foundation (The Task Force) was the first national lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) civil rights and advocacy organization and remains the movement's leading voice for freedom, justice, and equality. We work to build the grassroots political strength of our community by training state and local activists and leaders, working to strengthen the infrastructure of state and local allies, and organizing broad-based campaigns to build public support for complete equality for LGBT people.

Pride at Work (<http://www.prideatwork.org/>)

National Pride At Work is affiliated as the newest constituency group of the AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labor & Congress of Industrial Organizations). The purpose of Pride At Work is to mobilize mutual support between the organized Labor Movement and the LGBT Community around organizing for social and economic justice.

Queer Resources Directory (<http://www.qrd.org/qrd/>)

The QRD is an electronic library with news clippings, political contact information, newsletters, essays, images, hyperlinks, and every other kind of information resource of interest to the GLBT community. Information is stored for the use of casual network users and serious researchers alike.

Transgender at Work (<http://www.tgender.net/taw/>)

Transgender at Work provides resources for innovative employers who want to company employment policies to help the transgendered employees to be at their most productive. Includes links to resources for transgendered workers.

Books Addressing GLBT Issues in the Workplace

Baker, Daniel, Strub, S. O. and Henning, B. (1995). *Cracking the Corporate Closet: The 200 Best (and Worst) Companies to Work for, Buy from, and Invest in if You're Gay or Lesbian - and Even if You Aren't*. New York: HarperBusiness.

Dunne, G.A. (1996). *Lesbian Lifestyles: Women's Work and the Politics of Sexuality*. University of Toronto Press.

Ellis, A.L. & Riggle, E. D. B. (Eds.) (1996). *Sexual Identity on the Job: Issues and Services*. New York: Harrington Park Press.

Friskopp, A. and Silverstein, S. (1995). *Straight Companies, Gay Lives: Gay and Lesbian Professionals, the Harvard Business School, and the American Workplace*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

McNaught, B. (1994). *Gay Issues in the Workplace*. St. Martin's Press.

Mickens, Ed (1994). *The 100 Best Companies for Gay Men and Lesbians*. New York: Pocket Books.

Miriam, F. (1990) *Pride at Work: Organizing for Lesbian and Gay Rights in Unions*. New York: Lesbian and Gay Labor Network.

Powers, B. and Ellis, A. (1995). *A Manager's Guide to Sexual Orientation in the Workplace*. New York: Routledge.

Rasi, R.A. (Editor) (1995). *Pleasures and Perils of Coming Out on the Job*. Alyson Publications.

Rasi, R. A & Rodriguez-Nogues, D.M.L. (Eds.) (1995). *Out in the workplace*. Los Angeles: Alyson.

Snyder, K. (2003). *Lavendar Road to Success. The Career Guide for the Gay Community*. Berkeley: Ten Speed Press

Vargo, M.E. (1998). *Acts of Disclosure: The Coming Out Process of Contemporary Gay Men*. Haworth Press, Inc. 1998.

Winfeld, L. and Spielman, S. (1995). *Straight Talk about Gays in the Workplace*. New York: Amacom,.

Woods, J. D. (1993) *The Corporate Closet: The Professional Lives of Gay Men in America*. New York: Free Press.