



# Buffalo / Niagara

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www.PFLAG-buffalo-niagara.org

*We meet because we have learned that someone very close to us is Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, or Transgendered.*

*We try to help one another deal with this information in a positive manner.*

*Although we do not agree at all times, we try to be understanding.*

*We offer help to those who seek it, but do not force ourselves on others.*

*We strive to maintain anonymity while sharing on a level that is comfortable for all of us.*

*We encourage all to attend meetings for their own benefit as well as that of the group.*

*It is our hope that when each of us reaches a point of understanding and acceptance, we realize that this is when others need us the most.*

## Monthly Meeting

**Sunday, September 18, 2011**  
2:30–5:30 PM

The September meeting will include the showing of a video and time for discussion. As always, newcomers will be offered the alternative of meeting privately with a PFLAG parent.

Kenilworth United Church of Christ  
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The church is located two blocks west of Niagara Falls Boulevard at the corner of Decatur Rd and Dalton Dr. Decatur runs off of Niagara Falls Boulevard about 0.8 miles south of Sheridan Drive and about 0.8 miles north of Kenmore Ave.

Our meetings are in the library, which is near the parking lot entrance. The facility is handicap accessible.

## New Parents Meeting

**These meetings are scheduled as needed. Please call the helpline.**  
Held at a location convenient to those involved.

This self-help one-on-one meeting deals with the concerns of parents and family members who have recently learned that a loved one is Lesbian or Gay.

Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Buffalo/Niagara, is a non-profit, all volunteer, community-based organization not affiliated with any ethnic, religious, economic, or political group. Membership is open to all. PFLAG membership lists are kept confidential and mailings are sent in plain envelopes.

## Can You Help With The Newsletter

It is time consuming to find interesting things to share with our members. We want to have a content filled newsletter but that's hard to do within the time available. You can help. When you're reading the news and you see something that would be interesting to our members, just send an email with the information to [pflag@bfn.org](mailto:pflag@bfn.org) and if you're reading on-line most sites have a button that easily allows you to share the article with us.

## New Numbers, and Geography, for Gay Couples

By Sabrina Tavernise, The New York Times

So much for San Francisco. The list of top cities for same-sex couples as a portion of the population does not include that traditional gay mecca, according to new census data. In fact, the city, which ranked third in 1990 and 11th in 2000, plummeted to No. 28 in 2010. And West Hollywood, once No. 1, has dropped out of the top five.

The Census Bureau data, finalized this week and analyzed by Gary Gates, a demographer at the Williams Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles, gives the clearest picture to date of same-sex couples in America. In absolute numbers, they jumped by half in the past decade, to 901,997.

Most surprising is how far same-sex couples have

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dispersed, moving from traditional enclaves and safe havens into farther-flung areas of the country.

Consider, for example, the upstarts on the list: Pleasant Ridge, Mich., a suburb of Detroit; New Hope, Pa.; and Rehoboth Beach in southern Delaware. All three have been popular destinations for gay people locally but had never ranked in the top 10. The No. 1-ranked town is Provincetown, Mass., at the tip of Cape Cod.

The reordering reflects a growing influence of baby boomers, who became adults in the 1960s and 1970s, when the social stigma was starting to ease, and are more willing than previous generations to stand up and be counted, Mr. Gates said. Now that generation, arguably the first in history with such a large contingent that is out, is beginning to retire, and its life transition is showing up in the data, with older cities as the new popular choices. "As the baby boomer generation ages into retirement," Mr. Gates said, "we see its impact really strongly in the geography." The pattern was in evidence in Rehoboth Beach, a family resort town of 1,300, which was fourth on the list of same-sex couples per capita and did not figure in the top 10 rankings in 1990 or 2000.

"The change was pretty dramatic," said Rick McReynolds, 58, a resident. "It used to be all these boys," but now, he said, the gay population in town is older and has less of a singles scene.

But people who used to party here, like Bob Moore, a retired communications professor from Pennsylvania, have since returned with their partners to live. Mr. Moore, who came out in his 40s, after two children and a divorce, said he and his partner were looking for a place that was gay friendly, but not an exclusive enclave.

"We liked the fact that it was gay without being the Castro" neighborhood of San Francisco, said Mr. Moore, 59, who was sitting with his partner, Steve Ortleib, in Rigby's Bar and Grill on Tuesday night. He said they had visited four top retirement destinations for same-sex couples — two in California and two in Florida — before settling on Rehoboth.

In interviews in San Francisco on Tuesday, several gay people said the city attracted people who did not always want to become part of a couple. The census does not ask about sexual orientation. "You settle down in small towns because there is not much to choose from," said Nick Meinzer, 41, a hairstylist who works on Castro Street. "In urban areas we wait longer to settle down. I've been single for two years. They're not counting those of us who are single." Of the top cities like Pleasant Ridge, Mr. Meinzer said: "I've never even heard of those places. You'd think if they were so great you'd have heard of them."

Dennis Ziebell, 61, the owner of Orphan Andy's, a Castro neighborhood diner he opened 35 years ago, said he did not believe the count was accurate. "Take another survey, that's all I can say," he said. "I've been in a relationship for 36 years and nobody from the census asked me about it."

Last year was the third time the Census Bureau counted same-sex couples. The count included people of the same sex in the same household who said they were spouses or unmarried partners (spouses were not included in 1990). Mr. Gates calculated how many same-sex couples there were for every 1,000 households within towns and cities across the country.

New York is too big to figure prominently in top city rankings for same-sex couples per capita (it was 67th in 2010, Mr. Gates said), but it does rank by county, alongside more the more traditional locations. Manhattan is No. 5, after San Francisco County, Hampshire County, Mass., Monroe County, Fla., and Multnomah County, Ore.

The city ranking is a barometer of the changing demographics among the population of same sex couples, which has grown more diffuse throughout the country over the past 20 years.

In interviews here this week, several couples said that social attitudes had softened over time and that living farther afield was now easier to do. Mr. Gates compared the phenomenon to immigrants who no longer sought the safety of an enclave.

Steve Elkins, who runs a nonprofit community center called Camp Rehoboth, which acts as a liaison with the gay community, said cultural training classes for the summer police force would be met by stony stares in the early days. More recently, when he asked the police officers if they knew a gay person, two people in the class raised their hands to say they were gay.

"It's a generational change in thoughts and attitudes," he said. Rehoboth, he likes to say, used to be an island of tolerance in a sea of homophobia, and now is an island of tolerance in a sea of outlet malls.

Further evidence, Mr. Elkins said, was the quick passage of a civil unions bill that is set to take effect in Delaware on Jan. 1.

A decade is a long time in the gay community, and couples who were part of the pre-boomer generation said it had been all but impossible for them to come out. Michael Davis, 69, a retired intelligence officer who moved to Rehoboth in 2004, grew up in a small town in Wyoming in the 1950s, where homosexuality, in his words, did not exist.

"When I was growing up, gay was a mood you were in," he said, sitting at dinner with his partner, George Hooper, 64, a retired federal employee. For years he told people he was renting a room to Mr. Hooper. He could be fired for coming out in his job.

These days he lives openly, socializing with other gay couples and enjoying retired life on the beach.

"To go from complete homophobia to this," he said gesturing around him to the largely gay clientele at Rigby's.

Mr. Hooper smiled impishly and said, "He's come a long way, baby."

## Kay Patterson

Licensed Mental Health Counselor

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## Bi-national couples await relief under Obama policy change

By Chris Johnson, The Washington Blade

Brian Andersen is nervously awaiting a phone call from U.S. immigration officials. Andersen, an American citizen who married his spouse, Anton Tanumihardja, an Indonesian national, in D.C. in June, hopes that U.S. Immigration & Customs Enforcement will deem the deportation proceedings against Tanumihardja to be a low priority and take him out of the pipeline for potential separation from the country.

"To be a little cliché, it really would feel like a burden would be lifted from our shoulders," Andersen said. "Of course I do know in the back of my mind, that certainly isn't the end of the road, but it would certainly take the immediate threat away of the government tearing my spouse away from me."

Such an opportunity is possible for Andersen and Tanumihardja thanks to new guidance that the Obama administration unveiled last week in immigration policy. In a letter to the Senate, Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano last week indicated that authorities will conduct a case-by-case review of the approximately 300,000 undocumented immigrants facing possible deportation to determine which cases are high priority and low priority for separation from the country.

Those who have been convicted of crimes or pose a security risk will be a higher priority for deportation, while those who are deemed lower priority will be taken out of the pipeline. Administration officials will weigh a person's ties and contributions to the community and family relationships. The Obama administration has said these criteria are inclusive of LGBT families and same-sex couples.

Tanumihardja has lived in the United States since 2002 and has sought residency in the United States through the asylum process. After losing his bid for residency through this process, he was served with a final deportation order and was set for separation on Feb. 14. However, immigration officials postponed the deportation temporarily and Tanumihardja must continue to check in with ICE officials. At any time, the deportation office can set a date for his separation from the country.

Andersen, who lives in Philadelphia with his spouse, said a call from ICE removing Tanumihardja from proceedings would provide immediate relief until action is taken to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act, which prohibits federal recognition of same-sex marriage.

"It doesn't solve the larger issue of the discrimination of the Defense of Marriage Act, and still wouldn't allow me to sponsor Anton for permanent residence, but it is a step in the right direction and would allow us the peace of mind knowing we can stay and continue to fight together for full marriage equality," Andersen said.

Under current immigration law, straight Americans can sponsor their spouses for residency in the United

States through the green card application process if their spouses are foreign nationals. The same rights aren't available to gay Americans because the Defense of Marriage Act prohibits federal recognition of same-sex unions, which are only legal in six states and D.C.

Consequently, foreign nationals who are in committed relationships with gay Americans may have to leave the United States or face deportation — which could mean separation from their partner — if these foreign nationals are discovered to be undocumented or upon expiration of their temporary visas. The new policy guidance offers an opportunity for the Obama administration to cancel the deportation of these foreign nationals, enabling them to remain in the country with their partners.

Lavi Soloway, founder of Stop the Deportations and an immigration lawyer who handles deportation cases for same-sex couples, said Napolitano's guidance demonstrates the Obama administration is offering "a greater degree of sensitivity" to LGBT families.

"Those individuals who are facing deportation, but who are married to a gay or lesbian American citizen have a more receptive Department of Homeland Security to communicate their request for prosecutorial discretion than perhaps a few weeks ago," Soloway said.

The change builds off an existing June 17 memo from the Department of Homeland Security enabling immigration officials to exercise discretion in deportation cases that aren't deemed high priority. Soloway said the guidelines now are still the same as when this earlier memo was issued, but the administration has signaled "an aggressive interest in setting aside low priority cases, and that would include cases involving LGBT families."

But Soloway noted that the Obama administration has offered no timeline for when officials will complete the removal of foreign nationals in same-sex marriage from the deportation pipeline, nor whether this change would mean an end to all DOMA-related deportations.

"We don't know how long it will take for the government to work through its pipeline of cases, and so any bi-national couples who are at risk of being torn apart through deportation should be advocating for themselves and should be presenting the evidence and making the argument to deportation officers or prosecutors," Soloway said.

Gillian Christensen, a spokesperson for the Department of Homeland Security, responded to the Blade's request to comment on timing with the following statement.

"ICE is focused on smart, effective immigration enforcement that prioritizes the removal of criminal aliens, recent border crossers and egregious immigration law violators, such as those who have been previously removed from the United States," Christensen said. "The agency exercises prosecutorial discretion, on a case by case basis, as necessary to focus resources on these priorities."

One couple that had been in deportation proceedings has already found relief after Napolitano issued the new guidance. Alex Benshimol and Douglas Gentry, a married gay bi-national couple in California, learned on Saturday that ICE dropped proceedings against Benshimol, a Venezuelan native.

In a statement, Gentry said the decision by ICE to exercise prosecutorial discretion and take Benshimol out of the deportation pipeline, effectively taking him out of danger, is "extremely encouraging."

"This should bring hope to so many couples in our situation," Gentry said. "As happy as Alex is, he's still uncertain. We will still have to fight for full equality because DOMA prevents me from petitioning for his green card. But the constant fear of exile or separation is over, and for that we're very grateful."

The case marks the second time this year that ICE has dropped deportation proceedings against a same-sex couple. In July, immigration officials discontinued proceedings against Henry Velandia, a gay Venezuelan national, who lives in New Jersey with his spouse, Josh Vandiver.

Another couple that could receive a call from ICE and obtain relief is Sujey and Violeta Pando. The Denver, Colo. couple, who have been together five years and married last year in Iowa, received media attention last week after an immigration judge decided to postpone deportation proceedings against Sujey, a Mexican national, until January.

Violeta told the Blade that a phone call from ICE informing the couple that Sujey would be taken out of the pipeline for deportation would make them "so happy there'd be no words to describe the feeling."

"I think there's a possibility because under Secretary Napolitano's memo, it listed some categories, and Sujey fits all those categories," Violeta said. "So, I don't see why not, she has ties to the community, she's married to me, she's not a criminal."

Growing up in Mexico, Sujey was ostracized by her family for being a tom-boy and says she was raped and beaten growing up. At the age of 16, she was brought into the United States. Her deportation troubles started in 2008, when she was arrested after a traffic violation and taken to jail. ICE was notified and deportation proceedings started against her.

The specter of deportation, Violeta said, still concerns the couple and they don't know what action they'd take if a deportation was ordered against Sujey.

"We try not to look at that as an option," Violeta said. "I don't know what I would do. We don't look at that as an option, we need to fight for this. It all goes back to DOMA. So, no, not an option."

But the new guidance would only affect gay foreign nationals who are currently facing deportation proceedings. Gay foreign nationals in same-sex relationships who are seeking legal status and

protections, but haven't yet had deportation proceedings started against them, aren't affected by the Obama administration's change.

One such bi-national same-sex couple is Bradford Wells, a U.S. citizen, and Anthony John Makk, an Australian national. The San Francisco couple were married in Massachusetts seven years ago and have lived together 19 years. Wells and Makk came into public view earlier this month after the San Francisco Chronicle profiled them and reported that U.S. Customs & Immigration Enforcement on July 26 denied Makk a marriage-based green card for residency on the basis of the Defense of Marriage Act.

Makk is the primary caregiver for Wells, who's living with AIDS. Wells told the Blade he'd be faced with significant challenges in continuing to care for himself should the U.S. government order deportation of his spouse.

"If he was deported, I'd be here all alone, I wouldn't have anyone to assist me," Wells said. "I would find it impossible to take care of all the things I would need to take care of to manage my day-to-day life. I would not be able to do everything I have to do."

Steve Ralls, a spokesperson for Immigration Equality, which is handling Wells and Makk's case, said their story underscores the fact that same-sex immigrant families need earlier intervention and a more permanent solution to put them on equal legal footing with opposite-sex couples.

"While the administration's decision to intervene and halt deportation proceedings is a welcome step in the right direction, our government should not be forcing couples to face a worst-case scenario in order to receive even minimal relief," Ralls said.

To ensure greater protection, Ralls said the Obama administration should implement a policy of holding spousal applications for married bi-national same-sex couples until either the courts or Congress lift DOMA from the books.

"That allows more families to maintain legal status, and legal protections, which is a far better option than waiting until deportation orders are issued and families have been forced out of status," Ralls said. "The administration has offered to loosen the noose in a last-minute reprieve for some families. Instead, they should be stepping up, and offering help, before families are faced with such dire circumstances."

Immigration Equality on Wednesday appealed the denial of the marriage-based green card to U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services. The appeal gives him no legal status while pending, but if granted, would then place him back in legal status. Ralls said an attempt to remove him while the appeal is pending would be unusual because a successful appeal would permit him to remain in the United States legally.

Even though the policy change wouldn't directly impact the San Francisco couple, Wells said he thinks the more rigorous attention that bi-national same-sex couples would receive under the case-by-case examination of deportation proceedings makes him feel "there could be hope at the very end of the road."

"There is a possibility that if we find ourselves at the very end of the road that he may get deferred action and they won't actually put him on a plane and fly him back to Australia, but we're not there yet and I'm trying to get some relief before we get there," Wells said.

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## Philadelphia's Instructive Anti-Bullying Efforts

By Kyle Bella, The Bilerico Project

Anti-bullying has dominated the discussion among mainstream and LGBT websites alike but what seems curiously absent is the discussion on strategies that are helping to quell rates of bullying. While a broader national bill is necessary, by focusing on the efforts of local governments, we can learn how to approach new anti-bullying legislation at all levels of government.

In particular, by highlighting the efforts of Philadelphia, which has a history of progressive anti-bullying legislation, we can begin to understand how anti-bullying legislation works to keep students safe only when proper enforcement procedures are in place.

Policies in Philadelphia have explicitly mentioned sexual orientation since The Board of Education adopted Policy 123, "Adolescent Sexuality," in June 1991. Though the policy explicitly states that "the Board of Education firmly asserts that abstinence from sexual activity during adolescence promotes good health and a healthy lifestyle," it also affirmed that the board must "assure a safe, equitable and positive school experience for lesbian and gay students."

This earliest policy, however, failed to include any specific strategies of how to enforce anti-bullying legislation. In 2004, under a School Reform Commission report, Philadelphia adopted Policy 102, "Multiracial-Multicultural-Gender Education." For the first time, the school board included "sexual orientations (perceived or known) and gender identities (perceived or known)" within their initial policy statement. They also included "Policy Procedure" and "Investigation" sections that summarize their plans on promoting a more equitable curriculum and enforce any grievances students might make with the district.

But in January 2010, after a series of racially motivated bullying incidents toward Asian immigrants at South Philadelphia High School, the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations intervened to conduct 11 public hearings over the year that featured over 130 witnesses, including LGBTQ students and adults, who gave their experiences with bullying.

These conflicts, and the resulting report, *Widening Our Circle of Concern*, ([www.wideningthecircle.org](http://www.wideningthecircle.org))

helped recognize the continued failures of enforcing these anti-bullying policies and offered distinct strategies to enforce these policies.

As a first step, in September of 2010, the School Reform Commission adopted Policy 248, "Policy For Unlawful Harassment," and Policy 249, "Bullying/Cyberbullying," that include both explicit definitions of these terms and offer step-by-step complaint procedures that more specifically list how to report problems and how the district must handle these reports.

To specifically address the problems LGBTQ youth face, the city's Office of LGBT Affairs has organized the LGBTQ Advisory Committee. The Committee created the *Community Service Directory for LGBTQ Youth* that is directed toward all district adults in direct contact with students. The directory lists established district policies, offers resources list of organizations locally and nationally that support LGBTQ youth, includes frequently asked questions on how educators can speak to students about sexuality and gender identity, and offers a glossary of commonly used terms in the LGBTQ community.

According to Gloria Casarez, who heads the Office of LGBT Affairs, the next step is developing a district wide curriculum that would include LGBTQ content, specifically books and movies, divided by elementary, middle and high school levels. As Casarez explained, "Curriculum and LGBT bullying are very different, but if you have reflective curricula that talk about people in a positive light you will have fewer negative reactions to these people."

These steps alone, however, cannot solve the current crisis. As *Widening the Circle of Our Concern* indicated, "Despite these positive efforts, the widespread presence of unresolved intergroup conflicts remains." What, then, are the next steps that will extend beyond Policies 248 and 249?

One of the first recommendations that the report made was that Policy 248 be amended to provide appeals procedures for any official district decisions, an additional complaint procedure that investigates the district's failure to explore a report of harassment and an explicit description of language access services the district provides.

At the same time, the report suggested that the district create a permanent staff position to "strengthen intergroup harmony and coordinate all activities relevant to this report." This staff person would likely help implement other recommendations, including individual school anti-discrimination policies, peer mediation programs and the integration of restorative justice practices, which emphasize positive behavior practices, promote dialogue between victim and offender and offer community service opportunities that are not "solely punitive."

While it's impossible to imagine schools free from bullying entirely, it's clear that existing efforts to

strengthen anti-bullying preventions for LGBTQ cannot depend on the simple legal principle that LGBTQ students be protected. Philadelphia is a model of how, in embracing an approach that stresses staff and faculty education, specific enforcement recommendations, formal complaint procedures and community involvement, the effects of bullying can be lessened. The result is a more equitable climate can be created for all students.

In a time when GLSEN reports that nearly 90% of LGBTQ students reported some form of harassment within the past year, beginning these discussions on *how* to implement these policies changes in other school districts could not be more important.

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## Elmhurst College asks prospective students about sexual orientation

BY Kara Spak, Chicago Sun-Times

Elmhurst College, the 4-year private liberal arts school west of Chicago, makes history by being the first university in the country to ask students about their sexual identity (LGBT) on admissions applications. Elmhurst College officials weren't looking to blaze trails when they added to their admission application: "Would you consider yourself to be a member of the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered) community?" With that one line, though, they became the first college in the country to ask potential students directly about their sexual orientation or gender identity.

"Increasing diversity is part of our mission statement," said Gary Rold, Elmhurst's dean of admissions. "This is simply closing the loop, in many ways, of another group who has a very strong identity. It may not be race and religion but it's an important part of who they are."

The question will appear on applications for those freshman and transfer students hoping to start in the fall of 2012. Like admissions questions about race, ethnicity or religion, answering the question is completely optional and does not affect admission decisions. Students can check "yes," "no," or "prefer not to answer." Those who answer "yes" may be eligible for a scholarship worth up to one-third of tuition, not unusual because about 60 percent of incoming students receive some type of scholarship aid, Rold said. More importantly, he said, knowing students' sexual orientation will help officials direct incoming students toward services or groups that might help them make an easier transition to college life.

"We try really hard to take good care of students, have them try graduate and be successful citizens in the world," he said. "The only way you do that is to meet people where they really are."

At a handful of other universities, there are admissions procedures that might identify LGBT student applicants. At Dartmouth College, for example, students can check boxes of activities that might interest them, including LGBT-centered activities. At the University of

Pennsylvania, students who write in their application essay that they are gay can be paired with a mentor.

Elmhurst, though, is the first college in the country to directly ask students about their sexual orientation. The private, liberal arts school in its namesake suburb has 3,300 undergraduate students and is affiliated with the United Church of Christ.

"It is kind of a pleasant surprise that Elmhurst College in Illinois is the first campus to ask an identity question," said Shane Windmeyer, executive director of the national nonprofit Campus Pride. "Some of the leaders in college admissions have done similar stuff but never asked the question." Windmeyer thinks it's an important question to ask and doubts anyone would lie about being gay to get a scholarship. He also does not think being gay or lesbian would be an advantage in the competitive college admissions process.

"It's important that these youth have a way to express their sexual identity, like their racial identity," he said. "Colleges ask those questions so they can give them the resources to get them to be successful."

Rold said he knows some students will bristle at the question, as they do at questions about race and ethnicity. And while the question might attract more applicants, he thinks that number will balance out with students who do not apply because of the question.

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## Back to school, back to progress

Campus Pride Press Release

This fall a growing number of American colleges and universities are taking steps to make their campuses safer and more inclusive for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students, according to the new ratings from the Campus Pride's LGBT-Friendly Campus Climate Index. In fact, 33 schools – nearly double the number from last year – received the highest ratings available for institutions of higher education.

The Campus Climate Index takes an in-depth look at LGBT-friendly policies, programs and practices. Colleges are rated from one to five stars, depending on their answers to a detailed, voluntary questionnaire submitted to Campus Pride, a national non-profit working to create safer, more LGBT-inclusive colleges and build future LGBT and ally leaders. Launched online in fall 2007, the Index has become a staple in student and faculty research, campus organizing efforts and benchmarking for LGBT student safety and inclusion on campus. Campus Pride's Campus Climate Index takes into account answers by students, faculty and staff to highly detailed, comprehensive questions assessing LGBT-friendly policies, programs and practices.

Each summer, colleges and universities are encouraged to update their Campus Climate Index with new data and information that reflects their institutions' continuing efforts to create safer, more inclusive campuses. Campus Pride's 2011 Campus Climate Index

includes 33 schools -- nearly double from last August -- receiving perfect, five-star ratings. These schools, including well-known and nationally-respected centers of academia, excelled in eight areas: 1. LGBT Policy Inclusion, 2. LGBT Support & Institutional Commitment, 3. LGBT Academic Life, 4. LGBT Student Life, 5. LGBT Housing, 6. LGBT Campus Safety, 7. LGBT Counseling & Health and 8. LGBT Recruitment and Retention Efforts.

The colleges and universities scoring five-star ratings this year include: American University; Amherst College; Carleton College; Dartmouth College; Emory University; Humboldt State University; Indiana University; Ithaca College; Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Oberlin College; Oregon State University; Princeton University; San Diego State University; Southern Oregon University; Stanford University; Syracuse University; The Ohio State University; The Pennsylvania State University; University of California, Berkeley; University of California, Los Angeles; University of California, Riverside; University of California, Santa Barbara; University of California, Santa Cruz; University of Maine; Farmington University of Massachusetts, Amherst; University of Michigan; University of Oregon; University of Pennsylvania; University of Southern California; University of Vermont; University of Washington; Washington University in St. Louis; and Whitman College.

Despite the growth in schools that are actively working to make their campuses better for LGBT students, much more work remains to be done. "Campus Pride applauds all campuses who have 'come out' on the Index, regardless of their rating. By doing so these campuses are taking active responsibility for their LGBT campus community, says Windmeyer. "The Campus Pride Index grew by nearly a third over the past year, but there are still many, many other colleges and universities who have yet to 'come out' for their LGBT students and

then take adequate steps to protect and ensure a safe, welcoming learning environment."

Campus Pride's 2010 State of Higher Education, an in-depth report documenting the experiences of over 5,000 college students, faculty, staff and administrators, showed that only seven percent of colleges and universities nationwide have institutional support for LGBT students. Surprisingly, only 13 percent include sexual orientation in campus non-discrimination policies and just 6 percent include gender identity protections.

"According to our national research, more than a third of transgender and 13 percent of lesbian, gay and bisexual students, faculty and staff fear for their physical safety on campuses across the United States," Windmeyer says. "As a result, more than a third of some of these students and faculty have seriously considered leaving their school. We must do better."

For more information on Campus Pride's Campus Climate Index, visit [www.campusclimateindex.org](http://www.campusclimateindex.org). For more details on the LGBT-Friendly National College Fair Program, visit [www.campusclimateindex.org/events/](http://www.campusclimateindex.org/events/)

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