

Application for the  
JAMES P. AND SHIRLEY J. O'BRIEN DIVERSITY ENDOWMENT

Applicant:

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Institute for Children, Youth and Families (ICYF)  
The John & Doris Norton School of Family and Consumer Sciences  
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences  
University of Arizona

Project Title:

*Understanding and Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth:*  
Training Youth Professionals, Volunteers, and Advocates

Abstract:

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) issues are at the forefront of diversity concerns in the United States: reactions range from celebration and support to hostility and rejection. Within this context, young people across the US are growing up and growing into an awareness of their sexual identities. The best available evidence shows that LGBT youth are a group at extreme risk for the most compromising challenges that adolescents may face: school failure, victimization, depression, substance abuse, and suicide. LGBT youth come out at younger ages than ever before, and they come out in environments that are not prepared to understand and support them. The majority of teachers, ministers, parents, and youth professionals of today grew up at a time when there was literally no such thing as an "out" gay youth; few of them have had professional, research-based training to help them understand the unique needs of LGBT youth, or to help them identify strategies for supporting the healthy development of all young people with regard to LGBT issues. Using a train-the-trainer model, this project will train CALS Extension Agents, their community collaborators, and members of the University community in the *Understanding and Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth* curriculum, and assist them in developing the capacity to become resources for LGBT youth issues in the state of Arizona and in their local communities.

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Project background:

My major areas of expertise include research on adolescent sexuality and sexual orientation, and research on positive youth development. With regard to research on LGBT youth, I have published extensively in the area of adolescent sexual orientation and health, civic engagement, and normative development. As my research on LGBT youth gained attention, I began to be called upon to act as an expert for advising and training teachers and youth development professionals in understanding and supporting LGBT youth. I developed a curriculum for the training of youth professionals (the *Understanding and Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth* curriculum) with funding from the William T. Grant Foundation. The curriculum has been presented at multiple regional and national conferences, including the USDA CSREES CYFAR conference (2004), and has been peer-reviewed and accepted for inclusion on USDA's CYFERNet. I have used the curriculum for trainings with University of California Cooperative Extension 4-H and FCS Advisors. I also contracted with the Northern California Training Academy to conduct trainings across northern California for foster care professionals. I estimate that I have trained over 125 youth development professionals using this curriculum during the past two years.

Nature of the project:

Adolescent sexual orientation (LGBT) issues are important concerns for youth professionals today, but that there are few opportunities for professionals to be trained on this topic. Because of the recent emergence and quick pace of social change related to LGBT issues, few youth development professionals received any formal education on LGBT youth needs. I consistently hear from youth professionals that they would like research-based information to help them better understand and support LGBT youth, and help them help all young people better understand these issues. For example, in July I conducted a training in El Dorado County in collaboration with the county 4-H Youth Development program. Other youth professionals in the county were invited. In that largely conservative, rural county, the turn-out was double the anticipated number: 35 people registered, yet over 70 people appeared in person for the training. These professionals described their need for (a) more personal comfort in addressing these issues, (b) current information and resources for supporting youth, and (c) strategies for gaining institutional support to better support LGBT youth.

I propose a 2-day train-the-trainer workshop designed for CALS Cooperative Extension Agents, their community collaborators, and other interested members of the University community. The workshop will prepare the participants to use the *Understanding and Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth* curriculum in their communities, and will include time for discussions of ways that the network of trainers can learn from and support one another in their individual work. The training will be planned for 30 participants. My goal is that 5-8 of these will be CALS Cooperative Extension Agents, another 5-8 will be their community collaborators, with the remaining spaces open to interested individuals from the University or local community.

Goals, inputs, outputs, outcomes:

The overarching *goals* of this project are twofold. First, the primary goal is to enhance the personal knowledge, skills, and values of the participants. The specific learning objectives of the curriculum are outlined below. The second larger goal is to develop a cadre of youth development professionals that can act as resources for LGBT youth and LGBT youth issues in their respective communities.

Learning Objectives: Knowledge

- The participant will understand the distinctions between sexual orientation, sexual behavior, sexual identity and gender identity
- The participant will gain a proficiency in terminology associated with discussions of same-sex sexuality in adolescence.

- The participant will understand the key settings in which sexual orientation and gender identity develops.
- The participant will understand the developmental processes associated with coming out.
- The participant will understand emotional and behavioral health risks among sexual minority youth.
- The participant will understand the development of resilience and resilient outcomes among sexual minority youth.

Learning Objectives: Skills

- The participant will be able to recognize developmental challenges that LGBT youth face.
- The participant will apply knowledge of risk and resilience when evaluating possible developmental outcomes for LGBT youth and their families.

Learning Objectives: Values

- The participant will develop a personal awareness of her or his values and the contributions those values make to work with LGBT young people and adults.
- The participant will appreciate the importance of LGBT-friendly environments.

*Inputs* for this project will largely involve personnel time: mine, student research assistants in my lab, and the time devoted by CALS Cooperative Extension Agents and other youth professionals to the training. Additional inputs will include the resources to conduct the training (this is reflected in the budget: travel and meeting expenses; duplication of the training manual).

The primary *output* will be a network of youth development professionals trained to build community capacity to understand and support LGBT youth.

The desired *outcome* will be further dissemination of this training, as the trainees will be encouraged to plan trainings in their home communities. An additional desired outcome will be an enhanced local view of the resources of CALS Cooperative Extension. For example, since conducting the training in El Dorado County California this past July I have been told that the experience has significantly re-positioned 4-H in that county among youth professionals, many of whom viewed 4-H as a "traditional" program that had little to offer them. Local youth development professionals in that community now view 4-H and Cooperative Extension as a resource for contemporary youth and family issues.

Meeting the O'Brien Endowment mission:

This project is consistent with the O'Brien Endowment mission of promoting "diversity in people, programs, and ideas." It addresses a pressing diversity issue in our nation, it does so from a research-based perspective, and it focuses on a key component of CALS Cooperative Extension: youth development.

Personnel for completion:

I have already developed the curriculum, and currently have 15 printed copies; this work was funded through an award for my research and its dissemination from the William T. Grant Foundation. I will devote my time to the project as part of my service to the ICYF, CALS, and Cooperative Extension. I support multiple undergraduate students who work in my lab; I will devote the time of one or more of these students to help organize, manage, and participate in the training.

Integration into the University community:

The target audience for the training is CALS Cooperative Extension Agents and their community collaborators. However, I have had several inquiries from community members in Phoenix and Tucson who have heard about my work and this training; I am confident that there is a large population of individuals here at UA and in the surrounding communities that would attend such a training if it were made available to them.

Budget:

<b>Budget item:</b>	<b>Amount:</b>
Curriculum training manuals and supplies 40 manuals (binder, 100 pages, compact disk), notepads, pens	\$200.00
Travel, meals, and lodging for CALS Extension FCS / 4-H Agents to attend training (5 CALS Extension Agents, \$250 per person)	\$1,250.00
Catering for training (30 attendees; lunch and snacks for a 2-day training)	\$600.00
Subtotal:	\$2,050.00
<b>Matching funds:</b>	
15 Curriculum training manuals – available from applicant	\$75.00
Match from ICYF for 25 training manuals (per agreement with Dr. Mari Wilhelm)	\$125.00
Match from Norton School (per agreement with Dr. Soyeon Shim)	\$500.00
Subtotal:	\$700.00
<b>Total O'Brien Request:</b>	<b>\$1,350.00</b>

Budget justification:

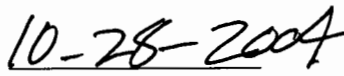
Curriculum training manuals and supplies: While the curriculum is available on compact disk, it is important for trainers to have hard copies of the training materials. Additional basic supplies for the training workshop (notepads, pens) are needed.


Travel, meals, lodging for CALS Extension FCS / 4-H Agents: All effort will be made to conduct the training with lowest possible travel costs. The possibility of combining this training with other regional or state-wide events that bring Agents together will be explored.

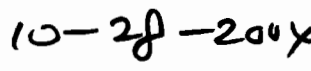
Catering for training: Lunch and snacks to be provided for the 2-day training.

Signatures:

  
Applicant

  
Date

  
Director, Norton School

  
Date