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"INSTITUTIONAL NEEDS OF THE TRANSGENDER STUDENT COMMUNITY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND"

A RESEARCH REPORT

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY

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OF

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BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE

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OF

MASTERS IN DIVERSITY STUDIES

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Prof Melissa Steyn

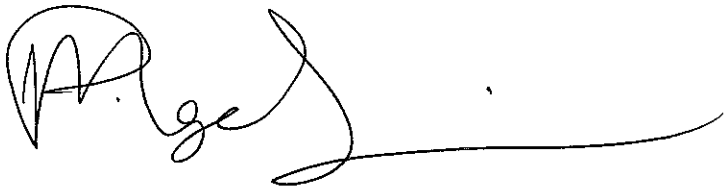
Declaration of Authorship

I, Pura MGOLOMBANE, declare that this research report titled, "Institutional needs of the Transgender Student Community at the University of the Witwatersrand" and work presented in it are my own. I confirm that:

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of the other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signed: *PMgolombane*

***Date**: 11 July 2017*



UNIVERSITY OF WITWATERSRAND

Abstract

Transgender students in higher education in South Africa are increasingly coming out. Though this coming out comes at huge to cost for them in terms of personal safety, alienation, potential harassment, bullying and discrimination, this group of students are insisting that campuses should be inclusive and safe for everyone irrespective of their gender, sex, sexuality and/or sexual orientation. In this regard, student organisations such as Activate and Ctrl Alt Gender are doing profound advocacy work in putting pressure on the university management to recognise, affirm and acknowledge transgender students as part of the university community.

It is through researching the institutional needs of students who are openly identifying as transgender at Wits that one can observe the full conseqences of the compartmentalising system that activist Mock (2014) describes when reflecting on her experiences as a transgender woman. Ratele & Kessi (2016) maintain that the biggest success in terms of transformation since 1994 in higher education is the increase in diversity of student bodies with regard to race and gender; however, Francis & Msibi (2011) suggest that issues of sexual identity, as they intersect with other identities need more exploration. This is consistent with what Ratele & Kessi (2016) assert that research that takes a more integrated approach to students' experiences is required. It is important to recognise that inasmuch as scholars such as Higham, 2012; Kiguwa, 2014; Vincent, 2008; & Woods, 2001 have done studies in issues of power, dominance, subordination in higher education, on how power perpetuates itself and how it might be undone, Ratele & Kessi (2016) insist that more research is needed to marginalised students, and making their experiences central to the transformation and decolonisation debates. This study is an attempt to do precisely that by focusing particularly at the institutional needs of the transgender student community at Wits University.

University in particular and Higher Education in general is often the first opportunity many transgender students have to question their gender and sexuality. Transgender students form

one of the most vulnerable groups of people who experience serious difficulties on campus because their existence is negated and/or is not sufficiently recognised.

The themes arising from the thematic analysis of student interviews relate to campus awareness, campus climate, campus experience, campus incidences of harassment/discrimination, toilet experiences, student group participation, things that could improve transgender student experiences if they were to be introduced at Wits, student support services, Counselling and Careers Development Unit (CCDU) experience, campus health experience, residence experience, pronoun usage experience, trans community on campus, knowledge of the Safe Zones@Wits advocacy programme. These themes reveal the needs and experiences of transgender students on campus. Thematic analysis is a process for encoding qualitative information (Gibb, 2007).

Ten key needs emerged from this study: policy, health care, gender neutral toilets, residences, Safe Zones@Wits, pronouns, transitioning, coming out, campus climate, and campus awareness.

In the South African context there is not much literature as yet in this field of study. However, I am confident that with the developing interest in transgender communities, accurate understandings will begin to emerge as advocacy programmes and institutional policy regimes that offer support to transgender students facilitate safe spaces in which they can come out, self-disclose their transgender identities and in the process claim their full humanity.

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To my family, Mam-J, Ma-Sechaba, my sisters Babes, MkzT ka ZKhAndy, my children Athi Zikhona, Akhanyisile and Andisiwe, who have supported me unconditionally in my personal and professional endevours, I am because you are. Finally, to my extraordinary and dynamic wife Kagisho for giving me space to pursue my dreams sometimes at huge social cost to you, I cannot thank you enough, except to say thank you.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

"Our genders are as unique as we are. No one's definition is the same, and compartmentalizing a person as either a boy or a girl based entirely on the appearance of genitalia at birth undercuts our complex life experiences." (Mock, 2014. P.59). It is impossible to escape from the consequences of how people are assigned a gender at birth. However, it is important to understand the implications of assigning gender; especially as these implications affect transgender and gender non conforming individuals in Higher Education settings. This chapter introduces a study of the experiences of transgender students at the Universtiy of the Witwatersrand (Wits) and provides a background to the research. In addition this chapter articulates a problem statement, the aim of the research, research question, rationale for the study.

In the recent past there has been an observable emergence of students who are openly identifying as transgender at Wits. This increasing visibility of students who identify as transgender is not isolated to Wits; it would appear to be an international occurrence, according recent research (Dugan, Kusel, & Simounet, 2012; McKinney, 2005; Rankin, Weber, Blumenfeld, & Frazer, 2010). In the South African context there is not much literature as yet in this field of study. However, I am confident that with the developing interest in transgender, accurate information will begin to emerge as advocacy programmes that offer support to transgender students. In the USA, though still relatively small, there is an emerging body of literature which has begun to focus on the needs and experiences of transgender students from multiple but intersecting perspectives of campus climate (Rankin, Weber, Blumenfeld, & Frazer, 2010), identity development (Bilodeau, 2005; Rankin & Beemyn, 2012), student services (Beemyn, 2003; Beemyn, Curtis, Davis, & Tubbs, 2005; Buzuvis, 2012), resiliency (Singh, Meng, & Hansen, 2013), engagement and leadership (Dugan et al., 2012), and daily lived experience (McKinney, 2005).

1.1. Background

Mock (2014) clearly outlines her desire for examining gender from an intersectional perspective, moving from pathologisation of transgender people to adopting a human rights-centric framework for unpacking gender:

> "Gender and gender identity, sex and sexuality, are spheres of self-discovery that overlap and relate but are not one and the same. Each and every one of us has a sexual orientation and a gender identity. Simply put, our sexual orientation has to do with whom we get into bed with, while our gender identity has to do with whom we get into bed as. A trans person can be straight, gay, bisexual, etc.; a cis gay, lesbian, or heterosexual person can conform to expected gender norms or not; and a woman can have a penis and a man can have a vagina. There is no formula when it comes to gender and sexuality. Yet it is often only people whose gender identity and/or sexual orientation negates society's heteronormative and cisnormative standards who are targets of stigma, discrimination, and violence. I wish that instead of investing in these hierarchies of what's right and who's wrong, what's authentic and who's not, and ranking people according to these rigid standards that ignore diversity in our genders and sexualities, we gave people freedom and resources to define, determine, and declare who they are" (p.114).

Butler (1993) touches on the most important aspect of assumed cisnormativity, that is, genders assigned to children at birth according to sex. "One who decides on its gender, is clearly not its gender from the start and fails to realize that its existence is already decided by gender" (p. 22). Each child is labled either as AMAB (assigned male at birth) or AFAB (assigned female at birth). This has significant impact on the socialisation of the child as they grow and are conditioned into the set of norms associated with their assigned gender. A child, or later in life, an adult, who does not wholly or in part identify with their gender assigned at birth is said to be transgender; this is an umbrella term that includes both binary, and non-binary transgender people. Binary transgender people identify as being male or female, the opposite of their gender assigned at birth, whereas non-binary transgender people identify as being without a gender (agender), or having both binary genders (bigender), etc.

Our understanding of gender as a social construct is an important point of departure. Johnson (2009, p.65) suggests that we need to understand doing gender as a way of ritual. Butler (1990), places significant emphasis on gender as being performative, and in essence, constricted by heteronormativity and the compulsory restrictions that stem from it. She outlines these intersections that play out from the birth of a child onward through their entire lives.
Wilkerson (2007) maintains that, "the scientists reason that, given the complexities of human sexuality, it is best and easiest to explain the most constant feature of human sexuality, which they take to be object choice". Kendall (2011), argues that "some scholars believe that sexual orientation is rooted in biological factors that are present at birth; others believe that sexuality has both biological and social components and is not preordained at birth" (p. 349). According to Johnson, "...doing gender involves interaction ritual chains that are driven by emotional energy. This emotional energy shapes the localised intentions of men and women as they do gender thus transforming gender into something that we use as well as do" (2009, p. 66).

One of the challenges faced in understanding gender, sex and sexual orientation is the notion of biological essentialism. Connell (2009) maintains that, "one of the most dramatic proofs of the importance of social processes in gender, and a familiar disproof of biological essentialism, is the fact that different societies have recognised different gender categories" (p.109). In this regard for example, Monro (2005) submits that India provides an example of the intersectionality of genders (p. 22). This once again disproves the '*biological essentialism,*' and should be able to put the matter to rest once and for all but societal power is highly invested in this way of seeing, doing and policing gender.

The socially constructed binary and boxes that are used to describe gender are very problematic. Lorber (2005) claims that "...these constructs are often oversimplified and stripped down to dichotomous polar extremes (male and female, masculine and feminine, gay and straight) that mask important diversity and variation within each status" (p.74). According Androgyneity blog (2015):

> "The use of the binaries and boxes model assumes that transgender people are inherently male/female/intersex, based on genitalia, chromosomes or hormones,

> whereas in reality, the sex of a transgender person is part of their experience of being transgender. If a transgender woman has a penis, she is no less of a woman, and the converse applies to transgender men. The notion that one must fit a certain physiological mold in order to be considered a particular gender is problematic, cisnormative and essentially erases transgender people, particularly those who cannot or do not want to medically transition".

So, given that gender is a social construct it becomes a performance rather than a natural or biological phenomenon. West & Zimmerman (2002) contend that:

> Doing gender involves a complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional, and micropolitical activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine 'natures'. When we view gender as an accomplishment, an achieved property of situated conduct, our attention shifts from matters internal to the individual and focuses on interactional and, ultimately, institutional arenas. In one sense, of course, it is individuals who 'do' gender. But it is a situated doing, carried out in the virtual or real presence of others who are presumed to be oriented to its production. Rather than as a property of individuals, we conceive of gender as an emergent feature of social situations: as both an outcome of and a rationale for various social arrangements and as a means of legitimating one of the most fundamental divisions of society" (p.42).

1.2. Problem Statement

Limited literature in the South African context exists about transgender students in higher education. As a result, transgender students are misunderstood when it relates to university policies and practices with oppressive and sometimes destructive consequences. Mock (2014) points out that having a "lesbian child is a lot less daunting than having a trans child, especially in a culture where gay and lesbian people are increasingly becoming more accepted, whereas transgender people, especially trans women, are still stigmatized" (p.173). Many transgender students on campus face multiple forms of oppression from family, social structures, members of the academy; these multiple forms of oppression include violent erasure from campus life, curriculum, residences and support services. For example, towards the end of 2013, a

transgender student laid a complaint at the Wits Transformation and Employment Equity Office (TEEO) about an incident of transphobia. The AMAB student had used female toilets instead of male toilets, as she felt safer doing so, and was harassed for doing so by fellow students who imposed their transphobia upon her.

My exposure to the transgender students' experiences and my observations at Wits campuses seems to suggest that though there may be pockets of positive experiences of transgender students and staff, there is much work to be done to change the institutional culture to be inclusive of transgender people.

1.3. Aim of the research

The aim of the study is to critically investigate the the institutional needs and experiences of the transgender student community at Wits University; to examine the interpersonal and institutional obstacles and barriers transgender students face at Wits; and to study transgender student perceptions and needs in relation to the utilisation of various student services and programmes such as Health services, Counselling services, Residence Life, the Wits TEEO, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) advocacy programmes such as Safe Zones@Wits and Wits pride.

1.4. Research Questions

The main research question is: What are the needs and experiences of the members of the transgender student community at Wits University? In order to further explore and analyse this main question, the following sub-questions were formulated:

1. What is the general experience of a transgender student at Wits?
2. Do transgender students at Wits feel they belong?
3. What practices/policies are responsible for alienating transgender students, if any?
4. Do transgender students feel discriminated against in any way because they openly identified as transgender?
5. Do transgender students feel socially accepted at Wits as part of a gender nonconforming community?

6. How, based on the findings, can the university assist to:
    6.1. Address the needs of transgender students.
    6.2. Improve the experiences of transgender students at Wits?

The research focuses on the members of transgender student community.

6.3. Rationale

My interest on the experiences of transgender student community at Wits stems from my experiences as the Manager: Diversity, Ethics & Social Justice at the Wits TEEO. In this position, I was responsible, among other things, for dealing with cases involving discrimination and related student complaints. In these processes, I was led to the subsequent realisation that I had taken for granted the difficult choices that the members of the transgender student community have to make in a world that may not recognise their existence. In addition, I would like to make a contribution in accentuating the plight of transgender student community at Wits, by advocating for structural changes especially as it relates to policy, healthcare, documentation, residences and public facilities, such as toilets.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This study deploys the theory of intersectionality to examine the institutional needs of transgender students at Wits. These needs are based on the lived experiences of the transgender students. This theory was found useful simply because it looks beyond one category, such as gender, as a site of oppression. In this chapter, I trace the origins of the theory of intersectionality in order to bring about an understanding of the context under which the theory emerged. This is important because an understanding of context reveals the environment within which transgender people become a discriminated social group.

This chapter will also review what other scholars have said about transgender communities. So, the review of literature will address the scope of the research and will provide the background to the study. This narrative will weave together the transgender identities with the complexities and challenges that emerge from those identities. The chapter will show how the complexities and challenges faced by transgender communities shape their lived experiences in general. However, given the topic of the study, it is essential that these experiences are contextualised. Thus, the last part of this chapter is about the transgender experiences in higher education with particular reference to the challenges which are mostly experienced by transgender students.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality refers to the interaction between gender, race, and other categories of difference in individual lives, social practices, institutional arrangements, and cultural ideologies and the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power. Originally coined by Crenshaw (1989), intersectionality was intended to address the fact that the experiences and struggles of women of colour fell between the cracks of both feminist and anti-racist discourse. Crenshaw (1989) suggests that theorists need to take both gender and race on board and show how they interact to shape the multiple dimensions of Black women's experiences.

Davis (2008) contends that feminist analysis has moved beyond the longstanding critique of the focus on class in classical sociology, beyond the construction of a special set of studies of gender parallel to sub-fields of ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation and religion and towards the theoretical recognition of the importance of the intersection of multiple inequalities. Yet, there remain significant differences as to how this theoretical recognition of the importance of the intersection of multiple inequalities should proceed (Brah and Phoenix, 2004; Crenshaw, 1991; Felski, 1997; Hancock, 2007; Lykke, 2004; McCall, 2001, 2005; Medaglia, 2000; Mirza, 1997; Mohanty, 1991; Phoenix and Pattynama, 2006; Verloo, 2006; Walby, 2009; Yuval-Davis, 2006). However, there is a common interest in how to conceptualise and theorise the relationship between different social groups and between agencies that shape each other. Recent gender theory has addressed these issues under the heading of intersectionality. So, intersectionality as a theory is helpful in observing and understanding the ways in which multiple forms of oppression and power interact within and across social groups.

In the similar way that the Black women were invisibilised in both the race and the feminist struggles, transgender people have been invisibilised in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, asexual, queer and other sexual orientations and gender identities communities (LGBTIAQ+). Crenshaw (1991) shows the invisibility of Black women in the domestic violence projects when she analysed as a weakness for both the gender equality project and for the anti-racist project. Crenshaw (1989) also uses the concept of intersectionality to grasp the ways in which the interactions of gender and race limit Black women's access to the American labour market, and how a lack of understanding of this intersection led to the marginalisation of Black women and Black women's experiences. Intersectionality has since been heralded as the "most important contribution that women's studies has made so far" (McCall, 2005, p. 1771).The fate suffered by Black women where their issues fell between the cracks is somewhat experienced by the transgender community, in that within the context of sex and gender identity politics transgender people are the most marginalised. Crenshaw (1991) argues that the experiences faced by women of colour were "not subsumed within the traditional boundaries of race or gender discrimination as these boundaries are currently understood" (p. 1244). She reasons that previous academic, political and civil societal engagements with the intersections of gender, race and/or ethnicity have not been sufficiently nuanced. One identity category is

instead treated as dominant; social power "works to exclude or marginalise those who are different. Contemporary feminist and anti-racist discourses have failed to consider intersectional identities such as women of color" (Crenshaw, 1991, pp. 1242-3). So, using intersectionality theory to reveal the environment within which transgender people live as a discriminated social group should be an important contribution.

"Words have the power to encourage and inspire but also to demean and dehumanize. I know now that epithets are meant to shame us into not being ourselves, to encourage us to perform lies and to be silent about our truths" (Mock, 2014. p.75). The lack of understanding of transgender people perpetuates harmful myths about their non existence, and perpetuates cisnormative assumptions. As a result, transgender people face discrimination when they come out. The failure to consider transgender identities has serious implications because in all forms of social life, social power structures they get excluded.

It is important to note that intersectionality theory is dynamic as shown by McCall (2005). McCall (2005) identifies three distinct approaches to working with the concept of intersectionality: *intra-categorical, anti-categorical*, and *inter-categorical* (p. 1773-4). The *intra-categorical* is concerned to "focus on particular social groups at neglected points of intersection... in order to reveal the complexity of lived experience within such groups". This approach draws inspiration from Crenshaw's work in order to examine groups, often small ones, which had not been previously analysed. The *anti-categorical* approach is "based on a methodology that deconstructs analytical categories". This approach considers the stabilisation of categories to be problematic in essentialising and reifying the social relations that the analyst may be seeking to change. It thus prioritises fluidity over stability of categories. The *inter-categorical* approach "provisionally adopt[s] existing analytical categories to document relationships of inequality among social groups and changing configurations of inequality among multiple and conflicting dimensions". McCall (2005) recommends the *inter-categorical,* for its power in engaging with the larger structures that generate inequalities. This is important in understanding the existence of a network of power structures which give rise to forms of oppression and discrimination. It is the similar structures that exist at Wits that generate inequalities that need to be studied, revealed and transformed in order to ensure that university spaces are inclusive.

Another interesting and relevant review of intersectionality was done by Hancock (2007). Hancock (2007) also reviewed numerous studies of intersectionality in order to build a typology of approaches. She identifies three approaches to the study of race, gender, class and other categories of difference: *unitary*, *multiple* and *intersectional.* In the *unitary* approach, only one category is examined, and it is presumed to be primary and stable. In the *multiple* approach more than one category is addressed and these matter equally; the categories are presumed to be stable and to have stable relationships with each other. In the *intersectional* approach more than one category is addressed; the categories matter equally; the relationship between the categories is open; the categories are fluid not stable; and mutually constitute each other. Within this typology, Hancock (2007) places considerable emphasis on the issue of fluidity, suggesting that only in the last category is there any analytic presumption of fluidity of the categories. She presumes that a category is either dominant (unitary) or equal to other categories (multiple, intersectional); this omits any notion of asymmetry (pp. 64, 67). The dominant understanding of gender and sexuality tends to adopt the unitary and multiple approach to the categorisation of life. As a result, when confronted with the multiplicity and intersectionality presented by transgender people, dominant groups become oppressive; the university as a microcosm of society is not substantially different.

Intersectionality addresses the most central theoretical and normative concern within third wave feminist scholarship: namely, the acknowledgement of differences among women. The very fact of differences among women has become the leading subject of feminist theories in recent years. This is because it touches on the most pressing problem facing contemporary feminism, the long and painful legacy of its exclusions (Zack, 2007, p. 197). Intersectionality addresses precisely the issue of differences among women by providing a "handy catchall phrase that aims to make visible the multiple positioning that constitutes everyday life and the power relations that are central to it" (Phoenix, 2006, p. 187).

And so, intersectionality illuminates one strand of contemporary feminist thought that has been, in different ways, concerned with the issue of difference. This strand has been devoted to understanding the effects of race, class, and gender on women's identities, experiences, and struggles for empowerment. It has been especially concerned with the marginalisation of poor women and women of colour within white, Western feminist theory. Initially, this strand of

feminist theory adopted a *triple jeopardy* approach to class, race and gender (King, 1988) by exploring how, with the addition of each new category of inequality, the individual becomes more vulnerable, more marginalised, and more subordinate. However, from *triple jeopardy*, the focus progressively shifted to how race, class and gender interact in the social and material realities of women's lives to produce and transform relations of power (Anthias, 1998; Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1983; Collins, 2000; Yuval-Davis, 1997;). Intersectionality seemed ideally suited to the task of exploring how categories of race, class and gender are intertwined and mutually constitutive, giving centrality to questions like how race is 'gendered' and how gender is 'racialised', and how both are linked to the continuities and transformations of social class.

Postmodern theoretical perspectives have also employed intersectionality in the project of deconstructing the binary oppositions and universalism inherent in the modernist paradigms of Western thought (Brah and Phoenix, 2004; Phoenix, 2006). Critical perspectives inspired by poststructuralist theory, postcolonial theory (Mani, 1989; Mohanty, 1988), diaspora studies (Brah, 1996), and queer theory (Butler, 1989) were all in search of alternatives to static and essentialising conceptualisations of identity. Intersectionality theory has therefore contributed substantially to postmodern projects of conceptualising multiple and shifting identities. These projects have coincided with and drawn upon Foucauldian perspectives on power that focus on dynamic processes and the deconstruction of normalising and homogenising categories (Knudsen, 2006; Staunæs, 2003). Intersectionality seems to embody a commitment to the situatedness of all knowledge (Haraway, 1988), promising to enhance the theorist's reflexivity by allowing her to incorporate her own intersectional location in the production of self-critical and accountable feminist theory (Lykke, 2005).

Intersectionality promises to provide a multipurpose framework that is inclusive in its applicability. So, intersectionality theory seems to have succeeded early in its development to articulate a sense of exclusionary theorising about gender in women's studies in which there appeared to be a false epistemological understanding that White women represented all women, that Black men were the same as Black women as in anti-racist theory (Hull, Scott and Smith, 1982). King (1988) tells us that, thinking in terms of *multiple jeopardy* challenges the idea that "each discrimination has a single, direct and independent effect on status, wherein

the relative contribution of each is readily apparent as well as the non-productive assertions that one factor can and should supplant the other" (p. 47). By emphasising the differences among women, these scholars not only countered the unwarranted universalising of White, middle-class, American women's experiences as representative of "all women's" but began a highly productive line of theorising about how lived experiences of oppression cannot be separated into those due to gender, on the one hand, and race, on the other, but rather are simultaneous and inextricable (Brewer 1993; Espiritu 2000; Glenn 2002). Moreover, this analysis highlighted the implications of such intersections for practical politics, since "women of color are situated within at least two subordinated groups that frequently pursue conflicting political agendas" (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1246). Part of the utility of an intersectional analysis, therefore, was to give voice to the particularity of the perspectives and needs of women of colour who often remained invisible *as women* even when they were organising "on separate roads" to express feminist demands (Roth 2004) and invisible *as blacks* despite their significant leadership in the American civil rights movement (Robnett 1997). Because women of colour argued that their oppression was experienced in a *qualitatively* different way, their experiences required distinctive attention in order to see "how race, gender, and class, as categories of difference, do not parallel but instead intersect and confirm each other" (Espiritu, 2000, p. 1). The emphasis on giving "voice" to those who are in positions of oppression encouraged what Hancock (2007) calls a "content specialization" interpretation of intersectionality: "a substantive focus on the study of multiply-marginalized groups". This methodological emphasis on what Hancock (2007) calls "multiple intersections" and McCall (2005) defines as an "intracategorical" approach focuses especially on differences of experience for subgroups within a category, and often generates lists of groups to be included as well as debates over the priority to be given to one or another intersectional location (Andersen 2008). The word *transgender* is an umbrella term in a subgroup of a collection of different subgroups within a broader LGBTIAQ+ category which needs to be revealed and understood so that this community can be equally recognised and its needs can be adequately addressed at Wits; intersectionality is best placed to assist with this complex project.

Given that the transgender community is a subgroup of a broader group of sexual and gender minorities, that is, LGBTIAQ+; I used what Hancock (2007) calls "multiple intersections" and

what McCall (2005) defines as an "intracategorical" approach. These approaches helped me to focus particularly on differences of experiences of transgender students within the LGBTIAQ+ category.

The relationship between Gender, Sex and Sexuality

Thompson (1994) and Kimmel and Messner (2004) in Kendall (2011) provide a well-articulated view to the gender debate when suggesting that, virtually everything social in our lives is gendered. People continually distinguish between males and females and evaluate them differentially. Gender is an integral part of the daily experiences of both women and men. A micro level analysis of gender focuses on how individuals learn gender roles and acquire a gender identity. Gender roles refers to the attitudes, behaviour, and activities that are socially defined as appropriate for each sex and are learned through the socialisation process. Gender identity specifically applies to the lived experience of a person as being either cisgender (identifying with their gender assigned at birth), or transgender (not identifying in part or wholly with their gender assigned at birth).

West & Zimmerman (2002) offer an insight pertaining to the concepts of sex, sex category, and gender; how these concepts intersect and create contradictions in how they are understood, practised and theorised. These concepts may be understood as follows:

> **"Sex** is determination made through the application of socially agreed upon, yet socially constructed biological criteria for classifying persons as females, males or intersex. The criteria for classification can be genitalia at birth, examination of hormone levels, or chromosomal typing before birth, and they do not necessarily agree with one another, given their problematic 'medically normative' origins. Placement in a '**sex category'** is achieved through application of the 'sex' criteria, but in everyday life categorization is established and sustained by the socially required identificatory displays that proclaim one's membership in one or the other category. In this sense, one's 'sex categorization' presumes one's sex and stands as proxy for it in many situations, but 'sex' and 'sex categorization' can vary independently; that is, it is possible to claim membership in a 'sex category' even when the 'sex' criteria are lacking. **Gender,** in contrast, is the activity

> of managing situated conduct in light of normative conceptions of attitudes and activities appropriate for one's 'sex category'. Gender activities emerge from and bolster claims to membership in a 'sex category'. We contend that recognition of the analytical independence of 'sex', 'sex categorization,' and 'gender' is essential for understanding the relationships among these elements and the interactional work involved in 'being' a gendered person in society" (West & Zimmerman (2002, pp. 42-43).

According to Meem, Gibson and Alexander (2010),

> "For more than a century, scientists and scholars have sought to identify the combination of factors that makes a person feel sexual desire for someone of the same sex. This quest began in the nineteenth century, as Western medicine claimed status as a profession, with standardized training academies, curricula, and practices. The professionalization of medicine evolved through a number of developments in science at the time including (1) refinement of scientific methods, (2) significant advances in technology, (3) a mania for taxonomy, and (4) a new understanding of human behaviour as pathology" (p.121).

Over time and through its professionalisation, science positioned itself as authority in the field of sexuality whilst fixing gender into a binary position of female and male. This gender essentialism masked the socialisation effects of gender. In this regard, Kendall (2011) claims that, "whereas the word gender is often used to refer to the distinctive qualities of men and women (masculinity and femininity) that are culturally created, sex refers to the biological and anatomical differences between females and males" (p.347). Kendall (2011) takes this argument further by suggesting that, "at the core of these differences is the chromosomal information transmitted at the moment a child is conceived. The mother contributes an X chromosome and the father either an X (which produces female embryo) or a Y chromosome (which produces a male embryo). At birth, male and female infants are distinguished by primary sex characteristics: the genitalia used in the reproductive process. At puberty, an increased production of hormones results in the development of secondary sex characteristics: the physical traits (other than reproductive organs) that identify an individual's sex. For women, these include larger breasts, wider hips, narrower shoulders, a layer of fatty tissue throughout

the body, and menstruation. For men, they include development of enlarged genitals, a deeper voice, greater height, a more muscular build and more body and facial hair" (pp. 347-348).

Meem et al. (2010) reason that:

> "Before turning his attention to human sexuality in the 1940s, zoologist Alfred Kinsey was best known for his meticulously researched study of the gall wasp. In 1940, he and his research team at Indiana University began the massive undertaking that culminated in publication of 'Sexual Behavior in the Human Male in 1948' and 'Sexual Behavior in the Human Female in 1953.' The group interviewed thousands of men and women, taking detailed sexual historic and when the 1948 volume appeared, public reaction was intense. Many were shocked and displeased by Kinsey's frank and unapologetic discussion of sexual matters. One element of Kinsey's work on sexuality that distinguished it from that of his sexologist predecessors was his absolute refusal to allow moral or medical concerns to enter into his examination. Kinsey insisted that human sexuality in all its variations was simply a matter of stimulus and response-given sufficient stimulus, human beings experience sexual arousal" (pp. 122-123).

Lorber (1994, p. 6) summarises the importance of gender skilfully when debating that, "gender is a human invention, like language, kinship, religion, and technology; like them, gender organizes human social life in culturally patterned ways". Whilst Kendall (2011) concludes that "gender organizes social relations in everyday life as well as in the major social structures, such as social class and the hierarchies of bureaucratic organizations" (p.350).

Trans Identities Complexities & Challenges

Lombardi (2009) argues that previous studies on transgender people have tended to confound sexuality with gender. The implications are such that individual identities are presented as one homogenous group characterised by a single global narrative, when in reality, the transgender community are affected by intersecting oppression and are an extremely diverse group under the umbrella term. The reason for the problem in conceptualising gender variant populations can be attributed to the misrecognition of sex as gender and gender as sex within research

studies (Lombardi, 2009). Money (1955) made a distinction between one's biological sex and gender roles among intersex individuals; and later added gender identity as a concept to refer to a person's internal sense of their own gender, which is to be used along with gender role, that is, external aspects that communicate one's gender to others (Money,1973, 1985). Feminist theorists have also worked to focus on gender rather than sex as gender was conceptualised as being socially constructed, whereas, sex refers to biology (Ferree, Lorber, & Hess, 1999; Howard, Risman, Romero, & Sprague, 1999).

However, gender is still used by many researchers as a synonym for sex and conceptualised as a single dichotomous variable that conflates biology with social and psychological factors (Knaak, 2004; Laner, 2000). As a result the use of sex and gender interchangeably has contributed to the confusion of how gender variant people are seen by others.

Rizzo (2006) suggests that many people do not see much difference between transvestite, transgender, or transsexual and will use each interchangeably. The distinction beween each is crucial. People who do not partially or wholly identify with the gender they are assigned at birth fall under the umbrella term 'transgender,' whereas people who are transvestites or transsexuals are not included under the umbrella. The conflation and lack of understanding is not only limited to the uninitiated but extends to some scholars.

The complexities inherent in the transgender identities, obscures the diversity found among gender variant individuals. Young and Meyer (2005) discussed how the labels "MSM" and "WSW" (men who have sex with men and women who have sex with women) conceals important information about the social aspects of people's lives and urge greater reflection on how and when these terms are appropriated. The same can be said about the umbrella term "transgender." Transgender has become an overarching word to identify a range of identities and lives. Its use carries a sociocultural specificity that erases the lives and experiences of those outside an explicit Anglo-American context (Namaste, 2005).

There are other serious questions that arise within the transgender community. These questions relate to notions of *passing* as one of the two dominant sexes and who has a right to police who passes and who does not. Roen (2002) maintains that some binary transgender

people view passing as the *other sex* as the ultimate sell out. That is, passing is portrayed as complicit with normative gendering and therefore as contrary to the gender-transgressive ethic of transgender politics. Roen (2002) insists that for some, this necessarily entails the disruption and eventual abandonment of categories such as *woman*, *man*, and *transsexual*. By contrast, a more liberal transsexual politics may not strike at the roots of psychomedical constructions of transsexuality, or *gender identity*, but is more concerned with the human rights of the person who is *transsexual*.

In this instance, the person's identity does not come into question in the same way, but their legal rights and rights to access medical services are central issues. This is a curious brand of identity politics where the purpose is to obscure the question of identity. One does not proclaim oneself proudly as a lifelong *transsexual*. One moves into progressively less threatening identity states such as formerly *transsexual* and, ultimately, *woman* or *man*. Here, it is assumed that the *transsexual* person will want to seek sex reassignment surgery, that s/he will want to pass full time as a woman or as a man, and that s/he deserves the legal rights of any other *woman* or *man*. These two political positionings are not mutually exclusive, and both rely at times on human rights discourses. Any one person may adhere to aspects of each line of argument simultaneously. Both seek greater societal acceptance and legal rights for transgender people.

Therefore, it is important to be aware of the risks associated with identity categories. Butler (1993) writes that "as much as identity terms must be used, [and] as much as "outness" is to be affirmed, these same notions must become subject to a critique of the exclusionary operations of their own production: For whom is outness a historically available and affordable option? Is there an unmarked class character to the demand for universal "outness"? Who is represented by which use of the term, and who is excluded? For whom does the term present an impossible conflict between racial, ethnic, or religious affiliation and sexual politics?... In this sense, the genealogical critique of the queer subject will be central to queer politics to the extent that it constitutes a self-critical dimension within activism, a persistent reminder to take the time to consider the exclusionary force of one of activism's most treasured contemporary premises" (p. 227).

Transphobia

Transphobia is the feeling of unease or even revulsion nonnormative gender identity and expression (Hill, 2002; Hill & Willoughby, 2005). Studies have found that many transgender people have experienced some form of discrimination or harassment because of their gender identity or presentation sometime in their life. Harassment, discrimination, and violence faced by transgender people on a daily basis, as well as the highrisk behaviours those individuals engage in to cope with these issues are common themes throughout the literature. Transgender people are not immune to the jokes, stereotypes, and misperceptions about their identity and community. Repeated subjectivity to these conditions discourage the creation of a positive self image (Mintz, 2011). According to Zubernis and Snyder (2007), if a person receives messages that society loathes them, not only will they feel isolated from society at large, they might internalise these negative beliefs and engage in self hatred. The exclusion of this population is both formal and informal, subtle and overt, leading to greater stigmatisation.

Mock (2004) explains her experiences with transphobia:

> For many trans people, the pretending can last months, years, even decades; no two people have the same journey, yet a common fear threads us: Being who I really am will lead to rejection. Concealing who you are warps your sense of self and heightens feelings of hopelessness about ever being able to be your true self. A defeatist feeling loomed over me, telling me that no one would ever understand and accept me. I began believing that people, including my family and friends, would be disgusted by me, and these new belief systems anchored in the shame that I internalized from the world around me led to further isolation. It's no surprise that trans people are more likely to struggle with depression, suicidal thoughts and actions, substance abuse, and a wide range of self-harming behaviors that make it that much more difficult to live healthy, thriving lives.
>
> Thankfully, suicidal thoughts were not part of my journey, though feelings of isolation and hopelessness followed me. In rare moments of self-reflection, when I faced no one but myself, I dropped the mask. I didn't have the words to define what I saw or who I was, but I recognized me and often chose to dismiss her with the one question that pushed me to put the mask back on: Who will ever love you if you tell the truth? (p. 207).

A study of 402 transgender individuals within the United States found that approximately 60% had experienced some form of harassment and/or violence, and 37% had experienced economic discrimination (Lombardi, Wilchins, Priesing, & Malouf, 2001). Reback et al. (2001) found that approximately half of their sample reported employment discrimination, 30% reported being fired from their job, and 29% reported discrimination in housing. A study conducted in San Francisco found that approximately 80% of transgender/transsexual men and women experienced verbal harassment, 50% experienced job discrimination, and 30% experienced physical abuse (Clements, 1999). A community health study conducted in Boston found many transgender/transsexual individuals have experienced problems accessing health care and many received blatant discrimination from health care providers (GLBT Health Access, 2000). In a study of 50 transgender college students, Rankin & Beemyn (2005) found that 44% of participants had experienced harassment including derogatory remarks, verbal threats, graffiti/vandalism, physical threats and assaults, denial of services, and pressure to be silent (Rankin & Beemyn, 2005, as cited in Beemyn, 2005). Transgender people also experience high levels of physical danger (Hill & Willoughy, 2005; Lee, 2000). Compared to non-transgender and heterosexual students, LGBT[IAQ+] youth are four times more likely to be victims of verbal or physical assaults and, as a result, are five times more likely to miss school due to fear for their personal safety (Lee, 2000). McKinney (2005) completed a similar study of 85 self identified transgender college students regarding their perceptions of discrimination on campus. Results indicated that most participants believed that the campus climate was hostile towards transgender students.

Normative attitudes about sex and gender are the basis of transphobic attitudes and beliefs, but the question remains as to how experiences of transphobia may differ between gender variant people. Sugano, Nemoto, & Operario (2006) found that Latina and African-American transgender women of colour reported experiencing higher levels of transphobia compared to Asian/Pacific Islander transgender women. They also found those who self-identified as female had higher levels of self-esteem compared to those who self-identified as preoperative transgender women. Experiences of transphobia may be influenced by many factors that may or may not be directly related to one's identity or expression.

For individuals who are gender variant or non-conforming, one's gendered presentation may influence their experiences with discrimination. As such, those who have used hormones for many years or those who have utilised surgical interventions to change their gendered appearance may experience lower levels of discrimination. Having legal documents that match their social presentation may also reduce people's experiences of discrimination. The issue being one's ability to live one's life without being seen as gender variant in any way; in this sense, gender presentation and legal sex is as important as one's gender identity (Lombardi, 2009). Grossman, D'Augelli, Howell, & Hubbard (2005) studied a child's perceived parent reaction to the child's revelation of a *nonconforming* gender identity. Fifty-five transgender youths were interviewed about their parents' reactions to their gender identity. Results indicated that 59% of parents had negative reactions to their child's gender identity when initially informed of this identity. Furthermore, results indicated that parents verbally and physically abused many participants because of their gender identity. According to the authors, increased levels of parental abuse corresponded to increased levels of gender nonconformity. This lack of acceptance by their own parents, combined with high levels of abuse in the home, school and in public spaces, can lead to severe emotional consequences of depression, stress, anxiety, and suicidal ideation (Grossman et al., 2005). In addition, emotional trauma and isolation can lead to high-risk and self-destructive behaviours, while lack of acceptance by the self and others can lead to high-risk behaviours such as substance use and suicidal ideation (Bruce, Ramirez-Valles, & Campbell, 2008; Zubernis & Snyder, 2007).

In the context of higher education, student academic success is determined not only by success on tests and papers. The holistic college experience often involves educational experiences that occur outside of the classroom. Students that feel more supported on campus and feel connected to the campus community, both inside and outside of the classroom, often achieve greater academic success (San Diego State University, 2010). Despite the presence of transgender students on college campuses, most American colleges and universities have excluded or failed to include these students (Beemyn, 2005; Beemyn & Curtis et al., 2005; Lovaas, Baroudi, & Collins, 2002; McKinney, 2005; Sausa, 2002). Many college campuses currently exclude transgender students and fail to meet the needs of these students in such areas as health care, residential living on campus, bathrooms and locker rooms, records,

programming, and support Mintz (2011). These practices not only add to a general level of discomfort for transgender students, but send a broader message that the campus does not address the needs of or include this population, nor care whether or not these students experience academic success (Beemyn, 2005).

Records and documents present a particular set of challenges for transgender students. When a student transitions from one gender to another, they often have a difficult if not impossible time changing their academic records and identification to reflect their chosen name and/or gender identity. If a student is not able to change these facets of their identity, they are often constantly forced to explain why their name, for example, does not match official university documents. This can lead not only to discrimination, but to a sense of disempowerment for the student as their identity is not validated (Beemyn, 2005, Sausa, 2002). Forms, such as those a student must fill out to obtain housing, often limit a student to choosing between male and female. If a student does not identify as male or female, identifies as both male and female, or transitions from male to female or female to male, these forms will not only provide an initial complication when ticking a box, but the answer that is ticked is often set in stone for the duration of the academic experience. Transgender students have reported a lack of supportive programming or staff on campus (Beemyn, 2005; McKinney, 2005). McKinney (2005) reported that most respondents to the survey of 75 college students indicated that while there may be LGBT[IAQ+] programming on campus, the "T" is often ignored. There was also a lack of support groups or supportive faculty or staff for transgender students. Many campuses not only do not have any openly transgender faculty or staff, but do not have faculty or staff that are trained to support trans students (Beemyn, 2005).

Transgender Experiences in Higher Education

There has been a sustained interest in the location and significance of higher education institutions across the continent. The need to integrate challenges of gender dynamics into continent wide higher education debates take place around issues such as globalisation, academic freedom, access, citizenship, and nationalism. African feminist scholars have made important contributions to a robust discourse on gender, epistemology, and higher education in African contexts (Bennett & Reddy, 2009).

One of the most complicated arenas of research *shared* across myriad disciplinary spaces is that of sexualities. In their study, Bennett & Reddy (2009) mapped the terrain of disciplinary engagement with sexualities and gender in South African higher education by undertaking research on the ways in which teaching on sexualities and gender were being approached in these institutions. Their focus on teaching highlights the importance of the connection between university classrooms and the environments beyond those classrooms. Their motivation for undertaking such a project was informed by theories on the history and culture of higher education institutions which suggests the overwhelmingly patriarchal nature of institutional norms within African (and indeed, global) higher education systems. These norms include curricular approaches to the body, identities, sexualities, and the relevance of such concepts to diverse disciplines. Such norms are constantly, however, under negotiation and have been challenged in a number of ways by feminists, especially feminist academics and teachers within diverse disciplines. Secondly, theories on the institutional culture of higher education institutions which argue that while such institutions are key forces in the production of *professional* citizenship, they also construct gendered norms of sexuality (compulsory heterosexuality) which embed such citizenship into conservative notions of reproduction, sexual moralities, and *respectability* (Bennett & Reddy, 2009).

"It is commonplace that apartheid tried to govern most aspects of people's lives within the borders of South Africa. It is increasingly accepted that the policy was also targeted at regulating, directing, and shaping the most intimate parts of the lives of its subjects" (Ratele, 1999, p. 56). Ratele's discussion is a compelling exploration of the connection between apartheid interests in racialisation (the construction of the body, as confined via *family genes* and [arbitrary] notions of hierarchy, to a biologically appropriate destiny within human liaison) and sexuality (Bennett & Reddy, 2009). The impact of apartheid legislation on South Africans' sexuality was powerful. What is important to note is the fact that resistance to apartheid also influenced constructions of masculinity, womanhood, and notions of what constituted appropriate and *liberating* relationships to sexual experience. "Struggle" masculinities, for example, according to Xaba (2001), encouraged young men's overt and visible heterosexuality in the name of commitment to the overthrow of the regime; the processes

of political organisation (both within and outside the country's borders) involved high levels of mobility, communication, and sometimes *interracial* connections.

In terms of post-1994 discussions about sexualities and gender dynamics within South Africa, the meanings of *manhood* and *womanhood* are currently in intensive contestation. The negotiation of *masculinities* and *femininities* intersects with the dynamics of escalating poverty and unemployment, juxtaposed against the concerted efforts by the government to facilitate people's access to new opportunities for education, professional opportunities, and interaction with the globalising world. Within South Africa, despite new post-apartheid political language around gender equity and the formation of national machinery designed to monitor and support policies which support the economic and social empowerment of women (especially black women), there is fierce gender hostility and a sense of powerful (perhaps very valuable) instability concerning *gender* norms (Bennett & Reddy, 2009). Gender dynamics continue to be negotiated in intimate relationship to racialisation, and to class-based realities; within our own university classes with young men and women, debates about identity rage with passion and confusion. On the one hand, the discourse of *gender equality* is alive, across diverse sectors of South Africa (and with diverse effects); on the other, gender-based violence (rape, domestic violence, the sexual assaults on children) is rampant and sends a very particular message to South African women about their vulnerability and political impotence. Given the centrality of *becoming gendered* to sexuality, these dynamics deserve consideration. Feminists have long argued that heterosexuality needs to be studied as a political institution, especially by those individuals who feel that they are, in their personal experience, the precursors of a *new relation between the sexes* (Rich, 1979). Bennett & Reddy (2009) suggest that this phrase talks of the need to examine the ways in which sexualities are organised by society with the result that certain desires, behaviours, and identities were criminalised, stigmatised, or medicalised. This organisation privileges heterosexual behaviour, identities, and desires, marginalising and often criminalising homosexuality and legitimising homoprejudice.

How do transgender students hold the contradictions of a gendered heterosexual world on the one hand and emerging political movements advocating for a gender neutral society which embraces the fluidity of gender and sexual orientation? Worthen (2012) suggests that the

relationship between sexual experiences and attitudes toward LGBT[IAQ+] individuals may be more complex. For example, those with more sexual experiences who have traditional gender role ideologies may be less inclined to support LGBT[IAQ+] individuals. In contrast, those with more sexual experiences and liberal gender role ideologies may be more supportive of LGBT[IAQ+] individuals. In this regard, feminist identity can be an important way to measure liberal gender role ideologies. Worthen (2012) contends that studies show that those who identify with feminism are more likely to believe that women should have equal rights to men, to have liberal attitudes toward women's roles, and to have non traditional gender role attitudes; and they are less likely to have politically conservative beliefs compared to non feminists (Cowan, Mestlin, & Masek, 1992; Jackson, Fleury, & Lewandowski, 1996; Liss, O'Connor, Morosky, & Crawford, 2001; Roy, Weibust, & Miller, 2007).

Connell (1990) contextualises sexual politics with the classic feminist slogan the *personal is political*. Connell (1990) purports that this relationship between the personal and the political is a basic feature of both feminist and gay/lesbian politics and a link between personal experience and power relations. Generally speaking, both LGBTIAQ+ rights and feminism represent challenges to traditional definitions of gender roles and efforts to combat prejudices. Some studies have investigated how feminism and attitudes toward gay men and lesbian women are related. Limited research indicates that self identified feminists are more likely to report supportive attitudes toward gay men and lesbian women (Minnigerode, 1976; Ojerholm & Rothblum, 1999) and are less likely to focus on the need to maintain traditional sex role divisions (MacDonald, Huggins, Young, & Swanson, 1973) when compared to non feminists. As a result, it is likely that feminist identities may be related to positive attitudes toward LGBTIAQ+ individuals.

Other measures specifically related to college experiences may also affect attitudes toward LGBT[IAQ+] individuals. For example, freshmen (compared to upperclassmen) have been found to be less liberal (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991) and less tolerant of gay men and lesbian women (Lottes & Kuriloff, 1994), thus it is important to consider how first year students may differ from upperclassmen in attitudes toward LGBT[IAQ+] individuals. Research also indicates that a lower grade point average (GPA) is associated with anti gay and anti lesbian behaviours

and attitudes (Rey & Gibson, 1997). Most interestingly, those with academic majors in humanities and liberal arts, especially those in majors that have classes about gender and sexuality (such as sociology), have been found to be more supportive of gay men and lesbian women when compared to students majoring in business and hard sciences (Bierly, 1985; Larsen et al., 1980). In the main, research suggests that there may be a link between sexual experiences, feminist identity, academic discipline and attitudes toward LGBTIAQ+ individuals.

According to Worthen (2012) in studies of universities throughout the United States, many researchers have found that campus climates are fraught with hostility toward LGBT[IAQ+] students (Brown et al., 2004; Evans, 2001; Evans & Rankin, 1998; Rankin, 2003). For example, in a study of 14 college campuses and more than 1,600 self identified LGBT[IAQ+] people, Rankin (2005) found that 36% of LGBT[IAQ+] undergraduate students experienced harassment. Furthermore, these undergraduates are especially vulnerable since estimates indicate that between 19% and 35% of LGBT[IAQ+] youth report suicide attempts compared to less than 10% of their heterosexual peers (D'Augelli, 1993; Hershberger & D'Augelli, 1995; Savin-Williams & Cohen, 1996). In addition, the suicides (all occurring in the latter part of 2010) of Tyler Clementi (age 18), Corey Jackson (age 19), Justin Aaberg (age 15), William (Billy) Lucas (age 15), Seth Walsh (age 13), and Asher Brown (age 13), all of whom were all subjected to anti gay harassment and bullying, most certainly suggest a need for investigating LGBT[IAQ+] identity and suicide (Friedman, 2010; Melloy, 2010). Furthermore, the fact that both Tyler Clementi and Corey Jackson were college students at large public universities (Rutgers University in New Jersey and Oakland University in Michigan) suggests that more work is needed to create safe spaces for LGBTIAQ+ college students (Worthen, 2012).

One of the most unified responses to the suicide of a transgender teenager was captured after the death of Leelah Alcorn in 2014. Leelah Alcorn captivated the attention of many activists and concerned parties alike when she committed suicide at the age of 17. She reportedly faced ongoing abuse from her family, who continued to misgender her beyond her life, by calling her by her dead name (a name that she was given at birth which was not consistent with the sex which she identified with and therefore no longer used nor recognised hence, dead) at her funeral. In response to Leelah's suicide note which was perhaps best encapsulated by the

words "my death needs to mean something ... Fix society. Please.". A few days later, My Chemical Romance artist Ray Toro released a song that spoke specifically to experiences of transgender people who have faced ongoing challenges with those around them perpetuating transphobia, who eventually become complicit in their deaths. Toro's lyrics (2015) highlight how transgender people foremost need support, and respect –

"For the lost and brave
For the ones who stayed
For the ones we left behind
Far away from you we learn
To not ask why

Why we hate
A different state of mind and heart
It's gone on far too long
We are here to say".

In essence, Toro has encapsulated a universal response to common threats faced by transgender youth – discrimination and the ongoing effects of intolerance upon those who are vulnerable. It is crucial to note that particularly when examining the experiences of young transgender people, and often including those in the higher education system, that many are still financially dependent on family who may be actively transphobic. It is important to remain critical of campaigns and activists who may call for people to *come out* of a closet – particularly when so many people who are reliant on financial support are unable to safely do so without the risk of homelessness, abuse, violence and erasure. Toro encapsulates this well in his response; a song released in early 2015 in solidarity with transgender youth.

The results from Worthen's (2012) study shows that a liberal gender role ideology (as measured by feminist identity) may be an important part of promoting supportive attitudes toward LGBT[IAQ+] individuals. Psychological examinations of the cognitive processes underlying attitudinal changes suggest that attitudes are linked to beliefs and behaviors (Wyer & Srull, 1994). Because most attitudes are formulated based either on direct experience or

observational learning, introducing new experiences and concepts within the classroom can contribute to attitudinal shifts (Eagly & Chaiken, 1995). If beliefs are challenged and evaluated within this context, viewpoints can sometimes change (Osgood & Tannenbaum, 1955). Encouraging open minded discussions about liberal gender perspectives in the college classroom may positively impact student perspectives and, possibly, campus climate. Since the *typical* college classroom has been found to perpetuate heterosexist and sometimes even anti-LGBT[IAQ+] attitudes (Connolly, 1999), promoting tolerance and challenging stereotypes can be an important part of changing student attitudes in the classroom. Worthen's (2012) findings posit that initiatives to reduce negative attitudes toward LGBT[IAQ+] individuals on college campuses should focus on introducing diverse perspectives toward sexualities and feminism in the classroom.

LGBT[IAQ+] individuals experience discrimination and oppression, which can negatively affect their well-being (Harper & Schneider, 2004; Meyer, 2003; Stotzer, 2009). While some of these discriminatory practices involve blatant hostility and violence, most emerge in subtle mistreatment and biases (Nadal, Rivera, & Corpus, 2010). This discrimination is based in heterosexism, or the presumption that only heterosexual relationships are valid and acceptable. Upholding traditional gender roles and rules is a central component of heterosexist assumptions and worldviews (Kitzinger, 2001). In addition, heterosexism underpins both homophobia and transphobia (Woodford & Bella, 2003). Although heterosexism is a pervasive societal issue, university campuses are increasingly high profile sites given recent suicides of gay college students, such as Rutgers University freshman Tyler Clementi (Knickerbocker, 2010).

Heterosexual students' attitude toward LGBT[IAQ+] people is a useful indicator of campus climate. Woodford et al., (2012) indicate that little is known about the nature of heterosexual students' perceptions toward LGBT[IAQ+] people as a whole. A plethora of studies investigate students' attitudes toward lesbian and gay people; most are conducted with specific subgroups of students (e.g., psychology students, social work students), thereby limiting their applicability to the general campus climate. Further, campus-climate studies that include attitudinal measures tend to assess old fashioned homophobia, such as, "As far as I am concerned, homosexuality is immoral" (Yost & Gilmore, 2011, p. 1334), which does not capture the subtle

biases that are more characteristic today (Nadal et al., 2010). Moreover, and most important, given that LGBTIAQ+ campus climate programmes generally focus on fostering acceptance of the entire LGBTIAQ+ community rather than each group separately, research on attitudes toward this population as a whole is useful in informing these programmes and improving the institutional climate for LGBTIAQ+ students. LGBTIAQ+ people experience exclusion as a result of heterosexism. Therefore, studying attitudes toward the LGBTIAQ+ population can also help advance understanding of the nature of this complex and often nuanced system of oppression. Unlike previous studies, Woodford et al., (2012) in their study examined the role of respondents' gender expression as an antecedent of their LGBT[IAQ+] attitudes. The study explored the impact of the role of etiology of transgender identity on students' attitudes toward LGBT[IAQ+] people. Accordingly, the authors' assumptions were that college students' perspectives toward LGBT[IAQ+] individuals are established, nurtured, and sometimes revised through the interpretive process of trying to understand and evaluate the social cues that come from the individuals, communities, and social institutions surrounding them.

Educational programmes that reach all students may be useful, for example, as part of freshman orientation or required first year seminars. Moreover, spaces need to be created that allow for conversations about attitudes concerning LGBT[IAQ+] people and other gender nonconforming people (Woodford et al., 2012). Research suggests that students in attitudinally diverse networks are less resistant to attitude change than those in attitudinally similar systems (Levitan & Visser, 2009). Having opportunities in courses and other settings to discuss personal opinions, even though differing, may facilitate positive attitude change.

Faculty and staff play a pivotal role in creating these spaces. Members of the university community who are progressive by nature are often keen to join advocacy programmes that support LGBTIAQ+ people in the academy and beyond. However, it is often harder to reach conservative populations in the university community. Faculty and staff, who identify as politically conservative who disclose their opinions with students through discussions or symbols (e.g., safe space stickers, text on syllabi), may encourage politically conservative (and other) students to critically examine their own attitudes and possibly change their perspectives. Collaborating with politically conservative LGBTIAQ+ allies in the development of targeted programmes is recommended. Research into the causal factors of politically conservative

students' opinions is also suggested. Woodford et al., (2012) study also highlight the consequence of attribution of cause for sexual orientation and transgender identity, particularly for the latter. Similar to related studies (Claman, 2008; Eldridge et al., 2006). Woodford et al., (2012) found that believing in biological causation is associated with affirming attitudes toward LGBT[IAQ+] people. Clearly, conceptual frameworks about the cause of transgender identity and sexual orientation are pivotal factors to consider in understanding attitudes toward LGBTIAQ+ people and in educating about LGBTIAQ+ people.

Schlossberg, Waters, & Goodman (1995) identified four factors that impact a person's ability to transition to a new environment; namely, situation, self, support, and strategies. *Situation* refers to the general nature of the transition, including whether the event is positive or negative, permanent or temporary, sources of stress, and how an individual's perception of the transition affects behaviour. *Self* refers to characteristics of the individual including demographic and psychological resources. *Support* refers to social support, including family, friends, and intimate relationships. Lastly, *strategies* refer to a person's coping responses to the transition.

Transgender students are by and large considered to be *other* by society and the self, therefore a sense of self and of belonging may be more difficult when arriving to college (Mintz, 2011). The gender binary excludes *transgender* as an acceptable gender identity, leading to feelings of isolation (Burdge, 2007; Grossman & D'Augelli, 2007). High rates of violence and discrimination, negative parent interactions, and fear of rejection further lessen a sense of self, as well as all but eliminate a supportive social network (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2003; Grossman et al, 2005; Lombardi, et al., 2001; Zubernis & Snyder, 2007). Following the model presented by Schlossberg et al. (1995), transgender students often do not have a strong sense of self, support, or strategy to assist in a positive adjustment. Therefore, colleges and universities have an obligation to provide service to all students and provide specific outreach to those that are underrepresented and/or underserved (Mintz, 2011).

Beemyn et al. (2005) state that rather than merely identifying the transgender community as a population that we must support, transgender students should be considered valuable contributors to our campus communities. Oppression of transgender people should be

recognised and the important roles transgender students can play on our campuses and the qualities they can bring to our communities must be appreciated as well. Rather than merely accept or tolerate this community, cisgender allies and society at large must also appreciate, value and learn from transgender communities.

This chapter reviewed scholars such as Mock (2014) on the lack of understading about transgender people and the harmful implications caused by such a lack of understanding; Lombardi, Wilchins, Priesing and Malouf (2001) on violence, discrimination and victimisation of transgender people; and Beemyn, 2005; Lovaas, Baroudi, & Collins, 2002; McKinney, 2005; and Sausa, 2002 (to mention but a few) on the exclusion of transgender students at most American colleges and universities. The chapter also looked at different themes such as intersectionality as a dynamic theory that assists to reveal the complexities of the lived experiences of transgender people. The relationship between gender, sex and sexuality was also explored. Transgender identities, complexities, challenges including transphobia were visited and contextualised. The chapter concludes with transgender experiences in higher education with specific reference to the challenges experienced by transgender students.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals with the research design, within which the following aspects of the research process are discussed, namely: case study, participants, data collection and analysis, individual interviews, positionality and limitations.

Research Design

Case Study

The study explores the institutional needs of transgender students at the University of the Witswatersrand, Johannesburg between the years 2014 and 2015. Given that there were only three students who officially and openly identified as transgender at Wits when the study was conducted; after consulting with the supervisor a decision was taken to include those transgender students who recently graduated, on condition that their graduation did not take place in a period longer than twelve months before. A case study design using individual cross-case analysis was used in order to highlight the individual story and to provide insight into the individual lived experiences as a point of departure for understanding the challenges faced by this small, highly marginalised group of transgender students. Yin (2003) argues that using cross-case analysis is important because it highlights the individual story and provides first hand account of lived experiences. The case study contributes to understanding the needs of transgender students in Higher Education in South Africa, by focusing specifically on individual experiences at this university.

Stake (1995) suggests the following steps in order to complete a case study method: "posing a research question, gathering data, data analysis and interpretation". The case study provides an opportunity to evaluate programmes such as Student Affairs Support Services in this context and to develop interventions. In addition, case study is important because it assists the researcher to study complex phenomena within their context; in this case the context will be Wits University, race and class of students that were interviewed.

The main research question for the study is: What are the needs and experiences of the members of the transgender student community at Wits University? In line with the case study

methodology, multiple methods of data collections were used namely transcribed notes, interviews, Transformation and Employment Equity Office (TEEO) monthly reports and observations. The individual interviews were recorded and transcribed. The recordings and the transcripts of the interviews were used for analysis of the data.

Given my positionality at TEEO, I was very central in the social justice policy developmental process, especially the Wits University Anti-Discrimination policy (2015). My office worked very closely with the Project Co-ordinator of the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) office whose primary role among others was to create safe spaces on campus for the LGBTIAQ+ community. Working with this office and dealing with some of the cases of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation provided me with an opportunity not only to observe and intervene but also to collect crucial data with regard to the needs and lived experiences of some of the transgender students on campus. In this regard, my office worked very closesly with CCDU, Gender Equity Office (GEO) & SOGI office pertaining to referral of students and advocacy interventions. As a member of Safe Zones@Wits I co-facilitated and participated at the safe zones training and roundtable discussions. In collaboration with SOGI office I also organised Wits Pride during which time a number of activities would take place including workshops that I would participate in. Lastly, in the residences I would have different conversations about social justice, anti-discrimination (policy) and Safe Zones@Wits.

In a nutshell some of the data was collected from my personal immersion in institutional social justice policy development and review regime, roundtable discussions; evaluation forms of the discussions, discrimination cases, through mediation processes of some of the discrimination cases, TEEO monthly reports for the SOGI office, Safe Zones@Wits meetings and training sessions. This included my collaborative work with different institutional support services such as Campus Health, CCDU, Residence Life, GEO and Wits pride. Through my personal involvement in the various social justice spaces I was able to make an assessment of needs of this group of students on campus and to influence policy decision in the university. A case in point of such a need that was assessed and followed by a policy decision was the need for gender neutral bathrooms which have since been introduced at Wits University in 2016.

According to Reviere, Berkowitz, Carter and Ferguson (1996) the use of qualitative methods may be optimal when conducting needs assessment with "persons and groups whose assumptions differ from those of the mainstream culture, and who, therefore, have a particular need to speak and be heard, in their own voices in the study" (p. 54). Reviere et al. (1996) describe needs assessment as "a systematic and ongoing process of providing usable and useful information about the needs of the target population to those who can and will utilise it to make judgements about policy pograms" (p.6).

In a college setting for example "needs assessments have been used [to] clarify the needs of a wide variety of student communities, including as graduate students" (Hyun, Quinn, Madon, & Lustig, 2006), international students (Leong & Sedlacek, 1998) 'women of color in engineering' (Tale & Linn, 2005), and students with learning disabilities (Hadley, 2007).

I undertook a study of the needs, qualitiative experiences and views of the students at Wits, as case study of the position that transgender students find themselves in Higher Education in South Africa. In this regard, one on one interviews were used to collect data and semi-structured questions were developed to encourage variety and depth of qualitative responses. The students who participated in the study came from four of the Wits University campuses which was very hepful in gaining better insight of different lived experiences of transgender students from different campus contexts.

Research Site(s)

The study explored experiences of current and former transgender individual students at the four campuses of Wits: Health Sciences, Education, West and East campuses. The different sites from which the participants emerged have a huge significance in the study because they provide different experiences of transgender students who spend most of their times in these spaces, especially as it relates to their sense of alienation and belonging. In addition, a staff member who also identifies as a transgender person and was a Programme Manager of SOGI, and who therefore works on these issues across the campuses, was interviewed. Together these participants provide a fairly comprehensive picture of the needs, and experiences, of

transgender students at the university. Yin (2003) recommends a multiple-case design due to the possible benefits of having the ability to study more than one case, and Miles and Huberman (1994) posit that the cross-case analysis of multiple case studies can "deepen understanding and explanation" (p.173).

Participants: sample and demographics

Given the small percentage of transgender students on campus and those who have courage to come out openly, only two registered students were willing to participate and one alumni student who recently graduated from Wits including a member of staff from TEEO who identifies as transgender. Of particular interest is that according to the TEEO staff member who participated in this study, there were only three students at Wits who officially and openly identify as transgender. The transgender staff member from the East campus provided insight into the experiences of students and was also able to speak to the experience of being a transgender person within the Wits Community.

One of the students was a full-time student from Health Sciences campus, a second student was a part time student at Wits Plus from the West campus, and the third student was a former student from Education campus having graduated at Wits in 2014.

All the participants came from Wits. They were all white middle class students whom I could not have access to if it were not for the TEEO staff member mainly because of the potential risks of discrimination and intolerance towards this population. So, recruitment included the use of various networks of the TEEO staff member such as the Safe Zones@Wits allies network of which I am also a member, and Ctrl Alt Gender of which the TEEO staff member is a member. It is important to note that all the participants were approached to participate through the Ctrl Alt Gender Gauteng transgender support network.

A snowball sample "identifies cases of interest from people who know people who know what cases are information rich" (Creswell, 1998, p.119). In view of the fact that there are very few transgender people who are *out*, this sampling technique asked various SOGI networks to identify students who may be interested to participate in the study. At this moment it is critical

to share that there was one black participant who had agreed to participate in the study. However, the participant was met with mental illness and had to be institutionalised. Sadly, this is something that some transgender people experience in their lifetime as a result of social rejection and high levels of discrimination (Mock, 2014).

With regard to race, all four participants are classified as White; whereas in terms of age, their ages are, 21, 23, 27 and 44. Therefore the breakdown of participant data by race is not reported here in further detail.

Data Collection & Analysis.

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) and Eng (2006) contend that studying the experiences of others allows for greater understanding of difference and can serve as a catalyst for increased self-awareness. Thus, data collection methods used in this study were deliberately intended to go beyond reflecting on transgender student experiences but to understand the conditions that give rise to those experiences in the eyes of transgender students. This is also in line with needs analysis (Reviere et al., 1996). Intersectionality assisted in analysing the overlapping and multiple oppressions in participants lives.

Participants were asked questions about their view on the awareness on campus about transgender students. The questions included their sense of and lived experiences of the campus climate. The partcipants were probed about their lived experiences of harassment and/or discrimination including their use of toilets on campus. Lastly, the pariticipants were asked if they were part of the student group on campus and how did their membership of the group benefited them; and they were invited to recommend some of the things that Wits University should do to improve transgender students' lived experience on its campuses. So, through a combination of these interviews, my positionality at TEEO, membership of Safe Zone@Wits, partnerships with SOGI office in a number of advocacy programmes including Wits Pride, mediation processes of some of the discrimination cases involving transgender students; I was able to explore the awareness of (and need for) support services, availability of support services to meet their individual and diverse needs, accessibility of the available support

services that currently exists and acceptability of the support services provided (Klugman, 2014, p.16). The presentation of the needs analysis is in Chapter 5.

Focus groups were considered initialy but due to the limited number of the available and willing transgender students to participate in the study, the idea of focus groups was regrettably abandoned. Also ethical considerations played a crucial role in making a decision to abandon the focus groups as one can't guarantee anonymity in a focus group.

The method of analysis chosen for my study was a qualitative approach of thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a process for encoding qualitative information (Gibb, 2007). The data was analysed according to commonalities, relationships and differences across the data set (Boyatzis, 1998; Creswell, 2009; Gibson & Brown, 2009). What counts as a theme is that it is a concept which captures the key idea about the data in relation to the research question. This concept should represent some level of patterned response or meaning within a data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82).

Participants' interpretations of their lived experiences were used as a way to make meaning of their needs, behaviours, actions and thoughts. This is in line with the constitutive elements in the process of thematic analysis (Creswell, 2003; Hatch, 2002). Thematic analysis allowed me to use both the inductive and deductive approach due to its intrinsic flexibility (Frith & Gleeson, 2004; Hayes, 1997). However, I used the inductive approach in order to effectively link the themes to data (Patton, 1990).

Thomas (2003, p. 2), suggests that the primary purpose of the inductive approach is to allow research findings to emerge from the frequent, significant themes inherent in raw data, without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies. The inductive approach also allowed me to condense raw data into a brief, summary format; to establish clear links between the research aims and the summary findings derived from the raw data; and to develop an understanding about the needs and experiences of transgender students which were evidence in the data (Thomas, 2003). Thus, using the thematic analysis was appropriate for this study as a

qualitative study because it assisted me to highlight the differences and similarities that exist in a data set.

Individual Interviews

Qualitative interviews were the main method in the study to obtain various perspective on the research questions related to the the needs and experiences of transgender students at Wits. Qualitative interviews give a new insight into a social phenomenon because they allow the participants to reflect and reason on a variety of subjects in a different way (Folkestad, 2008, p. 1).

Participants were asked to respond to a series of interview questions (Appendix 4) as part of inquiry strategies and critical theoretical frameworks used in this study in an attempt to address the research questions. Mintz (2011) indicates that this method of data collection allows for the representation and legitimisation of each person including the relationship between the data collected from all participants. Ryan, Coughlan and Cronin (2009) identify the one-on-one interview method as the most widely used data collection tool in qualitative research. This method was used from an understanding of the value of individual experiences and perspectives in a social inquiry such as transgender needs and experiences at Wits; through a series of interview questions about students' needs, qualitiative experiences and views of the students at Wits were explored, as case study of the position that transgender students find themselves in Higher Education in South Africa.

The interviews were held in private setting for the convienence of all the participants. The purpose of the individual interviews was to gather in-depth information from each participant in order to answer the research questions. Interviews were digitally audio recorded, transcribed, and then analysed. Participants were informed from the beginning of their option to stop the interview at any time during the interview process. The interview recordings, interview transcripts and electronic versions of analysis were stored on a secured computer, flash drive and external hard drive. Ryan et al (2009) suggest that one-on-one interviews are strategic in soliciting data on participants' experiences, views and beliefs. Thus, participants' experiences, views and beliefs were explored in this study.

Participants were asked through one-on-one interviews about their individual experiences as transgender students at Wits University; their views were invited on the general experience of transgender students at the university; their needs were assessed with regard to the current Wits University policy regime with particular reference to discrimination, inclusion, exclusion and what needs to be done in the present and in future to ensure that Wits University's policies, support services, institutional culture and practices are inclusive. I have analysed the individual interviews in order to formulate the themes which bring out issues that transgender students face in their daily lived experiences at Wits University. These are presented in chapter 4. I looked across the interviews (cross-case analysis) to establish how these compared; thus bringing out commonalities in experiences which in turn point to the needs of this group of students, and how they can be addressed. This relates to the needs analysis, and is presented in Chapter 5.

Positionality

I believe that my position in this study has illuminated the data that I collected. My experiences have been fundamentally shaped by my position as a social justice advocate, and this has impacted on my interpretation of the data. As a Wits staff member who deals with cases of discrimination on campus as Manager: Diversity, Ethics & Social Justice and who is, a Safe Zones@Wits ally, I was already acquainted with two participants in this study. One participant is a student and the other is a colleague at TEEO. While existing relationships between the researchers and participants might adversely affect data collection, I am pleased to report that this was not the case in this study. Instead, my positionality has created conditions that allowed this study to be possible; given the sensitive nature of the study and the everyday lived experiences that the transgender students have with the dominant groups. In addition, the knowledge amongst the participants that I was also an ally may have allowed participants to feel more comfortable to share their experiences with me.

I was always conscious and concerned about my cisgender, heterosexual, Black male positionality and how this gender privileged position might create limitations on how freely and comfortable the participants may feel especially because most of them were transgender

women; particularly when it came to the recruitment aspect of the study. I had no illusions that some participants may have been wary to share their experiences with someone outside the transgender community. This could have been the case because they may have felt that I may not be sensitive to the fact that there is no spokesperson for transgender people given the diversity of transgender community; therefore, I would misrepresent their lived experiences and perhaps even misinterpret the data. In order to mitigate these fears, I requested my colleague from SOGI to contextualise my reseach to the participants and my positionality; and how this research might help in significantly changing policy, like the gender neutral policy, and to mention that I played a principal role in partnership with the transgender community in ensuring that the Anti-Discrimination policy was approved by council in April 2015.

Limitations

The greatest limitation of this study would be the lack of diversity of participants in terms of class, race, place of origin and spatial arrangements. Though I would have loved to have at least ten participants and two focus groups, I am of the view that the different experiences of the participants are real and can be used to inform students, staff and management about the discrimination that transgender people are likely to experience just for their perceived transgression of the gender binary. So, the experiences of the participants will assist in helping the university management to be more informed about the needs of transgender students. I also hope that the narrative about these experiences will put pressure on the university to be more inclusive as well as to make the university to be a safe space for all transgender people.

Ethical Considerations

Information sheet (appendix I) was sent to the participants. Participants were asked to read, and indicate that they understood the document before participating in the study. The participation sheet contained the full study title, the name of the researcher undertaking the study and the name of the institution.

The participants were informed that the participation in the study was voluntary; that the interview would be audio recorded and transcribed for research purposes; that direct quotes

may be used in the report but using pseudonyms to protect their identities. Participants were advised that they could refrain from answering any questions; and that they may withdraw participation and/or their responses from the study at anytime before the research report is examined.

It was explained to the participants though they form part of the vulnerable group on campus, given that confidentiality was guaranteed, there were no risks associated with their participation in the study; that all information provided would remain confidential. The participants (especially the students) were assured that none of their identifiable information would be included in the research report; they were made aware that the results of the study will be communicated in the form of research report as part of the requirements for my masters degree.

Any person who did not identify as a transgender person was excluded from this study. All partcipants were asked to fill in a consent form prior participating in the study (Appendix 3). None of the participants were compensated in anyway for particpating in the study.

CHAPTER 4: Issues of Common Interest among Transgender Students, arising from the student interviews

This chapter presents the findings which are organised according to themes. The themes relate to campus awareness, campus climate, campus experience, campus incidences of harassment/discrimination, toilet experiences, student group participation, things that could improve transgender student experiences if they were to be introduced at Wits, student support services, CCDU experience, campus health experience, residence experience, pronoun usage experience, transgender community on campus and knowledge of the Safe Zones@Wits advocacy programme.

As one would expect, participants provided varied responses from their vantage points and about their lived experiences on different themes. However, issues of common interest to all participants emerged, which if addressed would make their lived experiences better and make them feel affirmed, safe and recognised as fully human at Wits.

Theme 1: Campus Awareness

Ane, who is a third year student Health Science student, believes that the awareness on campus about transgender people varies from faculty to faculty, school to school:

> *The East Campus generally among the BA students I find that there is more increased awareness; whereas Commerce, Engineering and Health Science students there isn't that much awareness. They may know that trans people exist and that is about it. There is no educated perspective among this group around trans issues. The difference of consciousness among these different groups of students can be attributed to critical discourse or lack thereof about, gender studies, politics, sociology etc which the BA students tend to do which generally makes them more sensitive than the other group of students* (Ane, Health Sciences campus).

Kay expressed her sense of observation when it comes to campus awareness through programmes offered by the university:

> *I was very impressed with the TEEO and the Wits Pride project because both the office and the pride provided a lot of awareness. I did not feel that there was a lot of hostility but generally my impression was that there was a lack of awareness among a lot of the staff and the academic departments* (Education campus).

Ice provided an interesting perspective both as a partime student and being age 44 as compared to 21 year old Ane who is full time and 23 year old Kay:

> *I am a part-time student, my experience is that most student support interventions that are good for full time students is not as good for part-time students. The level of awareness among part-time students is not as good as I have experienced to be with full-time students. I think the level of awareness is increasing as it is the case on a global scale. Transgender people remain a group of people that not a lot of people deeply understand* (West campus).

Tina's reponse provided insights in the journey travelled by both the university and transgender people on campus when it comes to awareness about transgender issues. Tina is better positioned because, as a genderqueer person, th[1]ey arrived as a student, and later became a student assistant and eventually a Programme Manager: SOGI programme:

> *From my side what is really crucial is that in the last two to three years we have seen an exponential increase in the awareness of issues facing transgender people on campus and also support for transgender people on campus. It was at the beginning of 2014 that a group of students came together to consult with me on my capacity as a Programme Manager: SOGI at Wits. It was an evening where a number of students had attended a event of Activate Wits, for LGBTIAQ+ student society. These students had come to me after a presentation and said Tina we need supportive spaces for transgender people on campus.*

[1] Tina prefers gender neutral pronouns: them, they, theirs, as opposed to gender binary pronouns she or he.

So, other structures became aware of the issues facing transgender students; when the office that I work in did some work on the Wits Anti-discrimination policy it was in this regard that I became part of a writing group. We wrote some progressive material around the creation of things like gender neutral toilets, changing curriculum and safety in the residences as part of my contribution to the policy. In short, there has been a growth of support of trans people on campus specifically over the past year. So, I think it is very positive in that regard (Tina, TEEO).

Theme 2: Campus Climate. The respondents by and large seem to have a sense that the campus climate is more welcoming, especially once you start to campare the campus with the outside world:

I can only speak for my own experience, it's been fine. I haven't felt uncomfortable or victimised in any way. I do have friends who have had experiences that weren't great but my experience has been neutral. I would not go as far as to say it has been good because one does get occasional commentary which is offensive but it remains better than it is the case in the walk of life external to campus. I think the level of awareness is a little bit higher on campus; in fact in my experience campus does have a little high levels of tolerance to diversity (Ice, West campus).

I find the climate to be generally receptive of my identity. Especially my faculty which has been more supportive around my identity. I have a sense that people knew or suspected about my identity so, when I came out late last year it was not difficult for them to refer to me according to my preferred trans identity. The Dean was also very understanding and helpful in informing the school about my transition and how I preferred to be addressed. However, the experience is generally different outside the faculty for example though not necessarily aggressive but it is not as welcoming (Ane, Health Sciences campus).

Most people that I interacted with were very keen to understand, learn, welcoming and embracing of me as a transgender person. In general at a transgender communal level within the university, it is a university that embraces diversity obviously not as much as we would like in all forms. There is definitely an effort to make the space inclusive. I found that for the most part I did not ever feel unsafe or was there any kind of a sense that there was any form of risk of institutional discrimination. So, I had a positive experience during which time I was only out for last year of my study which was in 2014, having been at Wits from 2010 (Kay, Education campus).

Theme 3: Campus Experience. Two of the four respondents had mixed experiences when it came to feeling welcome and valued as members of the university community:

Initially before coming out I found that there was some push back in how I expressed my gender from some of the department because there was a sense that it was not appropriate in the teaching environment. To some extent in the academic space because I was doing some teaching as well it was somewhat awkward at times. However, when I came out to them there was a lot of understanding and support from them (Kay, Education campus).

To answer your question, in terms of response, obviously there are a lot of responses some of which have been positive. There are a lot of people that I work with that use female ***pronouns*** *to refer to me, regardless of how many times I have told them that aha you must use* ***'them, they, their'****, that is, use gender neutral pronouns please. My experience of the space is been quite mixed; its been hostile, threatening, it's been a space that is demeaning but it has elicited some good responses* (Tina, TEEO).

Theme 4: Campus Incidences-harassment/discrimination. The majority of the respondents recalled that they had at some point in their university career experienced harassment or discrimination:

> *There is one incident that I can remember which happened recently, by recently I mean in 2015 where I felt harassed. The incident was about the toilets between 09th and 10th Floor at Senate House. I was using the female toilets when a female staff member took an issue with me using the female bathrooms. She tried to convince me to leave and when I did not leave, she called campus control. How did I deal with this situation, I referred her to TEEO. I said I am a trans woman I have every right to use this bathroom so, if you have an issue with me being here you can speak to Tish White at TEEO. The campus control personnel arrived and when they did, they did not really do much, they did not enter the bathroom they ask someone who was standing next to me something. I assumed that they were asking what was going on. The person may have responded that I was a woman and they were satisfied and they left* (Ane, Health Science campus).

> *I would not say that there was any ongoing harassment. There were one or two instances of intimidation in terms of shouting and slurs. These were very rare isolated incidences and I did not report them, all I did was to try to remove myself from the situations without any escalation. These incidences were very intimidating and concerning in terms of my safety* (Kay, Education campus).

> *So, in 2009 I received a death threat because of pride. So, a friend of mine informed me that this is what has been said in the Vuvuzela; we don't agree with this pride, we are out to get the leaders. And I didn't panic because for a long time I have known that there was a lot of opposition to LGBTIAQ+ people in the university but it was the first. It's unfortunate that it was the first because I think that in itself was shocking, I didn't know where to go, I didn't know where to report this to. So, I picked up myself and I called Justice Cameron and I said, this is the reality. Do you still want to come? It was on the day of the march, he said yes, I need to be there* (Tina, TEEO).

Theme 5: Toilet Experiences. Respondents highlighted their challenges when it comes to how they experienced toilets. Other than the issue of safety, the lack of sufficient gender neutral toilets was another common point of concern for them:

> *It was a tricky thing to negotiate the transition between using different bathrooms on campus. There are not sufficient gender neutral bathrooms available on campus. The introduction of these toilets would alleviate some of the complexities. I always found that my comfort of using female bathrooms dependent on how much comfortable I felt with my presentation on the day, which is unfortunate, but a reality because it was based on the fact that whether or not people would notice my presence in the female bathrooms informed whether I would feel safe in the bathrooms. So, I would try to avoid the situation as much as possible by using gender neutral toilets where available. I never had an experience of being detected, this never happened because whenever I felt uncertain about my presentation, I would default to using the male bathrooms. In fact in the male bathrooms there were instances where people would say, hey you are in a wrong bathroom, in which case again I would just walk away from the situation without engaging. I never felt threatened in those male bathrooms other than just being told that I was in the wrong bathrooms, and they were right* (Kay, Education campus).

> *I think it is a well-known problem and it is an issue that it has been on the news for example in the US the gender bathroom bills in Texas. The Wits campus does not have that many gender neutral toilets or facilities. So, it is definitely a very difficult issue to navigate on campus. I have a virtue of age quite frankly, so, occasionally when I have people who look like they may create unnecessary problems for me I just look them down in a sarcastic way. But of course other people had very difficult experiences and so bathrooms are a fundamental issue; though in the bigger scheme of things it really should be a trivial issue; but the reality is that it remains a fundamental issue* (Ice, West campus).

I only started using the female toilets half way through 2014. I only came out in first year. I always use the female bathrooms all the time in my faculty because I have the backing of the faculty, I thought Senate House bathrooms will be safe which they weren't. I generally avoid public toilets as a rule except if I really have to use them. So, by and large the faculty is a safe space for me to use bathrooms (Ane, Health Sciences campus).

Toilet spaces have been on the agenda for a year now and in that regard, we've heard a number of people who have said look I don't feel like using male-female binary toilets. At that point I started thinking about the use of gender neutral toilets, Rhodes at that point had created some and UCT had created some. I got in touch with people at both universities and got some advice and insight. I spoke with some people in other structures at Wits and I developed a gender neutral proposal (Tina, TEEO).

Theme 6: Student Group Participation. The respondents narrated how their lives were enriched by being part of organised student life. That is to say, for joining a student organisation on campus:

I was very much involved with Ctrl Alt Gender which is a transgender support group. This group is not only limited to Wits students but extends to staff and outside Wits borders to communities in and around Johannesburg and that was very supportive. I was also involved with Activate as a member at some point during my studies and was involved with Wits pride. Through my involvement I made very strong connections which help to provide a strong support structure (Kay, Education campus).

I do work on and off with Activate. My experience is that Activate tries very hard to be inclusive; they do not get it right all the time. But I think certainly if I compare my time when I was doing first year, there was no space for activism or space for trans people participating in Activate but in the last year or so; they have been trying to make the space inclusive and have been creating awareness which is a good thing and they make

me feel safer. The benefit of being part of Activate is safety. I have a safe space to access people who know the anti-discrimination processes and people who are part of the advocacy. Advocacy is important because it creates safe spaces and that is another benefit of being part of a student group like Activate (Ane, Health Sciences campus).

...the Activate Friday programme provided a descent space for people to have insightful discussions when they can learn about their experiences and support each other in dealing with difficulties they are encountering. You still find Wits Alumni who call me and still reflect about the Activate Friday programme and how it helped them to go by and get through a space which was predominantly cisgender and heteronormative. They appreciate the space as being profound and in how it shaped and affirmed their own identities... (Tina, TEEO).

Theme 7: **Things that could improve trans student experiences but are currently nonexistent at Wits.** The respondents indicated that there are specific areas for development:

Policy around trans people; which should speak on the documentation for trans people when they transition, for those who prefer to do so. Administrative interventions to facilitate the lives of trans people on campus. Facilities which recognise the presence and the existence of trans people on campus for example gender neutral bathrooms for those who wish not to subscribe to the gender binary or those who are early in their transition and therefore feel safe in using gender neutral bathrooms (Ane, Health Sciences).

When it comes to improving climate, it is important to realise the dynamics of the climate relevant to the space; we live in spaces at Wits which are microcosm of the spaces from outside of our university. We have some people here who are very transphobic, we have people who feel like they can get away punching people who are transgender, making violent jokes or threats and that is not ok. We need to note that there are patterns of people who are reporting issues relating to gender identity. These issues are related to curriculum, they are related to residence experiences, they are related to toilet use, and

they are related to general well-being. These are areas that are priorities that need interventions, we need in person interventions that go into these spaces, that work with residence life, that work with CCDU, that work with any LGBTIAQ+ spaces such as Activate and reach out to provide collaborative experiences and collaborative support and supporting people who are trans on campus (Tina, TEEO).

Broader awareness to students, some sort of introduction to trans issues incorporated to the general diversity training. I think this will be very valuable for all students to go through that would help with situations like bathrooms because people would be more aware of and about transgender issues and individuals, as well as being more critical of their approach to issues of gender, gender identity and sexual orientation. I think the above would be more helpful and to have more gender neutral bathrooms would also help a great deal. I think that Safe Zones have been an incredibly effective programme just in terms of places and people that LGBTIAQ+ people can interact with and use whilst feeling safe at the same time (Kay, Education campus).

Registration can be very difficult because you have to provide an explanation of about 18 minutes every single time. You tend to think that the person at admission should have heard this before and so what's new. And my experience was not that bad but I still did have to explain myself quite a bit in some cases in the presence of a crowd given that it is registration after all, so does get a bit sensitive and insensitive at the same time.

So, there is a difference between the objective and subjective reality. It is an issue where you are nervous about the experience so if there is a slightest error from the administration person even if it is explicable if they haven't been trained I feel a bit defensive and insecure to start with. I think the ideal being on the receiving end is that the person should be superbly trained to realise that I am a bit vulnerable and sensitive to start with; of course it is not their fault. So, yes, that would help, as I said, it was ok at Wits Plus, the reception was ok, with that little bit of explanation (Ice, West campus).

Theme 7.1.: Student Support Services. The participants shared their experiences pertaining to the general available student support on campus and with specific reference to their experiences with CCDU and Campus Health:

> *Trans gender experience is incredibly diverse. So, forms of oppression intersect with other many forms of oppression in many cases. Thus, this need to be taken into consideration when dealing or addressing inequality and discrimination in the sense that my experiences as a white privileged transgender person might not be representative of all trans students in the university and certainly are not representative of trans students in the university. So, I am really glad that there is research being done and I would be very much interested to see the findings* (Kay, Education campus).

> *TEEO, CCDU & GEO are the key student support services at the moment in relation to LGBTIAQ+ issues. TEEO is currently the only official programme on SOGI that exist. The project is very important to create awareness. The trans policy development will be very important for me* (Ane, Health Sciences campus).

> *If support structures make transgender visible, a priority and something crucial for our university community to engage with and I believe that we will see more transgender people come out. We need to create environments that are respectful and safe for transgender people on campus and it's no longer good enough to have somebody who is faced with something related to an issue facing a transgender person go, hang on let me google this, that is unacceptable* (Tina, TEEO).

> *I have experienced discrimination in the walk of life but the comparison with campus is really negligible. So, at my age I have always known there was an issue. I have always had a queer gender experiences. I got over society's response to that when I was twelve, so I learnt to deal with that. For me there is a general comparison between the walk of life experiences and campus. On campus I hope that we would be the leaders in how*

we handle diversity and to encourage society to move forward with the times (Ice, West campus).

Theme 7.2.: CCDU Experience. The participants predominantly reported having good experiences in their use of the Counselling Careers and Development Unit over the period of their time at Wits:

I used CCDU early in 2014. I was encouraged by Tish from TEEO and my girlfriend at the time. I was having a hard time at home. CCDU was very helpful and accepting. In the main I did have a very good experience in terms of providing a containment space in terms of the issues I was dealing with at the time. As such I would refer to them as a safe space for trans gender people (Ane, Health Sciences campus).

I am afraid I haven't utilised the services of CCDU. I am not fully aware of the services of what they offer. I would be interested to know their services. I was only aware about them vaguely as offering career guidance, so I am glad to hear that they also provide counselling services because it is something of immense value (Kay, Education campus).

I have not really used their services. I really know of their existence. The reason I have not used their services is quite simple. I spent a good twelve month in counseling, discussion and exploration with a psychologist who was an ex CCDU staff. I think experiences at CCDU would be good given their background in trans issues. So, my experience of them second hand I would say it was fine (Ice, West campus).

Theme 7.3.: Campus Health Experience. The participants who had used Campus Health and Wellness Centre on campus predominantly reported positive experiences when it came to consulting with healthcare providers:

I have the good fortune to have access to private medical care. So, I go to a counsellor who I trust and I have worked with for quite a while (Ice, West campus).

I have use it twice just for general checkups, I wasn't feeling well. On both occasions I would say I had a positive experience (Kay, Education campus).

My experience of campus health was due to a vaccination process. All med students are required to undertake the process. I also done the HIV testing there. That was it really except that the medical practitioner referred to me by my legal name. So, the mis-gendering was not their fault because they were calling me according to the documentation in front of them. There was no time to even conscientise the medical practitioner because of the que that was there (Ane, Health Sciences campus).

There have been mixed responses to people that I interacted with but I had very good response from the people who has worked with the HIV/AIDS counselling member of staff. That for me has been positive, there has been relationships that have been proposed between themselves and a number of agencies. My reports from students have been mixed and it comes down to personal bonds that a person has with that care provider (Tina, TEEO).

Theme 7.4.: Residence Experience. None of the participants stayed at the residences but somehow some of them knew someone who either stays at the residence or once stayed there:

I do not stay in the residences. I would not have preferred to stay in the res because I am not sure if their placement policy would recognise my gender identity failing which I could be placed in the men's res and that scare the hell out of me. If I were to be placed at the res, I would prefer Junction, because you can have your own room (Ane, Health Sciences).

I am not a res student at all, I have friends who stays at res and their experience was fine. I think it is an issue that requires constant and ongoing discussion because there you have a turnover of students; so their conscientisation is required on these matters with every intake (Ice, West campus).

I did not stay in res, my family lives in Johannesburg, so I was able to stay at home throughout my studies. However, I do have friends who stay at res. There is this particular trans student who I know who did not particularly have a positive experience at res. What was positive was that she was able to stay in a gender neutral res. But there were few instances which she did feel unsafe and I think that perhaps having Safe Zones allies in res or wardens trained as Safe Zones allies would assist in making sure that there is an informed way of dealing with trans issues. In addition, if the general administrative staff and any staff with authority who stay in the res would be valuable if they were to undergo a Safe Zones training (Kay, Education campus).

I didn't stay at the res.The residences I think in the most part are operated by people who have students' best interests at heart. However this does not translate to people having the agency to understand issues relating to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. It is in this regard that I see issues coming up that are reported to me; relating to being in residences that are homophobic, that are transphobic. There are spaces that you really not feel safe as a person who is LGBTIAQ+, in this regard there is a lot of work to be done (Tina, TEEO).

Theme 7.5.: Pronoun Usage Experience. The participants were invited to reflect on whether or not they were affirmed by their lecturers once they were aware that they are transgender:

Yes I did have a conversation with a couple of professors. Most of them were in the maths department and for most of them it is not something that they have given much thought to. And when I asked them to use the correct pronouns they had no issue doing so. But I did get a sense that it was just a courtesy not something that they did understand. They were hesitant to get into the conversation of it which was alright as

long as they were willing to use the correct pronoun and being respectful and in which they were. The significance of using the correct pronoun is about being seen and being recognized; and having your identity validated. So, when someone uses the incorrect pronoun they are reinforcing the state of uncertainty in trans people, that self-doubt, that questioning of will I ever be truly enough (Kay, education campus).

For example in Physiology all my tutors knew me and on the attendance register my name reflected as Ane. So, I assumed that the Dean sensitised the faculty about the proper usage of pronouns because everyone seem to have been using the correct pronouns. However, with Anatomy there is a constant rotation of tutors. This makes it difficult to create sufficient rapport to talk to them about my gender identity. But they do refer to be me as Ane because that is what is on the register. Because it is a class set up they have never talked to me on a one on one basis per se (Ane, Health Sciences).

I think my lecturers thought that I was insane anyway, irrespective of how I look like and how I dress. I did not do that many courses this year, so it has been a process over three years. I think there is only one lecturer who really like 'ooh ok, name change' I had them last year and this year same person but I do not recognise the name. In that case I do not think they respect you but they just deal with you anyway. My experience of the university is one thing pertaining to my transition as opposed to what it would do in a systematic and structural basis. I spent a lot of time in counselling with somebody who is ex CCDU, who referred me back saying that one of the trans organisation is based on campus and has functions within the wide community as well, that was Ctrl Alt Gender (Kay, West campus).

Specifically with students, I have heard from two students that they have been mis-gendered in some spaces but as time got on and people started engaging in the most part people started receiving positive interaction, respecting their pronouns, respecting the names that they use. For me having observed that it seems to be an issue that will get resolved on a longitudinal basis (Tina, TEEO).

Theme 7.6.: Trans Community on Campus. The participants were asked to share their knowledge of the existence of the transgender community on campus:

> *I know other trans people on campus, there is not many who are visible, open or out for obvious reasons. For example because residences are not safe or they do not feel comfortable to be out. The trans community does exist on campus not only as students but as staff as well. Those are the people who are out and visible not necessarily everyone who is trans because not everyone feels safe enough to be as visible as I am. So, the policy development for trans people will also assist because as things stand administratively trans people are non-existent, it remains unsafe for trans people to be out and live freely. So, safety needs to be a certainty for trans people* (Ane, Education campus).

Theme 7.7.: Knowledge of Safe Zones@Wits. Participants seem to be aware about the Safe Zones@Wits programme and expressed their experiences:

> *I personally did not make use of Safe Zones. However, I had a couple of friends who were Safe Zones allies. So, I was aware of its existence and very pleased about its existence. I had also created safe spaces within my own social circles and I was fortunate in that sense having been in the university long enough. So, I was very glad that Safe Zones existed for those people who were not at Wits long enough and did not have access to social circles that would create safe spaces for them. Thus, I recognise and appreciative of Safe Zones for transgender people* (Kay, Education campus).

> *I am a member of the Safe Zones project. My experience of it is profound because it drives transformation on campus to create awareness and to create more safe spaces through conscientising people, through education and awareness; which I think is a best way of creating safe spaces for trans people. It is a great, inclusive programme and well taught. It includes all aspects of identity and sexual health. The disappointment is that there is always not enough people who attend as they could be. And I wonder how we*

can best encourage people to attend. So, making the project to be highly recommended could also help (Ane, Health Sciences).

My title is Programme Manager: SOGI Advocacy programme. The programmes that I work with specifically are Safe Zones at Wits where we host public lectures, we hosts things like seminars, we have training sessions, all this forms part of an initiative to create safety and respect for people who are LGBTIAQ+ on campus. Very important in this regard is that we used in our pilot in 2011 the Santiago State University model for a contextual approach in eliminating discrimination on campus and in providing support to LGBTIAQ+ people on campus. So it was in this regard that we started an ally training programme; and out of this programme was born a number of people who were able to train individuals to learn about giving support, coming out, about transitioning, disability, sexual harassment, any form of support needed in relationships, that group also learn about basic communication skills so that if somebody comes with a problem they are able to contain that problem and if necessary refer to an expert structure (Tina, TEEO).

The responses from the participants reflect a great and urgent need for Wits to start to pay strategic attention to the issues of common interest to the transgender community at Wits, with specific reference to students. These issues of common interest for ease of reference were organised into themes. So, the themes addressed in this chapter which came out from the student interviews are: campus awareness, campus climate, campus experience, campus incidences of harassment/discrimination, toilet experiences, student group participation, things that could improve transgender student experiences if they were to be introduced at Wits, student support services, CCDU experience, campus health experience, residence experience, pronoun usage experience, transgender community on campus and knowledge of the Safe Zones@Wits advocacy programme.

In the participants views, experiences and observation, they believe that if Wits were to prioritise addressing these themes, the daily lived experiences of the transgender people on campus will be recognised and validated, whilst in the process their needs will be potentially addressed.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter deliberates on and makes meaning of the research findings in relation to the research questions.

The main research question is: What are the needs and experiences of the members of the transgender student community at Wits University? In order to further explore and analyse this main question, the following sub-questions were formulated:

1. What is the general experience of a transgender student at Wits?
2. Do transgender students at Wits feel they belong?
3. What practices/policies are responsible for alienating transgender students, if any?
4. Do transgender students feel discriminated against in any way because they openly identified as transgender?
5. Do transgender students feel socially accepted at Wits as part of a gender nonconforming community?
6. How, based on the findings, can the university assist to:
    6.4. Address the needs of transgender students.
    6.5. Improve the experience of transgender students at Wits?

The chapter unmasks specific interpersonal and institutional obstacles including barriers transgender students face at Wits; student perceptions and utilisation of various student services and programmes such as Health services, Counselling services, Residence Life, TEEO's SOGI office services such as Safe Zones@Wits and Wits pride and other related services. In the main, ten key needs (themes) emerged from this study: policy, health care, gender neutral toilets, residences, Safe Zones@Wits, pronouns, transitioning, coming out, campus climate, and campus awareness.

Transgender Students Needs

Need 1: Policy

Participants felt that policy would go a long way in ensuring that the lived experiences of transgender people on campus are improved. Currently, the university policies privileges the needs and experiences of students from the dominant groups mainly heterosexuals. These

policies assume that all students will be male or female and in the process fail to serve the needs of transgender students. Thus, it is befitting to pressure university management to introduce policies that consider gender diversity, sexuality and sexual orientation of their students in order to ensure that transgender students are validated and safe on campus (Beemyn et al., 2005). It is in this light that two of the participants were accurate to indicate that a policy for transgender people is needed. In this regard, they felt that the said policy should include things like documentation which recognises and affirms transgender people; administrative procedures that will facilitate the lives of transgender people; facilities that recognise the presence and the existence of transgender people on campus; and should also make reference to issues of transitioning and coming out. Ane felt that from the advocacy and awareness perspective, the university should take a policy position that ensures that there is a university wide credit bearing diversity course to ensure that a broader awareness of diversity.

Need 2: Health Care Services

One of the participants used Campus Health twice; the first time it was for the general checkups whereas the second time it was for ill health. On both occasions the participant had positive experiences. The other participant had the privilege of having access to private medical care. Ane used Campus Health for academically required vaccinations. Tina reported that there has been mixed responses to people that they interacted with pertaining to their experience of Campus Health; as such they concluded that it may come down to personal bonds that a person has developed with a health care provider over a period of time. Largely, all participants highlighted the siginificance of the health care services that are transgender specific or rather that cater for transgender people's health needs.

However, in general research tells a completely different story when it comes to transgender students' experiences with regard to health care services on campus. Dean (2000) argues that although research on campus-based health services for transgender people is sparse, studies of general health care access for this population find that professionals typically lack accurate information about transgender people, severely limiting their ability to provide quality. Xavier (2000) posit that a Washington, D.C., transgender needs assessment reported that nearly one-third of the 263 transgender people surveyed believed that the transphobia of health care

providers and a fear that caregivers would disclose their transgender status were barriers to medical care. Whereas a community health study conducted in Boston found many transgender/transsexual individuals have experienced problems accessing health care and many received blatant discrimination from health care providers (GLBT Health Access, 2000).

Need 3: Gender Neutral Toilets

All the participants believe that there are no sufficient gender neutral toilets on campus. Ane, a transwoman, highlighted that she had attempted to use female toilets. This shift in the usage of the toilets began half way through 2014. 'I came out in first year', she reported. This participant could not use female toilets at the risk of being discovered and most probably being humiliated. As it turned out, in 2015 there was an incident involving Ane where a female cisgender employee found her using the female toilets and was appalled by the discovery; this was so because according to Thompson (1994) and Kimmel and Messner (2004) in Kendall (2011) "virtually everything social in our lives is gendered. People continually distinguish between males and females and evaluate them differentially". In the eyes of the female cisgender employee Ane failed the gender evaluation even though it was a misrecognition from the part of the female cisgender employee. The reason for the misrecognition can be traced back to the conceptualisation of the gender variant populations where sex is misrepresented as gender and gender as sex within research studies (Lombardi, 2009).

Though the incident did not escalate between the two, campus security was involved; in the end both people involved felt harassed and violated by the incident. Ane's experience is consistent with the findings of other studies, which suggest that transgender people are frequently ridiculed, insulted, physically attacked and sometimes arrested when they use public bathrooms (Nicolazzo & Marine, 2015; Ratele & Kessi, 2016).

Other than the abuse that transgender students receive in the bathrooms, Ratele & Kess (2016) reason that in general these students face constant scrutiny about their gender identity on campus. Ane felt that for her it was difficult to negotiate between using different bathrooms on campus. She affirmed the sentiment by others that there are not enough gender neutral bathrooms available on campus. As a result she and others are often forced to plan visits to

the bathroom carefully (Gershenson, 2010; Herman, 2013). It is for this particular discomfort of having to plan her visit to the bathroom that Ane is of the view that the introduction of gender neutral toilets would alleviate some of the complexities that arise as a result of their scarcity. The challenge and fear is always about being detected when using either of the toilets (male or female) when you are a transgender person. For example, Ane intimated that when using male bathrooms there were instances where people would say 'hey you are in the wrong bathroom'; her response would be to walk away from the situation without engaging. She felt that those people were in fact right for saying she was in a wrong bothroom because in reality she is a transgender woman. This is what Bourdieu refers to as symbolic violence. Bourdieu claims that symbolic violence is the non-physical violence or "power which manages to impose meanings and to impose them as legitimiate by concealing the power relations which are the basis of its force" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 4).

The third participant, Ice, insisted that the Wits campus does not have that many gender neutral toilets or facilities concluding that it is definitely a very difficult issue to navigate on campus. This participant, as a 44 year old part-time student feels that she has a virtue of age. Thus, sometimes when she encounters people who look like they may create unnecessary problems for her, she just look them down in a cynical way. This participant is also aware that some people are not as lucky because other people have had very difficult experiences. For this reason she emphases the significance of the gender neutral bathrooms. She suggests that some of these experiences are dangerous for transgender people especially for transgender women because there is a high level of violence in some spaces, circumstances and situations particularly around the bathroom facilities. For example, she suggests that you get the classic predator myth where cisgender people responds negatively and a situation of violence escalates; not necessarily from the first person who responds badly but their acquaintances or people in general. So, in prioritising heterosexuals and cisgenders over gender neutral toilets, university management reinforces the gender binary and delegitimises identities of transgender students (Ratele & Kessi, 2016). Supported by Grenfell & James (1998) who maintain that "because one group's legitimacy rules another, a 'violence' has been and continues to be done" (p. 24).

The experiences that the participants narrate are a cry for recognition and affirmation. The recognition in the participants view will take effect when their needs are addressed. Introduction of gender neutral toilets will be one step in the right direction and should improve transgender students' daily lived experiences.

Need 4: Residences

None of the participants stayed in the residences for various reasons. Three of the participants have family in Johannesburg and the forth participant indicated that if she were to stay in the residences she might be placed in the male residences and that thought scared her a great deal. Tina suggests that issues relating to the transgender experiences at residences is that these spaces are homophobic and transphobic. In the last analysis this perception of residences makes them to be unsafe for LGBTIAQ+ identified persons.

Transphobia is the feeling of unease or even revulsion of nonnormative gender identity and expression (Hill, 2002; Hill & Willoughby, 2005). Studies have found that many transgender people have experienced some form of discrimination or harassment because of their gender identity or presentation sometime in their life, especially in residences for those transgender students who stay in residences. Harassment, discrimination, and violence faced by transgender people on a daily basis, as well as the highrisk behaviours those individuals engage in to cope with these issues are common themes throughout the literature.

Many on campuses' residences currently exclude transgender students and fail to meet the needs of these students in such areas as health care, bathrooms and locker rooms, records, programming, and support Mintz (2011). Thus, it is befitting for Nicolazzo & Marine (2015) to recommend that student residence staff and administrators should allow all students to self identify their gender, pronouns and name and accordingly their residence placement should be based on these self-identifications.

Need 5: Safe Zones@Wits

The participants were asked about their knowledge of Safe Zones@Wits programme and about its significance, if any, for the transgender people. Tina provided a background to this

programme as its coordinator. They argued that this programme created opportunities to provide a training for individuals as allies. The training programme entails teaching individuals about giving support, coming out, transitioning, disability, sexual harassment, any form of support needed in relationships, and basic communication skills – inclusive of how to contain a person who may be in crisis, listen attentively and offer appropriate support. All the participants were aware of the Safe Zones@Wits programme and one of them was even a member.

Inasmuch as Ctrl Alt Gender is useful as a transgender student organisation that creates a sense of community for transgender students. A community that is affirming, validating and recognising of transgender identities need to be created. The Safe Zones@Wits programme helps to reinforce, partner with and to support the transgender community on campus. This intervention is aligned with what Beemyn (2003) and Lees (1998) recommend that institutional support services departments should work with students to create a transgender support group.

Need 6: Pronouns

All the participants viewed the use of gender pronouns as important. Pronouns are indeed significant because they provide a first point of access to the humanity of the other. That is, this access may take effect during introductions, on their student or drivers or ID cards including name tags in spaces that require such. So, using the appropriate pronouns is important especially for the transgender people. As a result, using the appropriate pronouns for transgender people is one of the critical steps in recognising, affirming and respecting the gender identity and sexual orientation of transgender people. This will ensure that experiences mis-gendering which happen regularly to transgender people can be easily avoided.

The challenge however is the lack of understanding of the intersection that leads to the marginalisation of transgender people and transgender people's needs and experiences. That is, pronouns of transgender people are not isolated from their overall identity, sexuality, sexual orientation and struggles. At a certain level, as an oppressed group transgender experiences are arguably identical with Black women's experiences who were invisibilised in both the race and the feminist struggles; so, by not using appropriate pronouns the dominant groups perpetuates invisibilisation of the transgender people.

To this effect, intersectionality has since been heralded as the "most important contribution that women's studies has made so far" (McCall, 2005, p. 1771). The fate suffered by Black women where their issues fell between the cracks is somewhat experienced by the transgender community, in that within the context of sex and gender identity politics transgender people are the most marginalised and pronouns form an integral part of such marginalisation.

Need 7: Transitioning

Transition (or gender confirmation) is the process of changing from the gender assigned at birth to a gender with which the individual identifies. This may or may not involve medical or surgical treatment. Gender transition is a journey that is different for everyone. Every individual is unique and will experience gender variance to a different degree that also depends on social circumstances. Some may attempt to suppress their discomfort, while others may live permanently in the gender role that is most comfortable for them, but without seeking any medical treatment. Some people choose to follow a medical process called gender reassignment (Moughton, 2013).

Schlossberg, Waters, & Goodman (1995) identified four factors that impact a person's ability to transition to a new environment namely: situation, self, support, and strategies. *Situation* refers to the general nature of the transition, including whether the event is positive or negative, permanent or temporary, sources of stress, and how an individual's perception of the transition affects behaviour. *Self* refers to characteristics of the individual including demographic and psychological resources. *Support* refers to social support, including family, friends, and intimate relationships. Lastly, *strategies* refer to a person's coping responses to the transition.

Two participants made reference to their process of transition and the experiences they had in relation to their transitioning. Ane recounted that she had mixed experiences on campus emanating from her transition to being a transgender woman. Records and documents present a particular set of challenges for transgender students. When a student transitions from one gender to another, they often have a difficult if not impossible time changing their academic records and identification to reflect their chosen name and/or gender identity. If a student is not able to change these facets of their identity, they are often constantly forced to explain why their name, for example, does not match official university documents. This can lead not only

to discrimination, but to a sense of disempowerment for the student as their identity is not validated (Beemyn, 2005, Sausa, 2002). This was precisely Ane's experience outside the faculty, that is, in some certain spaces she felt disempowered.

The university policies and system should make it possible for students who want to alter their records and documents. This will assist transgender students such as Ane not only to depend on personal inclinations of the university officials but to ensure that such practices are part of the university's institutional policy regime, norms and culture. Colleges can address this issue by establishing a simple procedure for transgender students to change the name and/or gender designation on all of their campus records, including ID cards, listings in electronic and print directories, and files in admissions, financial aid, the registrar's office, and the health center (Beemyn et al., 2005).

Need 8: Coming Out

Coming out is a form of disclosing one's identity to one or more people who may have believed that one is a cisgender or heterosexual person. Coming out is a delicate matter and may be risky as well, depending on the context and places in which one *comes out*. As a result, due to the consequences of coming out those who do so may need support. For example Ane shared that she spent a lot of time in counselling in the process of coming out.

Culturally appropriate counselling can provide a safe, nonjudgmental place for students to explore their developing identities and address college-related challenges (Gould, 2004). While sharing many of the same developmental concerns as their peers, transgender students may also face culturally specific issues related to their gender-identity development, including coming out to themselves and to family and friends, negotiating gendered environments (Beemyn et al., 2005). Kay came out in her first year at Wits. She suspected that people, especially those in her faculty, knew or suspected her identity so when she came out it was not difficult for them to relate with her new identity. Ice felt that when she came out there was a lot of understanding for her. Kay and Ice are exceptional experiences for transgender people who decides to come out.

Tina's experience is a typical lived experience of what happens when one decides to come out, especially as a transgender person. Tina asserts that when they started working as a student assistant to Wits pride in 2011, everyone knew that they weren't heterosexual and there was never a sense of that their identity was an issue with their colleagues. However, in 2015 when they came out as being transgender there were number of issues that came up. They started feeling more threatened than they ever felt before in the workplace. Mock (2014) articulates the experience better when proclaiming that "words have the power to encourage and inspire but also to demean and dehumanize. I know now that epithets are meant to shame us into not being ourselves, to encourage us to perform lies and to be silent about our truths" (p.75).

Need 9: Campus climate

All participants felt that in the main, the campus climate varied across different spaces. Tina reported that there is an evident shift in the climate on campus from when they were a student in 2008 to 2015. For example, Activate Friday programme (in those days) to having University Pride and Safe Zones@Wits in 2015 created a huge climate shift. Tina concluded that in 2015 the tone is different because among other things there is a dedicated office dealing with SOGI. Social justice policies are also helpful in an attempt to create an inclusive campus environment.

Although the particpants appear to have a positive view of the campus climate. It is crucial that the university should undertake a campus climate assessment. This assessment will be useful in identifying the needs and challenges faced by the transgender students. This initiative is even more important when one considers transphobia, discrimination and harassment that some of the transgender students experience on campus. Zubernis & Snyder (2007), put the point across whe they contend that if a person receives messages that society loathes them, not only will they feel isolated from society at large, they might internalise these negative beliefs and engage in self hatred. The oppositie is also true hence the importance of a positive and inclusive campus climate becomes necessary in order to ensure that transgender students feel recognised and validated as fully human.

Rankin & Beemyn (2005) found that 44% of participants had experienced harassment including derogatory remarks, verbal threats, graffiti/vandalism, physical threats and assaults, denial of

services, and pressure to be silent (Rankin & Beemyn, 2005, as cited in Beemyn, 2005). Transgender people also experience high levels of physical danger (Hill & Willoughy, 2005; Lee, 2000). Compared to non-transgender and heterosexual students, LGBT[IAQ+] youth are four times more likely to be victims of verbal or physical assaults and, as a result, are five times more likely to miss school due to fear for their personal safety (Lee, 2000).

Need 10: Campus awareness

All participants believe that Wits has increased levels of awareness pertaining to transgender issues. However, levels of awareness varied according to different spaces on campus that participants occupied. Indeed, in order for transgender students to feel welcomed and affirmed on campus, the student life programmes in the end must be facilitated by transgender people. In instances where cisgender people are facilitating such programmes, the programme content must reflect the transgender students' daily lived experiences. According to Beemyn et al., (2005) similar to other underrepresented communities on campus, transgender students may feel invisible or marginalised if little or no effort is made to acknowledge their presence and needs. Yet most campuses still offer few to no opportunities for students to learn about transgender issues and experiences (Beemyn, 2003; Sausa, 2002). To change the situation universities must create transgender advocacy and awereness programmens; because students that feel more supported on campus and feel connected to the campus community, both inside and outside of the classroom, often achieve greater academic success (San Diego State University, 2010).

Recommendations

In view of the participants' experiences and in order to ensure that Wits is an inclusive space and becomes more supportive of transgender people; I would like to offer the following recommendations:

Policy & Procedure

- Develop a transgender **policy**; which should ensure that transgender students feel welcomed at Wits and by the university's institutional culture in all aspects of their student life; that is, student life such as, sports, student societies, residences, health services, classrooms, campus climate, etc.
- Introduce a procedure to allow transgender students to use their preferred names, pronouns or gender on campus.
- Develop standard operating procedures for people who would officially like to change their names and/or gender designation on their university **records and documents.**
- Ensure that all the officials who will be designated to facilitate the name and gender changes on records and documents (for students and staff) have undertaken Safe Zones@Wits training.
- Inform all students (and staff) that transgender students may request (if they so wish) student cards with their transgender name even when it is not their birth name even when that name does not correspond with the name in their birth certificate or identity document or marriage certificate.
- Sufficiently publicise the transgender policy and standard operating procedures for sensitive provision of transgender specific **health care** services.

Policy Workshops, Seminars & Roundtable Discussion for Students

- Provide sexual orientation and gender identity policy workshops, seminars and roundtable discussions to students.
- Advocate for student affairs offices, including student health, residence life, and the rest of the university, to implement a trans-inclusive anti-discrimination policy that has been approved in April 2015.

Safe Zones@Wits Training & Advocacy for all Staff

- Broaden the Safe Zones@Wits training to include senior staff, campus control, financial aid, human resources, registrar's office, professional and support staff throughout the institution.
- Include the Safe Zones@Wits training in the induction of all staff.

- Have regular advocacy and awareness campaigns at departmental, school and faculty levels on sexuality, sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Expand and broadly legitimise the role of **Safe Zones@Wits** on campus.
- Make the event to commemorate the annual transgender Day of Remembrance (November 20th) an annual event along with campus pride, and hold other trans-related events.

Health & Wellness

- Encourage all Health care and Wellness services to attend the Safe Zones@Wits training.
- Ensure that all the nurses, and doctors are Safe Zones@Wits allies to ensure that they are supportive of transgender students and have knowledge about transgender people health concerns.
- Develop transgender specific branding, marketing and communication material in relation to health care and wellness.
- Have regular surveys for transgender students about their health-care experiences and how services could be improved.
- Create opportunities for patients to identify their preferred name and gender identity on health care intake forms, rather than having "M" and "F" boxes.
- Ensure that there are gender neutral bathrooms for patients at health care facilities.

Gender Neutral Facilities

- Increase a number of **gender neutral** bathrooms and introduce other gender neutral facilities in all new buildings.
- Educate staff and students on transgenger students' experiences when using gender binary facilities.
- Educate staff and students on students' right to use bathrooms consistent with their gender identity or their personal preferences.

Residences

- Review the current **residences'** policies to include all gender neutral residences option to be open to first year students.
- Encourage all the wardens, residence coordinators, house committees and the management of residences to attend the Safe Zones@Wits training and to be allies.
- Involve TEEO, GEO, CCDU in the residence life training and other programmes.
- Ensure that all the residence assistants undergo the Safe Zones@Wits training and publicise the names of individuals within residence life who are knowledgeable about transgender concerns and can provide support to transgender students.
- TEEO, GEO, CCDU in conjuction with Student Affairs to develop a resource guide for transgender students on campus.
- Create space for transgender students to be housed in keeping with their gender identity/expression and, if desired, to have a single room.
- Change forms in admissions, residence life, student health, human resources, and other university units to allow for transgender self-identification.

Institutional Culture

- Change the **institutional culture** to expand the affirmation, recognition and celebration of transgender students; awareness, climate, harassment, intimidation, safety and general support structures.
- Identify aspects of student life that are conservatively organised along gender binary lines and educate these gender-based groups about the need for transgender inclusion.

Curriculum

- Change the **curriculum** to recognise and affirm the LGBTIAQ+ community as human.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Although the limititations of the study are already mentioned in Chapter three, it is important to reiterate what I consider to be a huge limitation of the study in this section; that is, it is the lack of diversity of participants in terms of class, race, place of origin and spatial arrangements. However, I am convinced that the experiences of the participants will assist in helping the university and the Higher Education sector in South Africa to be more informed and inclusive for all transgender people. So, in spite of the sample limitations the study used what McCall (2005) refers to as an "intracategorical" approach to intersectionality, which advocates for a focus on neglected subgroups, often small ones, within social categories (in this case LGBTIAQ+) so that the different needs of such subgroups (i.e. transgender) are also prioritised and different lived experiences validated.

Participants in this research are not the representatives of the transgender community or 'spokespeople' for the transgender community. However, their individual experiences do speak to the collective experiences of the transgender community at Wits, and the Higher Education sector in South Africa more broadly. That being said, the participants in this research were only white, middle class and living in surbubs. Their experiences should be understood in that context; that extends to Wits which is a historically white institution that, despite shifting student demographics, has retained its white liberal institutional culture.

All participants are privileged in relation to some heterosexual black students, especially those who come from working class backgrounds who struggle to pay tuition fees. The recent student protests , Rhodes Must Fall, Open Stellenbosch, and Fees Must Fall and the emergence of the Black Student Movement (BSM) that we witnessed in the past eighteen (18) months were multiple forms of demonstrations showing the stubborn oppressive tendencies at various levels that are experienced by Black students and staff in their daily lives in these historically white institutions. Given the racialised, gendered and classed history of South Africa, Black transgender students' experience adds another dynamic of exclusion based on their class and race. An example may be found in the experiences of Sandile Ndelu, a transgender activist

based at UCT who was involved in #RhodesMustFall – as quoted in the Daily Vox (Mbongwa, 2016):

> Q: *What has your role been in student movements?*
> A: The Trans Collective is a body of transgender people who joined student movements at UCT out of their own accord in 2015. However, what brings us together as a collective is our identity as gender diverse people and the resulting alienation. We have, together with general movement organising, attempted to add content to decolonisation by emphasising a more nuanced understanding of the colony which manifests at UCT and how it is affecting us in various ways. This has been done through passive means such as dialogues and discussions. However, since realising the resistance against this political shift, we are exploring other ways of bringing our movements in accordance with our understanding of decolonisation and the work that our movements should be doing. An example being the disruptive intervention that we staged at the RMF exhibition recently.
>
> Q: *How would you describe the treatment of trans[2]* people in student movements?*
> A: Exhausting and draining, macroaggressions, intimidation, exclusion, lack of support, invisibility, antagonism, dismissal.

That being said, the weight of class will be more for a lower middle class Black student who is transgender than the one who is from the same class but white. This may explain the fact that you will find that though in general there is a low number of transgender students who are out, in that number there is no representation for black students. It may be because the risks of violence are too severe for the Black students compared to their white counterparts who are protected by and large by their white privilege. However, all oppression is connected and it intersects. So, as a community irrespective of race and class there remain areas of common identity and interests which, if addressed, will improve transgender students' daily lived experiences on campus. These have been brought to the fore in this study, and include things

[2] Trans*: represents a short version of transgender.

like policy, health care, gender neutral toilets, residences, Safe Zones@Wits, pronouns, transitioning, coming out, campus climate, and campus awareness.

In order to engage with social justice work in the academy, one must contend with biases against women, people of colour, people with disabilities, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer individuals, that are embedded in the institutional culture in higher education, either because these cultures are designed with the lives and perspectives of the privileged in mind and/or because their structures still reflect the subordination that formal legislation has outlawed (Young, 1990). A safe space is a critical component of an institution engaging with social change, however, it is crucial for the entire academy to engage with this notion – to build on the concept of a safe space for people who experience oppression(s), and apply it to the entire academy, in order to facilitate an inclusive institutional culture. This will significantly impact upon the lived experiences of those who have gone from being excluded, to belonging in a space that is welcoming, respectful and supportive.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX I: INFORMATION SHEET

Each participant must read, and understand this document before participating in the study.

Full Study Title: Institutional needs of Transgender Student Community at the University of Witwatersrand.

Investigator: Pura Mgolombane

Institution: University of Witwatersrand

Dear Potential Research Participant,

My name is Pura and I am currently enrolled as a Diversity Studies Masters student at the University of Witwatersrand. As part of the requirements for my degree I am required to submit a research report on a topic of my choice. My research aims to find out more information about the institutional needs of the transgender students at Wits. I am interested in finding out about your lived experiences at Wits. I am also interested in hearing about the ways you receive (if you receive) support as a transgender student on campus. In order to do this, I am inviting you to participate in a one-on-one interview with the researcher to speak about these issues. To be able to participate in this research, you will need to identify as a transgender or be a gender non-conforming or a queer person. Would you like to participate in the interview? If so, please fill in the consent form.

The interview will be about an hour in duration and your participation is completely voluntary. It will take place at the Senate House room 9004 located at the University of Witwatersrand. The interviews will be audio recorded and then transcribed by the researcher. The audio recordings and transcriptions will be kept in a password-protected computer that only the researcher will have access to. The only other person besides the researcher who will have access to the transcriptions is my supervisor, Professor Melissa Steyn from the Wits Centre for Diversity Studies. Any identifying information will be kept strictly confidential. In the transcripts, final report or any published material pseudo names will be used to protect the identity of the participants.

If you would prefer to participate in a focus group format instead of this individual interview, please let me know. Participants will be advised not to share what will be discussed in the group sessions; however, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Participants may withdraw from the study anytime. The interviews will be recorded. Transcripts of all interviews will be made and

excerpts may be used to provide examples for my study, but you will never be individually identified in in the transcripts or any published material. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee at Wits.

There will be no reward or payment for your participation in this study. There are no foreseeable dangers to you nor are there any potential personal benefits associated with your participation in the study. You will be asked for a written consent before the study commences.

If you have any questions about the study, you can ask me. You can call me directly on 072-215-8469.

APPENDIX II: RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

Hello my name is Pura Mgolombane. I am doing Master's in Diversity Studies at the University of Witwatersrand. I would like to speak to you about a research study that I am conducting as part of my Master's programme.

My study title is "Institutional needs of transgender student community at Wits University".

I would like to talk to you because this study I am doing which involves transgender students. Do you have a few minutes to talk to me? I would like to ask you a few questions to ensure that you are eligible to participate in the study.

- Do you identify as a heterosexual cisgender male?
  If yes, say "Okay, thank you very much for your time, but this time I am only trying to recruit students who identify as transgender"

- Do you identify as a heterosexual cisgender female?
  If yes, say "Okay thank you very much for your time, at this point I am only recruiting for students who identify as transgender".

- Do you identify as transgender? Or gender nonconforming? Or Queer
  If yes say, "Great, I am looking for students who identify as transgender/gender/ nonconforming students/queer:

In-depth Interview –

You will participate in an hour long interview where you will be asked about your experiences as a transgender student/gender nonconforming student at Wits.

The interview will take about an hour to complete. We can schedule a time and a location that will work with your schedule. If you are interested, I need to ask you a few questions and give you some paperwork that you will need to complete before you can participate.

Distribute Consent Forms

Give all recruited students an information sheet and consent forms appropriate for the activity in which they will participate. Explain why they will not be able to participate unless they sign the forms.

Collect Contact Information for Follow-Up

Ask for participants' permission to record their contact information so that we can follow up with reminders about the project activity in which they intend to participate. Collect the following information:

- Name
- Age
- Mobile phone number
- Email address

Do you have any questions at this point?

Please contact me on 072-215-8469 if there are any changes to your schedule. If you have friends who identify as transgender, please invite them to participate in this study as well. If they are interested in taking part, they can reach me through the phone number above.

Thank you very much for your time.

APPENDIX III: INFORMED CONSENT: OF VOLUNTEER TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY

I agree to participate in an in-depth interview with Pura Mgolombane as part of his partial fulfillment of his MA degree with the University of Witwatersrand. I also give permission to be audio-recorded during the in-depth interview.

Signature		Date	
Print Name			

Signature of investigator

Signature		Date	
Print Name			

Signature of witness

Signature		Date	
Print Name			

APPENDIX IV: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Hello my name is Pura Mgolombane from the University of Witwatersrand. Thank you for agreeing to speak with me today. I am interested in hearing more about you and your experiences as a transgender student at Wits. There is no right or wrong answer to my questions. You don't have to answer any questions that you don't want to. We can stop the interview at any time.

Questions:

- What is your general sense of the level of awareness of the transgender issues on campus?
- How would you describe the climate on campus for the transgender students?
- Have you had any experience on campus in which you had to 'out' yourself or disclose aspects of your gender identity in order to receive services? How did you respond to this situation?
- Have you experienced incidents of harassment or intimidation on campus? If so, how did you respond? Did you seek any support? How was the incident handled?
- Are you involved in any student group/s on campus? What has been your experiences with these groups?
- What has been your experience with the bathrooms (toilets) on campus?
- What services or programmes would you like to see on campus that do not currently exist?
- Have you utilised any services from CCDU? Why/why not? What has your experiences been with the services?
- Have you been to Campus Health? If not, why? If so, please describe your experience there.
- Do you live at the residences? Have you ever lived at the residences? Why or why not?
- When you arrived at Wits, what were you told about residences' gender options? Were you assigned a roommate?
- Have you ever had concerns about residences' gender options? Did you ever discuss your concerns with someone from residence administration?
- Have you ever discussed issues of gender identity, sexuality, sexual orietation, pronoun use, etc with a professor? What was your experience like?
- What is your sense of the transgender community on campus? What would you prefer for it to be?

- Are you aware about Safe Zone? Are you a member? What are your experiences with Safe Zone?
- Where do you turn for support when dealing with stress or dealing with difficult issues or discrimination on campus?