

# GENDER AFFIRMATION AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: EXAMINING THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN GENDER EXPANSIVE STUDENT COMMUNITIES IN FORT COLLINS

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## PROJECT INTRODUCTION

The project explores the ways that access to gender-affirming support and resources greatly improves the overall quality of life for trans and gender-expansive persons. As part of this community-engaged project, a social justice action report has been developed regarding the vision and mission of gender-affirming organizations that provide support to Queer, Trans Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (QTBIPOC) in Colorado. The report is aimed towards allowing a Fort Collins organization, the Fort Collins Community Action Network (FCCAN), to create a gender-affirming culture by working closely with Queer and Trans stakeholders outside of CSU in Fort Collins and surrounding communities.

## INTERNSHIP GOALS

**Connect** with leaders and advocates within the LGBTQ+ and social justice communities.

**Create** a database for FCCAN in Excel with information regarding the organization, vision, mission, goals, services or focus, best practices, and contact information.

**Gain** a better understanding of the needs and experiences of trans and gender-expansive persons in Fort Collins and surrounding communities through the works of the organizations

**Learn** about the best practices for accountability and transparency by organizations that FCCAN can **incorporate** within their organization.

**Build** relationships and facilitate connections between these gender-affirming organizations and FCCAN.

## FORT COLLINS COMMUNITY ACTION NETWORK (FCCAN)

The Fort Collins Community Action Network (FCCAN) has been in existence for more than 18 years.

- ❖ **Grassroots** organization
- ❖ Furthers **economic, social, and environmental justice**, sustainability, human rights, and peace for all
- ❖ Builds **coalitions, develop strategies** and action.
- ❖ Create an action plan that **includes gender-affirming practices**

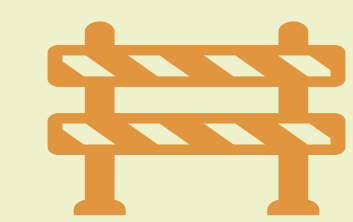
## HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO YOUR EDUCATION

The internship is in line with my research interests which broadly include digital media, gender and sexuality, intersectional and African feminisms, and queer identities. This experience translates into my research work as I have learnt how to connect with vulnerable human subjects and make transnational connections between the experiences of LGBTQ+ communities in the US and in Ghana.

## WHAT YOU DID - METHODS

- ❖ The intern was able to secure interviews with 6 organizations in the front range.
- ❖ The interview was designed to seek information on the best practices of gender affirming organizations, including processes, procedures, challenges, recommendations, and practices (culture).
- ❖ The interviews were both in-person and virtual. All conducted in English.
- ❖ **CSU Pride Center, CO Name Change, NOCO Eclectic, TFF, The Center on Colfax, Inside Out Youth Services**

## FINDINGS



Gender affirming practices



Policies- Formal



Policies -Informal



Visibility



Safety

## RECOMMENDATION

- ❖ **Practices** that help trans & queer people to feel seen, supported, welcome & visible.
- ❖ **Create** a safe space for trans and queer citizens is a space where they are respected, acknowledged, affirmed and safe.
- ❖ **Have** strong organizational policies, structure, and Culture.

## FINDINGS

"...that would include things like names, pronouns, policies for support, restrooms, locker rooms, pro email and computer usage, and gender markers on that nondiscrimination support for coworkers and clients and customers, things like that" – Noco Eclectic

"..our staff have to do mandatory reporting training every year." – Inside Out Youth Services

" I think representation is another really important piece in making sure that on the website or on the staff, people making decisions and also our LGBTQ or how that lens to making sure we're making decisions that are impacting LGBT Q folks in a positive way. So, yeah, there's a lot, a lot about language about representation about just celebrating people's differences." — CSU Pride center



The Center on Colfax, taken on July 24th, 2023

## CONCLUSIONS

Gender-affirming practices should be incorporated within organizational systems and structures to ensure diversity, equity and inclusion.