

Hatred in the Heartland

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Case Summary

In this case, we are presented with an institution with a long and varied history. Anywhere College, a small private institution located in the Midwest, began as a Lutheran seminary, and has since grown to be a University specializing in a number of fields, the arts, drama, and creative writing programs being some of its major highlights. Because of these growing fields, Anywhere College has had a steadily increasing population of LGBT students and has been developing supportive programming over the last decade. These efforts are now coming into conflict with other more religious members of the campus community.

A student, Gary Welsh, reported harassment and incidents of bias and property damage to his Residence Hall staff member; these issues were then forwarded to the Department of Public Safety. Gary continues seeking support and gets his word and history out in the school newspaper. This further incited anger and animosity from those in the University community that disagree with the LGBT lifestyle. LGBT student protests are met with counter-protests and violence.

You, the Director of Residence Life are facing push back for your inclusive programming efforts from parents, prominent alumni and financial supporters, leaders of the campus' Lutheran community, the Director of Development and Alumni Affairs and the College President. Because Homecoming and the College's campaign to increase donations are just around the corner, you are being pressured to potentially change and/or curtail what programming efforts you have already accomplished. However, you also must keep in mind that the LGBT community (both current and alumni) will fight tooth and nail to keep their College as inclusive an environment as it was when they began their tenure here.

What do you do?

Key Issues

- As the Director of Residence Life, it is important to understand that your influence on campus is somewhat limited and you can only impact so much change.
- Anywhere College, while potentially only nominally Lutheran, still has its roots in the Lutheran community and relies heavily on donations from individuals that may not be in line with where the campus is currently headed.
- There has been much progress made at Anywhere College regarding LGBT rights. LGBT students worry that much history and activism will be lost if programming efforts are stopped. However, a sizable (or so we are lead to believe) contingent of students feels otherwise.
- We also must consider the reputation Anywhere College has in working well with LGBT students. If things change drastically, students may be entering an unsafe environment that they might originally perceive as welcoming and accepting.
- The Dean of Students appears largely inactive in this case. While she is listed in the characters section, she is not mentioned in the case. Conley's lack of supportive supervision is worth noting.

Missing Information:

- What does Anywhere College's missions statement say regarding the Lutheran Church affiliation?
- How does the Lutheran belief system connect to Residence Hall Life?
- What population of the students are Lutheran?

- Did Residence Life respond to the attacks in the residence halls? If so, what was their involvement or actions? Are there suspected assailants? How is their ongoing investigation proceeding?
- Where are all of the students who said (in the case) that they had positive and learning-based experiences in the residence halls with LGBT student groups?
- How many LGBTQ students are there enrolled at Anywhere College? Living in the Residence Halls?
- How much time remains before homecoming?
- Is there a media relation's liaison?
- Does Anywhere College have a Crisis Response Team?
- Is there a state law, like those in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and California, protecting free speech that affects even private higher education institutions?

Relevant Actors

Madeleine Coney, the Director of Residence Life (for 20 years) at Anywhere College. She played an instrumental role in the original establishment and continuing acceptance and support for LGBTQ-themed programming and diversity efforts.

Cornelia Hudson, the Dean of Students, and the person directly under the president. Strangely enough, she has very little part in this case.

Gary Welsh, an out gay sophomore at Anywhere College and active LGBTQ-supporter on campus, has been targeted by anti-gay hate speech and vandalism in the Residence Halls. You, the Director of Residence Life, have helped Gary in bringing his case to the Department of

Public Safety. Gary also went to the student newspaper with his story, further igniting controversy.

Reverend Arthur Cass, a campus minister that is an active supporter of LGBTQ rights and programming efforts. He helps lead a candlelight vigil in defense of LGBTQ rights despite opposition and dissent amongst faculty and staff.

Terry Carson, director of Development and Alumni Affairs, is a behind-the-scenes supporter of LGBTQ rights. He is currently very upset about the impact that this current debate can have on the upcoming Homecoming event and on future donations and alumni support.

Emily Anywhere, a prominent supporter of Anywhere College, and a descendant of the Anywhere family that made the original large endowment to the college. Emily is currently threatening to end any and all future donations unless the college returns to the mission that she feels her grandparents had helped financially back.

Paula Amblin, an alumna of Anywhere College, and former student LGBT activist. She confronts you regarding the potential loss of 10 years worth of fighting for LGBT rights. She laments that this could lead to a lack of support for Anywhere's LGBT population, false advertising to future LGBT students, and says that she will withdraw financial support if these policies are rolled back. She also threatens to out Lillian Held, a Member of the Board of Trustees, if she does not openly back LGBT efforts on campus.

Gordon Felton, a member of the Faculty Senate and staunch supporter of LGBT rights, despite how unpopular this may be.

Howard Chittenden, the current president of Anywhere College, and someone not originally around for the last decade's worth of fighting and support for LGBT rights. He is not comfortable with the "liberal" attitude that Residence Life seems to be taking towards LGBT

programming and inclusion efforts, citing his beliefs that this may be indoctrinating their students and may run contrary to Anywhere's religious mission and aims. While he does not ban these programming efforts, he makes it very clear that something needs to change in order for the college's development plan to be financially successful.

Barbara Hanley, a mother of an Anywhere College student, and a representation of numerous possible families that are uncomfortable with the college environment that their children are a part of.

Lillian Held, a closeted Member of the Board of Trustees. She is a behind-the-scenes supporter of LGBT rights, but does not identify openly as a lesbian. If she does not publicly support these causes, she runs the risk of being outed by Paula Amblin, though she does not yet know this.

Reverend Milton Adams, a Member of the Board of Trustees, and a Lutheran Minister serving the Campus community. He is staunchly opposed to LGBT rights and programming efforts, siding with students in their efforts to remove LGBT visibility. He supports Anywhere College's original religious mission and will stop at nothing to make sure the campus does not expose their students to lifestyles that will lead to damnation and is against God's word.

Decision Issue #1

LGBT Programming in the Residence Hall

What should Madeleine Conley do about the backlash against LGBT programming in the residence halls?

Unfortunately, the existence of hostile climates for LGBT students at faith based institutions is not a new trend. This is due to an assumption of homogeneity at faith based institutions meaning

that all students come from the same faith background as that that of the institution. In fact, many administrators assume that the reason that many current students are attracted to the institution is due to its faith based background (Toben, 2009). For Judeo-Christian faith based universities and colleges, this means that it is assumed that all students are of the same Judeo-Christian faith. It is important to note that many of the Judeo-Christian faith believe that homosexuality is a sin. This belief comes into direct conflict with LGBT programming efforts as these efforts could be seen as unnecessary, unwanted or even an attempt to convert others to homosexuality.

Alternative #1: Madeleine should address the concerns of Lutheran Light, Emily Anywhere and other important stakeholders and eliminate the controversial LGBT programming in the residence halls.

Advantages: Internal stakeholders such as students, trustees, donors, and alumni are important in the decision-making processes of higher education institutions (Kretovics, 2011). According to Kretovics (2011), institutions are becoming more and more accountable to these stakeholders as the higher education industry becomes more businesslike in nature. In fact, the strategic planning phase of higher education management is based on the methods that higher education institutions can use to “meet the needs of its current and future stakeholders” (Kretovics, 2011). This accountability means that institutions cannot ignore feedback from the various stakeholders. In this case, Anywhere College is dealing with concerns about the LGBT programming in the residence hall from internal stakeholders such as students, donors, alumni, trustees, and even the president. Madeleine cannot afford not to take these concerns seriously. By eliminating the LGBT programming component, she can show that she is attentive to the needs of the stakeholders, ensure that Terry Carson’s fundraising campaign is successful, and preserve the integrity of the college’s faith based mission.

Disadvantages: While you will satisfy some stakeholders by eliminating LGBT programming, you will anger other stakeholders such as LGBT/ally current students, faculty, and trustees. Furthermore, by eliminating LGBT programming at Anywhere College, Madeleine would be doing LGBT and non LGBT students alike a disservice. According to Shapiro and Gross (2008) and influenced by Gilligan, higher education professionals have a responsibility to use the ethic of care in making decisions when faced with moral dilemmas. According to Beck (1994), “administrators need to encourage collaborative efforts between faculty, staff, and students...[which would serve] to promote interpersonal interactions, to deemphasize competition, to facilitate a sense of belonging, and to increase individuals’ skills as they learn from one another” (cited in Shapiro & Gross, 2008, p. 28).

In this decision, Madeleine must consider the care of those LGBT students that have been affected by the intolerance of the members of the Lutheran Light. Such intolerance can severely psychologically harm LGBT students by teaching them that anything that is not heteronormative is wrong. This can lead to fear of coming out, shame, guilt, depression, and even suicide. Furthermore, LGBT students who do not feel comfortable expressing their sexuality may feel as if they do not belong at Anywhere State as their sexuality goes against the teachings and beliefs of the Lutheran Church.

Alternative #2: Keep the LGBT programming in the residence halls at Anywhere College but make changes in the programming to better integrate tenets of the Lutheran Faith.

Advantages: Incorporating religious elements into LGBT programming has been successful at other institutions like Anywhere State. The University of San Diego, a private Catholic institution, had to deal with a similarly chilly climate for LGBT students as Anywhere College in the early 90’s (Kirkley & Getz, 2007). At the University of San Diego, a campus climate of fear

existed where faculty and students were afraid to come out and the LGBT student group had to meet in secret so that others could not discover their identities and cause them harm (Kirkley & Getz, 2007). As Anywhere College did, administrators at the University of San Diego focused on educational programming designed to “provide accurate, up-to-date information on sexual orientation and to dispel homophobic stereotypes as well as to address issues impacting the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered campus community” (Kirkley & Getz, 2007, p. 114). The program offered training for educators specifically designed to teach them how to deal with religious issues related to LGBT concerns (Kirkley & Getz, 2007). This education program, titled the Rainbow Educator Program, has been extremely successful in improving the climate for LGBT students at the University of San Diego (Kirkley & Getz, 2007).

Kirkley and Getz (2007) “offer three suggestions for those who want to start a Rainbow Educator Program at their religiously affiliated campus: balance critique of with respect for the institution, work closely with university administration, and start where the institution is” (p. 116). To incorporate these religious tenets into diversity programming, Madeleine must look closely at the mission of Anywhere State and try to find wording or a principle within that mission that would support LGBT programming initiatives. Administrators at the University of San Diego pulled out the phrase “recognition of the dignity of each individual” (p. 116) to support the Rainbow Educator Program (Kirkley & Getz, 2007). DePaul University, another private Catholic institution, connects its Catholic identity and its implementation of LGBT support programs with the teachings of its namesake St. Vincent de Paul who encouraged “a sensitivity to and care for the needs of each other and those served, with a special concern for the deprived members of society” (DePaul’s Mission, 1991, p 12).

Next, Madeleine needs to gain the support of higher level administrators such as President Chittenden and trustees Reverend Milton Adams and Lillian Held. Held will be the easiest administrator to convince due to her identity as an LGBT individual as well as her past support for LGBT support initiatives. However, her status as a closeted professional could prove challenging. President Chittenden and Reverend Milton Adams will be harder to convince due to their previously espoused anti-LGBT views. Madeleine will need to be very diplomatic in her bid to persuade these administrators that this change needs to be made. By stressing the religious elements that will be incorporated into LGBT programming, Madeleine may be able to be heard.

Lastly, Madeleine needs to consider the current negative status of the campus climate at Anywhere College before making any changes to LGBT programming. By assessing the needs of the campus, Madeleine will ensure that she does not set the expectations for change beyond the ability of the campus constituency. In the University of San Diego's case, "the REP explicitly accepted USD where it was regarding LGBT issues and didn't push it beyond where it could comfortably go" (Kirkley & Getz, 2007, p. 117). Instead of pushing students to develop beyond their ability, educators at the University of San Diego have used programming to create a dialogue about LGBT issues as well as some cognitive dissonance to push students more in their thinking (Kirkley & Getz, 2007).

Disadvantages: According to Kirkley and Getz (2007), it is vital to gain the support of administrators when establishing LGBT initiatives in a faith based institution due to the administration's ability to end funding for programs that it does not deem appropriate for the institution. It may be very difficult to get support from administrators such as President Chittenden and Reverend Adams, who do not see the value in LGBT programming and believe that such efforts promote homosexuality among students. These administrators are going to be

incredibly reluctant to support LGBT programming at all, let alone changes to the focus of the programming. Reverend Adams, in particular, will not be amenable to using religious arguments to support LGBT initiatives as he used quotes from the Bible in an attempt to convince Madeleine to eliminate LGBT programming altogether.

Decisions Issue #2

Responding to Violence against Students

How do we prevent further attacks on gay and lesbian students?

Despite the supposedly religious objection to LGBT programming and gay rights on campus, some members of the Anywhere community have thrown their religious morals to the wind, choosing instead to harass, threaten, and attack their LGBT peers. This case reports that five gay men were attacked within the residence halls between the initial threats against Gary Welsh and the candlelight vigil. Additionally, the candlelight vigil resulted in a near-riot, and one lesbian student was seriously injured by a rock thrown by an anti-gay demonstrator. In light of all this violence, it appears that there may be a critical lack of security, incident prevention, or policy enforcement on campus at Anywhere College.

While there are limits on a college or university's liability from unforeseeable crime or injury (Kaplin & Lee, 2009), a college nevertheless has a special duty to protect students who live on campus (Kaplin & Lee, 2009). Institutions must also ensure that they follow their own policies, including judicial or student conduct policies. Since she has a copy of the vigil incident, which did not occur in a hall, it can be assumed that Conley is an officer within the campus judicial system.

Until the campus becomes safer and better able to prevent or respond to attacks on gay students, gay students' learning, development, and esteem could be threatened. As explained by Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs, students who do not have the comfort of safety will be less able to continue with higher-level needs. At an institution of higher education, especially at a liberal arts college with numerous different learning and development objectives for its students, basic needs such as safety must be ensured before students can continue to grow.

Alternative #1: Safety Concerns

If the college does not have them installed already, install locks, deadbolts, and peepholes on the doors of all residence hall rooms.

Advantages: If the violence continues, the university will be more liable for future incidents than they have been for past incidents (Kaplin & Lee, 2009). Increasing security for each room will likely encourage students to be more intentional as to whom they allow into their rooms.

Disadvantages: Between the cost of the locks, deadbolts, and peepholes and the hours required from maintenance staff to install all of them, this will be an expensive undertaking. Focusing on security tools may unintentionally make the students feel less safe, especially in light of the recent attacks on a small campus in a small town.

Alternative #2: Seek information about unidentified assailants.

Advantages: If residence life or student affairs staff can identify the small portion of the student body who are making threats and attacking gay students, an aspect of the chaos and fear LGBT students on campus feel will be lessened. LGBT students will be better able to push for maintaining the policies and programming in the residence hall if they are not at the same time frightened by potential violence (Maslow, 1954).

Disadvantages: If the assailants are yet unidentified, the attempts by staff to find them may be perceived by students of Lutheran Light as a kind of witch hunt or as avoiding what they believe to be the main issue – abolishing programming and protection for LGBT students on campus.

This option also assumes and requires that the violence is perpetrated by a small minority of the anti-gay students on campus.

It may also be difficult to find individuals that are comfortable sharing the information they may have.

Alternative #3: Increase patrolling by residence life staff and security in the residence halls and at events.

Advantages: Increased vigilance will possibly prevent future attacks within the residence halls, where all the attacks on gay male students occurred and the initial graffiti was noticed. If there are Residence Life or Security staff members present in the hall, the assailants will be less likely to attack gay students, as there will be fewer opportunities to attack without staff or security noticing.

Disadvantage: Increasing residence life or security staffing or hours will increase expenses. If the money is not available to hire additional personnel, the staff that does exist could be worn thin by splitting up existing shifts to cover more ground and increasing frequency of rounds. Students may also learn to skirt the system by becoming hyperaware of the times that these staff members are patrolling the halls.

Alternative #4: Expedite student conduct processes for any assailants who have been identified.

Advantages: This will reassure the LGBT community on campus that the college does take their injuries seriously. Regardless of the administration's stance on whether or not there should be

programming on LGBT identity in the halls, it would be impossible for anyone to fail to see the merits in disciplining students who attack other students.

Disadvantages: If a student has been identified as an assailant, due process on this campus probably requires at least a preponderance of evidence that a student is responsible for violating the student code of conduct (Kaplin & Lee, 2009). If the assaulted students were surprised by their assailants, they may not have been able to identify their assailants, rendering this option invalid. If the threshold of evidence is met, there are still standards or precedents for sanctions against students found responsible for conduct violations, which may be insufficient to provide a strong disincentive for the assailants to continue.

Decision Issue #3: GALA Alumni Protest the Homecoming Gala

How should Anywhere respond to disruptive protests?

Paula Amblin and other alumni of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance have planned two dramatic actions around the upcoming homecoming celebration. First, they plan to disrupt the festivities with their protest, and they also plan to disclose that Lillian Hall, a member of the Board of Trustees, is a closeted lesbian. Given the context of Amblin's threat in the conversation with Conley, it appears the GALA alumni group has two goals: first, protecting the LGBT friendly policies that were implemented in the residence halls, and second, reducing support for and actively disrupting events at the institution until it retains the policies.

Higher education institutions are often the sites of protests. While the First Amendment generally does not apply to private institutions such as Anywhere, states may have laws or institutions may have policies protecting the right to free speech at universities, which can be

limited in time, manner, or place, but not prohibited completely. In *State v. Schmid*, the defendant successfully argued that he, although not invited to the campus, was protected by New Jersey speech law to speak his opinion and distribute materials on campus, and that Princeton's regulations against trespass were overly broad and lacked standards (Kaplin & Lee, 2009).

Violations of similar laws affecting private institutions have been litigated in Pennsylvania and California, and similar laws exist elsewhere (Kaplin & Lee, 2009). In this case, LGBT alumni of Anywhere College, who were invited to participate in homecoming, plan to protest Anywhere's planned policy changes. If there is a state law protecting speech, it would be even more difficult for Anywhere to justify restricting free speech to invitees.

Even where the First Amendment must be honored, courts have held that institutions are able to regulate or restrict protest, even student protest, on campus if the protests disrupt the educational environment, cause substantial disorder, or invade the rights of others (Kaplin & Lee, 2009). Due to legal precedent, these same standards would likely apply if there is a local law that requires private institutions to honor free speech (Kaplin & Lee, 2009). Therefore, if the GALA alumni group or a potential group of anti-LGBT policy protestors interfere with the successful completion of university-sponsored homecoming activities, the institution can take steps to end the protest and remove the disruptive individuals from campus.

The talk of ending LGBT programming and violence against gay students must be causing LGBT students and alumni to feel like they no longer matter to campus leadership. For members of minority groups who are marginalized already in society, such as LGBT students and alumni, being silenced, restricted, and even attacked by one's institution and one's peers must be a harrowing experience (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). In order to ensure that

LGBT students and alumni feel that they matter, they must be provided the opportunity to express themselves, as long as it is in an orderly fashion.

Alternative #1: Ban protesting at Homecoming and arrest alumni who protest anyway.

Advantages: The controversy regarding the LGBT programming and gay rights in general at Anywhere College have been a serious source of turbulence for the campus and its students (Schapiro & Gross, 2008). Stopping protests immediately will prevent the protests from cascading into further violent outbursts, as there have already been several men attacked on campus, and one woman has been injured with a rock. Protests at celebrations like homecoming are unseemly, and if they escalate into violence, the controversy could become a crisis threatening the school's identity (Schapiro & Gross, 2008).

Disadvantages: Groups on both sides are bent on getting their point across. Prohibiting the exercise of speech on campus, whether legal or not, will alienate the group or groups that are prohibited from spreading their message. If an organized demonstration is prohibited, individual or disorganized group protests or fighting could erupt organically from the tension. Prohibiting free speech could violate institutional mission and principles or state law.

Alternative #2: With the help of the Dean of Students and the Department of Public Safety, assign a place on campus for demonstrations for and against the LGBT policies on campus. Inform GALA and Lutheran Light students and alumni, in advance and in writing, of the restrictions. Increase security on campus that day.

Advantages: Although the First Amendment should not be an issue, this course of action may be required if a state law about free expression exists and applies to private higher education institutions (Kaplin & Lee, 2009). Having defined protest areas for the groups will allow them to demonstrate without disrupting the event, which will make the protest groups feel that they

matter to the institution, which is particularly important to the marginalized LGBT group (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998).

Disadvantages: Putting restrictions on the time, place, or manner of protests on campus could result in the violation of those restrictions by protestors. If protest groups violate the restrictions, the college and the police may be forced to remove students or alumni from campus forcefully. Notifying these groups in writing in such an emotionally-charged situation could lead to groups feeling treated impersonally. The media could also catch wind of the restrictions. Since most media outlets have been supportive of the LGBT groups, media figures may publicize the time and place of the homecoming protests, leading to a crowd of uninvited, outside activists on campus.

Decision Issue #4: Maintaining Your Trustees' Trust

What to do about outing Held?

Disclosing Lillian Held's sexual orientation would likely have serious repercussions in light of the controversy on campus. The motivation of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance alumni is unclear, but being outed could possibly injure Held's position, reputation, or perceived credibility. Held has likely completed her development into a positive, lesbian identity by this time, as research has shown that lesbians often become aware of their identities later than men and have an easier time coming out (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). As a public person, however, Held may not have come out to this point due to her profile within the religious campus community.

While the alumni might intend to bring injury upon Held for failing to act, disclosing her sexuality would not legally be libelous defamation of character, as the information given in the case verifies that Held is a closeted lesbian, and only false information can be prosecuted as libel (Kaplin & Lee, 2009). It is possible that the alumni members of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance believe that outing Held will improve the situation. Perhaps they believe that revealing that a valued member of campus leadership is a lesbian will help move the campus community towards a democratic, politicized, or integrative heterosexual identity and thereby commit to a non-heterosexist or non-homophobic worldview (Mohr, 2002). On the other hand, outing Held could be retribution from GALA for Held's failure to act to this point.

Alternative #1: Inform Lillian Held that the Gay and Lesbian Alliance alumni have plans to out her.

Advantages: If Held is alerted to GALA's plans, she may preempt their plans by taking action of her own. Held could also reach out to GALA in an attempt to coordinate efforts.

Disadvantages: It is unclear whether Held and Conley know each other or have a close personal connection. Held may be unaware that Conley and others know of her sexual orientation. If Held has yet to act or disclose her orientation in the light of this crisis, she may have a reason for not doing so. Warning Held will not necessarily prevent GALA from outing her against her will. Held may work against GALA, not for it, in order to prevent her lifelong secret from exposure. Finally, Held could misinterpret Conley's warning – she could assume Conley is the one threatening to out her.

Alternative #2: Recommend that Paula informs Lillian Held of GALA's plans.

Advantages: If Paula contacts Held to warn her, it should have the same advantages as Option 1, except Held and GALA would already be in touch. If Held takes this warning as a call to action

with the GALA alumni, Amblin and Held can begin planning their response immediately. This removes Conley from the awkward position of the intermediary and allows her to attend to other matters.

Disadvantages: Again, Held may have a significant interest in preventing her sexual orientation from becoming public knowledge. Held could actively work to discredit or sabotage the GALA group to prevent them from disclosing her identity as a lesbian. Or, the campus could lose a valued member of the community that had been working to increase awareness and acceptance on campus, just behind the scenes.

Alternative #3: Encourage Paula to solicit Lillian Held's assistance before threatening to out her.

Advantages: Prevents ill-will from forming between Held and GALA while potentially yielding a more favorable result for all involved. Since Held has been an ally of LGBT initiatives on campus, she may react more favorably to a call for assistance than a shot across the bow.

Disadvantages: Planning a collaborative action in response to the violence and controversy on campus will likely take time, and it is unclear in the case how much time remains until homecoming. If Held cannot assist in this case for her own reasons, GALA then outing her anyway will likely damage or destroy their relationship.

Alternative #4: Ignore this tertiary issue. Focus on the core of the conflict.

Advantages: If Conley can defuse the growing conflict in a manner that preserves policies protecting the rights of gay and lesbian students and the programming in the residence halls, GALA will probably not out Held, and Held will never know she was targeted in that manner. One woman's outing during a campus crisis is not the most critical issue facing Conley.

Disadvantages: If GALA does attempt to out Held against her will, Held could make a bad situation worse by denying the allegations. If Held does not deny the allegations, the revelation

of her orientation will undoubtedly lead to conflict within the Board of Trustees, especially between Held and Reverend Adams, who appears to believe in compulsory heterosexuality for religious reasons (Mohr, 2002).

Decision Issue #5: How to portray the reality of living on campus to the media

The media plays a big role on the views of a university or college. At times the media can be an ally and help highlight the good, while other times it can be an enemy and highlight the negative. In the case of a campus crisis, Watson, Poda, Miller, Rice, & West (1990) state that “no school emergency can be managed properly without the help of media, and the media cannot provide that help without the assistance of school... personnel” (p.32). Anywhere College’s campus has been portrayed as a one that is gay friendly, but recently campus riots and intentional LGBT student injuries have allow the media to shed a negative light on the institution, its campus safety, and support of the LGBT community.

In managing a crisis, it is important for administrators “to ensure that the media become a proactive force in the management process” (Watson et al., 1990, p. 34). Anywhere College should have a plan established for how to communicate with media crews. If there is a campus public relations office, it is imperative that there be a public relations liaison to the media and that all media requests go through this person (Hemphill & LaBanc, 2010, p. 74-75). Watson et al. suggests that,

The contact person should be familiar with media procedures, should have access to all ...personnel, and must have the ability to organize timely communication activities. He or she is the link by which the media can obtain timely and accurate information. Without such a contact, the media are forced to obtain that information by any means and from

any[one]... who make themselves available. That increases the chances that persons other than school... representatives will be speculating about the events leading to and emanating from the emergency. (p. 34)

There are two key functions that the media liaison is responsible for; collecting as much uncorrupted and factual information as possible, in a timely manner, without interrupting crisis management and establishing a positive identity of the institution (Watson et al., 1990, p. 34-35).

While most of these actions should be taken during the crisis, it is important to continue working with the media following the crisis to assist them in following up on their story by providing accurate and factual information. Hemphill and LaBanc (2010) state “managing the ‘media tsunami’ is a short- and mid-term concern” (p. 145). In terms of keeping the media informed of the campus climate and progress that has been made on campus, it is sometimes wise to have the media liaison, who should be familiar with the local media reporter, to call the local media and share with them what has been done on campus to overcome the campus crisis (Kulics, personal communication, March 9, 2011).

It is assumed that Anywhere College did not have a liaison to help manage the media because after the near-riot occurred, “the press and national media plaster[ed] the story all over the front pages” (Nelson & Harick, 2000, p.135). Not having a media liaison most likely led reporters to find any person who was willing to talk or wanted their “fifteen minutes of fame,” which usually leads to rumors and exaggeration of the truth. Watson et al. (1990) says “the best way to combat rumors is to provide [the] ... public with facts as soon as possible” (p. 41). Holding a meeting to inform all individuals who speak with the public about what to say and what not to say is a strong tactic. Additionally, the media can help with controlling rumors by updating the public as accurate information is provided (Watson et al., 1990, p. 41-42).

Alternative # 1: Identify Madeleine Conley as the media liaison so she can give a first-hand point-of-view on what the climate is like in the residence halls and on campus.

Advantages: It is my assumption due to the small size of the school, that Madeleine knows the students who were affected by the vandals and who vandalized Gary's room. Her involvement in establishing the LGBT educational programming in the residence halls along with being at the College for 20 years makes her a top individual for speaking with the media. Montgomery & Snyder (2002) share that "media regard student affairs officers as their best conduit to the "student voice," they frequently will bypass the designated university official and go directly to the chief student-life administrator for comment" (p.31). Because all reports of residence life activity get reported to Madeleine, and she is in direct contact with RA's, and A/RHD's, along with the Vice President of Student Affairs and/or higher she can provide the most accurate and timely information to the media. Her closeness to the students allows her to also reach out to those who might be able to represent the College and speak to the media.

Disadvantages: With all the hate crimes happening to gay and lesbian students living on campus, Madeleine has a lot of issues to deal with. Her contact with the media might not be as important as ensuring that the students who were attacked are physically and emotionally all right. When managing the media, your message needs to be concise and compelling, meaning you believe in your message, you are positive, and respectful. Body language, tone, and presentation are also very important when sharing information (Kulics, personal communication, March 9, 2011). Due to Madeleine's personal investment in providing opportunities for LGBT students, her ability to present the facts in a calm, concise, and respectful manner to the media might be unconvincing. Another representative may be the best choice.

Alternative #2: Promote students from Anywhere College, both those that were directly affected by the campus incident and those that were not. Encourage students to send a “letter to the editor” in response to the article put out regarding what was written about campus.

Advantage: This alternative would allow the student voice to truly be heard. Students can share how they feel about what happened on campus or to them as well as what efforts the College has made to create a LGBT open and caring community. By having students talk, it shows that the College administration is not just saying what they want people to think, but rather what is actually happening. This is also a good way for students to express their feelings without doing in a violent way.

Disadvantages: This method of media relation will allow students to utilize their First Amendment right to Freedom of Speech. Students tend to be very opinionated and what is said in the papers might be more hateful and “cascade” (Shapiro & Gross, 2008, p. 46) into worse problems for the institution. Additionally, student opinions are not always the facts, so Anywhere College might be working against itself by allowing the students to share their thoughts and experiences.

Decision Issue # 6:

Making Long Term Career Decisions

Madeleine has run into a situation where her personal values do not fit with the values of the institution for which she works. Kretovics (2011) writes that employment decisions are now based on the best fit and this is especially true in regards to the decision over whether or not to remain at a specific institution. Higher education institutions can change dramatically over time and in Madeleine’s case, Anywhere College has evolved from a tolerant, gay friendly institution to one where the safety of LGBT students is not guaranteed. This evolution must cause Madeline

to evaluate her position at Anywhere College and decide whether this institution is the best possible fit for her at this time.

Alternative #1: Madeleine decides to stay in her current position despite the drastic changes to Anywhere College's environment.

Advantages: If Madeleine stays, she can work hard to be a force for change at Anywhere College and become a transformative leader. According to Bensimon, Neumann, and Birnbaum (1989/2000), transformative leaders "create and promote desirable "visions" or images of the institution" (p. 217) through their actions. In this case, Madeleine would create and promote the vision of Anywhere College as a gay friendly higher education institution through her efforts in fighting to retain LGBT programming in the residence halls.

Two specific conditions of Anywhere College make it very likely that Madeleine's efforts to become a transformational leader will succeed. The first condition is the fact that Anywhere College is currently dealing with a crisis of a negative campus climate. This condition increases Madeleine's chance of success "because campus members and external community expect leaders to take strong action" (p. 218). The other condition is the fact that Anywhere College is a relatively small institution with only 5,000 undergraduates. According to Bensimon et al. (1989/2000), "transformational leadership is also more likely to emerge in small institutions where leaders can exert a great deal of personal influence through their daily interactions with the campus" (p. 218). By staying, Madeleine has a greater likelihood of success as a transformational leader and can make real and lasting changes to the negative campus climate towards LGBT students at Anywhere College.

Disadvantages: One major disadvantage to staying at Anywhere College is Madeleine's possible failure to effect change in LGBT policies and programming at the institution. If she is

not successful in retaining LGBT programming, Madeleine may become unhappy and unwilling to contribute to the creation of a more positive climate at Anywhere. She may experience a type of foreclosure in her professional career in that she does not believe that she has the ability to make a difference any longer and she might question why she should bother to produce quality work.

Alternative #2: Madeleine decides to seek another position elsewhere.

Advantages: Leaving Anywhere College may be just what she needs in order to grow as a professional. Madeleine has been the Director of Residence Life for twenty years and may need some new challenges and responsibilities in order to develop professionally. She may want to look for advanced roles such as positions as the Dean of Students.

Another advantage to making an institution/positional change is the increased ability for Madeline to find a position at an institution that is a better fit. Madeleine is obviously passionate about diversity issues such as LGBT initiatives so she should search for an institution that may better serve these communities. She may want to look at institutions that are not faith based as these types of institutions are often the least diverse due to the inherent assumption of homogeneity in the makeup of students, staff, and faculty.

Disadvantages: If Madeleine leaves Anywhere College, LGBT/ally students might feel as if she abandoned them when they needed her the most. According to the ethic of care, it is Madeleine's responsibility to ensure that the students feel cared for and valued (Shapiro & Gross, 2008). The residents at Anywhere College will not feel valued if Madeleine does not stay and ensure that the negative climate crisis is resolved.

Decision Issue #7: To Seek Outside Financial Resources or Not To Seek Financial Resources, that is the question...

As our institution does not rely directly on tuition to keep it afloat, one can reason that its endowment and regular donations account for its operating costs. As Kretovics (2011) notes, “planned gifts” can be both risky for an institution and incredibly useful if everything plans out correctly. These are what can help keep an institution going in times of need. Many institutions are currently courting the baby-boomer generation and recent graduates in the hopes of gaining money and support from this arge population. Endowments can also be done with a specific aim and purpose in mind (Kretovics, 2011). As with our institution, the question of whether money is being spent to forward the benefactor’s original goals is important to consider throughout. If a benefactor is not happy, future donations can be stopped.

If institutions choose to take on money from any source, private or corporate, they risk further entanglement down the road in that this person (or company/entity) may require usage of certain products, or limit institutional space for specific purposes. This can directly be seen in college campuses that sell off naming rights to their sports arenas. These institutions quickly find themselves limited with what vendors can be in that immediate area, the types of products sold, the splitting of profits, and general marketing issues. (Carey & Gardiner, 2009) (Wolf, 2007).

Alternative #1: Seek sponsorship from gay-friendly organizations.

Advantages: Because this case easily has the potential to gain national attention and recognition, one could argue that many LGBT-friendly organizations would be more than willing to help sponsor our programs for a bit of name recognition. HRC, ILGA, GSANI, and ACUHO-I are all organizations that we feel we can tap into and find support. While those individual organizations may not be able to support us (conflicting interests, lack of money, etc), we feel that there is a

high possibility that there are members who would be able to help support our programming efforts in the halls.

Disadvantages: We must ask ourselves what sort of precedent we are setting. If it comes to unpopular decisions on campus, and everyone can just seek sponsorship, then the campus community could be very much at risk for fragmentation. We must also recognize that these donations can easily dry up, leaving our students hanging, and necessitating a last minute change in programming in the academic year in question. The campus community may also feel uncomfortable with so many outside groups with little connection to the University being so heavily involved.

Alternative #2 Continue doing what we are doing using student room fees as our financial backing

Advantages: We will not risk pulling in outside sponsors that may clash with our campus community. We will continue doing what we have always done, and plan to see the same positive outcomes and results as we have previously seen. By focusing on LGBT development and considering a theory-driven approach (Evans et al, 1998), we know that we are continuing a program that is based on previous and proven research. We can easily defend that what we are doing is a proper use of student's money.

Disadvantages: This might serve to push students out of the residence halls, thereby diminishing our intended goals of helping and educating the masses (as well as keeping our halls inclusive and accepting), and lowering the amount of money that Residence Life receives and needs in order to function.

Decision Issue # 8: LGBT Rights & the Lutheran Community

The majority of the research and data out there that our group has seen has led us to believe that the Lutheran belief system is not as strict regarding the LGBT community as this case would have us believe (Mahoney). Many mainstream and liberal branches of the Lutheran Church encourage active LGBT membership, while more traditional groups within the Lutheran Church do allow homosexuals to be ordained as priests so long as they abstain from sexual encounters. (Mahoney) It is seemingly only the extremely conservative far-right branches that believe what Reverend Adams preaches. That said, when thinking about how to integrate the LGBT community with the religious Lutheran community on campus, it is important to consider scholarship and applicable theories that may be relevant.

While each institution will be different, we can still note that the paths that many LGBT youth take may look somewhat similar. In working with these groups, it is important to consider what stage in Identity Development they might find themselves in. Using D'Augelli's model (Evans et al, 1998), we can take away the fact that some students may not have the support they desire as recently out LGBT individuals, nor do they necessarily feel comfortable sharing this aspect of themselves. Some members of the LGBT community even report experiencing a spiritual loss while developing their identities (Love, Bock, Jannarone, & Richardson, 2005). These individuals are still looking for connections, however. We can relate this to the population found within the Lutheran Church in their desire to have a nurturing community (Mahoney). We must understand levels of faith development so that all involved (especially administrators) have a better handle on how each person is developing. Using Fowler's model (Evans et al, 1998), we gain better perspective on how these individuals are developing. We must also understand that we could be working with some individuals whose sense of spirituality is so off the charts that it is not even addressed in typical spirituality development. A commonality between both sides

could be an overlap in a constant thinking and wondering about what is “ultimately true,” as noted by Parks and other spirituality theorists (Evans et al, 1998).

Alternative #1 : Help Organize a Campus-wide discussion and forum to learn more about the overlap between the LGBT and Lutheran communities

Advantages: This could definitely serve to open up dialogue between the groups, and allow both sides to gain perspective on where the other is coming from. Those that are in the middle may feel more comfortable in being able to hear both sides and making educated decisions and coming up with their own viewpoints. However, as Love et al (2005), notes, those LGBT individuals that have not reconciled the two halves of their sexuality and spirituality will find it very difficult to remain open and accepting to those that they cannot feel comfortable around.

Disadvantages: This event is not entirely practical. It is a huge financial drain, incredibly difficult to plan, and could stir up more controversy. Representatives from both factions may not be comfortable with the representatives selected to voice opinions from their sides, further riots could ensue, and all-around anger could increase.

Alternative #2: Work towards adopting a departmental policy on inclusion and acceptance within the halls and increasing communication between different groups.

Advantages: LGBT students and their allies will know without a doubt that our department is supportive and inclusive. Having a supportive community will allow students to further develop their identities and become members of an LGBT community (Evans et al, 1998).

Disadvantages: Much like the other options presented, writing these things down could serve to further alienate other populations from our intended inclusive environment. We also will put ourselves out there for taking these standpoints officially on paper. If we are upset and dealing with backlash now, it will be very little compared to what could come.

Alternative #3 Do nothing and let the two groups work things out for themselves

Advantages: The main advantage here is that our Department does not have to further get stuck in the middle of controversy, nor potentially alienate others.

Disadvantages: We seriously risk mental and/or physical harm to our students from both parties. We are not doing our job as caring, purposeful educators, nor are we looking out for the development of our student populations.

Conclusion

After reviewing the case, it is clear that Conley, her students, and colleagues were involved in a very difficult situation with possible solutions that are guided by one's own background and beliefs. We do feel, however, that there are "better" ways to navigate this difficult situation.

Immediate: As Homecoming (Decision Issue #3) is seemingly right around the corner, we feel that it becomes an immediate issue and is addressed as soon as possible. Alternative #2, our selection for the best choice option, calls for us to set up designated space for those, whatever their viewpoints that would like to protest during Homecoming. We feel that this strikes a proper balance in allowing self-expression but also preserving Homecoming's fun and whimsical nature.

With Decision Issue #4, we note that there are many things that we could do, instead of just picking one. In going with our first alternative, we recognize the importance of informing Lillian Held that she will soon be outed. We also encourage the use of Alternative #2, by advising these Paula Amblin and others to approach Held and work things out on a more personal level. This also ties into Alternative #3, in that we are encouraging cooperation and assistance between both parties. Finally, Alternative #4, our option to remove ourselves from the

situation and focus on more pressing matters, also is relevant. By encouraging this communication between all involved, we can move on to other topics. Thus, this also becomes part of our short term plan as well.

Regarding Decision Issue #2, student safety, we advocate using alternative #2, amongst others, to begin immediate identification and follow-up for those suspected of being involved in the attacks. A lag time in this area could stall the case.

Short Term: In a more immediate line of thinking, we advocate that Madeleine Conley (Decision Issue #1) advocate for Alternative #2, creating inclusive programming for all populations within the halls. We realize that there will be intense backlash over this subject, but feel that we are being true to our mission of the last decade and are doing what we can to help *all* residents feel safe and at home. As it has been successful elsewhere, we feel that an incorporation of religious themes can be successful at Anywhere College.

With our second Decision Issue (student safety), we also note the importance of utilizing multiple plans of action. A short term project that will probably turn into a more long term issue is to make sure that all doors in the Residence Halls have available locks (deadbolts, chains, etc) so that students can be physically safe and sleep soundly. We also advocate using Alternatives #3 and #4 (all four options, essentially), in that we plan to have a better security and staff presence on the floors and available at student events. Furthermore, we will also put pressure on the Student Conduct office to expedite the case once the assailants are found.

Long Term: In Decision Issue #5, we advocate a long term approach (Alternative #1) that calls for Conley to be named representative and liaison to the media for all issues related to residence halls and students living on campus. We feel that, with her experience, she could do the best job

in this position. The Director role is probably the best fit, though we will caution new hires from automatically taking this position upon hire if a degree of comfort has not yet been established.

As noted earlier, Decision Issue #1 is both a short term *and* long term issue.

With Decision Issue #7, that of where and how we receive money, we are inclined to keep things in the status quo. Accepting money from outside organizations, while immediately a financially advantageous idea can create many issues down the road concerning where our loyalties lay and what we might inadvertently owe sponsors. This can also serve to further push away our students that are not yet entirely comfortable with the LGBT population. Therefore, programming money will continue to come out of student fees and be used for a variety of purposes, not just for the LGBT community.

Regarding Decision Issue #8, we feel it important for Residence Life to put their thoughts and opinions on support into words. We therefore ask this department to go with what we recommended in Alternative #2, and set about creating a statement (connected to policy) that affirms the department's commitment to diversity and inclusion.

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