LGBTQIA+ STUDENT SURVEY

April 2023

OVERVIEW

In collaboration with the LGBTQIA+ Committee, IERP conducted the LGBTQIA+ Student Survey during the Spring 2023 term. LGBTQIA+ students were asked a series of open and closed-ended questions to gain an understanding of their experiences at AVC.

The closed-ended questions included questions related to their experiences on and off-campus, their mental health, access to resources, their preferences on types of student spaces, and their interest in a Lavender graduation. Additionally, students were asked a few open-ended questions, which prompted them to discuss which pronouns they use, the barriers/challenges they face at AVC, and name ways the college can improve to best serve LGBTQIA+ students.

GENDER IDENTITY AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

We used skip-logic to capture the voices of LGBTQIA+ students. Students were prompted to respond to the question, **"Do you identify as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community?"** If students selected 'Yes' or 'Unsure,' they continued onto the following questions. If students selected 'No,' the survey ended.
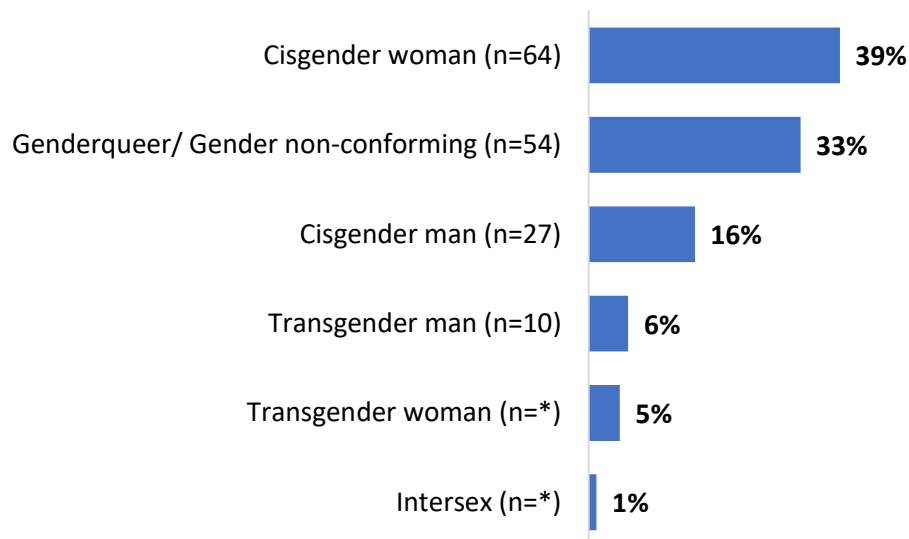
Figure 1. Member of LGBTQIA+ Community

- Yes (n=248)   No (n=96)   Unsure (n=13)

4%
27%
70%
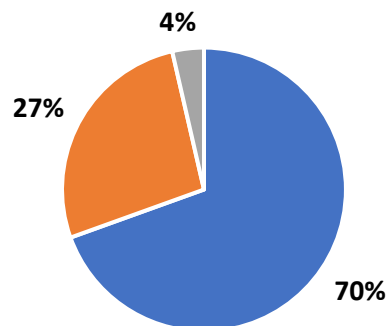
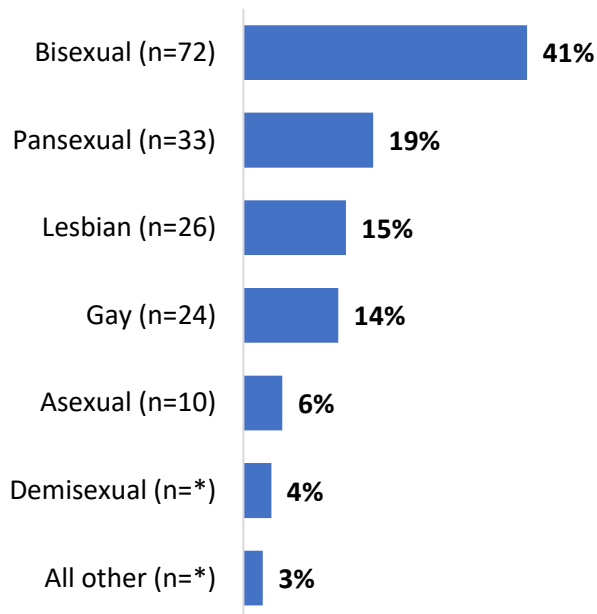Students were asked, **"Do you identify as any of the following categories?"** They responded with the following:

Figure 2. Gender Identity

Cisgender woman (n=64)	39%
Genderqueer/ Gender non-conforming (n=54)	33%
Cisgender man (n=27)	16%
Transgender man (n=10)	6%
Transgender woman (n=*)	5%
Intersex (n=*)	1%

Most students who responded to the survey were either cisgender women or genderqueer/gender non-conforming. Students were also provided with the option to write in another gender identity if the above categories did not fit. Other gender identities included a combination of cis and genderqueer, non-binary, gender fluid, and demi boy.

When asked, "**which of the following best describes your sexual orientation**?" students responded:

Figure 3. Which of the following best describes your sexual
orientation?

Category	Percentage
Bisexual (n=72)	41%
Pansexual (n=33)	19%
Lesbian (n=26)	15%
Gay (n=24)	14%
Asexual (n=10)	6%
Demisexual (n=*)	4%
All other (n=*)	3%

The majority of respondents identified they were bisexual, followed by pansexual and lesbian. Other categories identified are biromantic, demisexual + bisexual, queer, panromantic, aromantic, poly, unlabeled, Grey Ace, and Pansexual+ Ace.

For more information on gender identity and sexual orientation, see the USC Rossier's Gender Identity Glossary and HRC's Glossary of Terms.

(Image Source: StorySet)

USING PRONOUNS

Additionally, students were asked which pronouns they use.

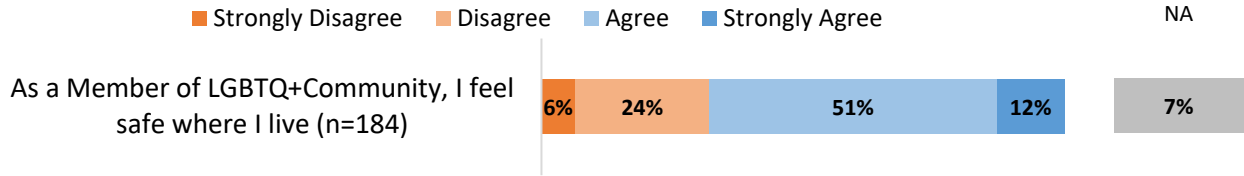| Pronouns	Frequency
She/Her/Hers	59
He/Him/His	27
She/They	17
They/Them	13
He/They	8
She/Her/They/Them	6
Any	5
She/Her They/Them He/Him	4
He/Him/She/Her/They/Them	3
He/Him/They/Them	2
He/She/They	2
She/He	2
They/Them He/Him	2
All But Generally Prefer He/Him	1
Any She They Him	1
Depends On The Day/Time	1
He/Him/It/Its	1
He/Him/They/Whatever	1
He/She	1
He/They/It	1
She/Her (Closeted)	1
She/Her In Person, They/Them During Online Activity/Would Prefer To Use Them In Person	1
She/Her/He/Him/They/Them/Ze/Zem/It/It's.. Honestly Doesn't Matter To Me.	1
She/Her/Him His	1
She/Her/It/Its/They/Them/He/Him	1
She/Her/Maybe They/Them?	1
She/Her/She/They	1
She/Them	1
Them/Her	1
They/It/Neos	1

What is particularly notable is the use of place-specific pronouns for some students. Students who identified this in their responses selected genderqueer/gender non-conforming or transgender in the question about gender identity.

Visit the Pronouns.org resource for information on why using pronouns matters.
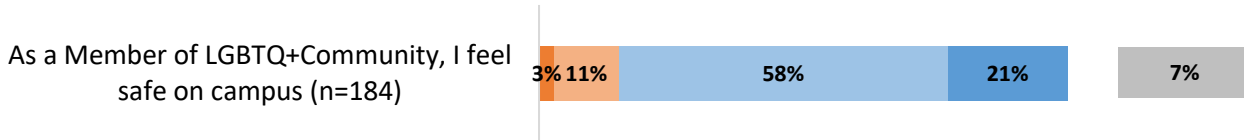
Next, students were asked to rate their level of agreement to a few statements related to safety on and off campus, perception of acceptance among faculty and staff, whether they have identified at least one faculty or staff member they feel comfortable reaching out to, and experiences in the classroom.
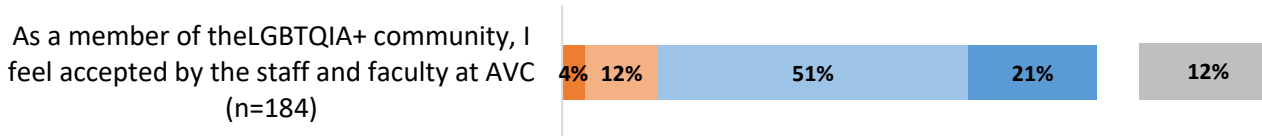
Figure 4. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:

Legend: ■ Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree   NA

As a Member of LGBTQ+Community, I feel safe where I live (n=184)
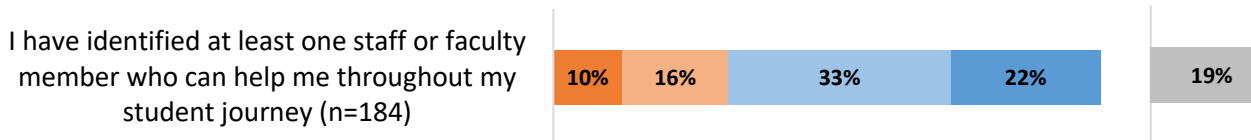6% | 24% | 51% | 12% | 7%

For the most part, students feel safe where they live. However, approximately 30 percent of respondents said they disagree/strongly disagree that they feel safe where they live.
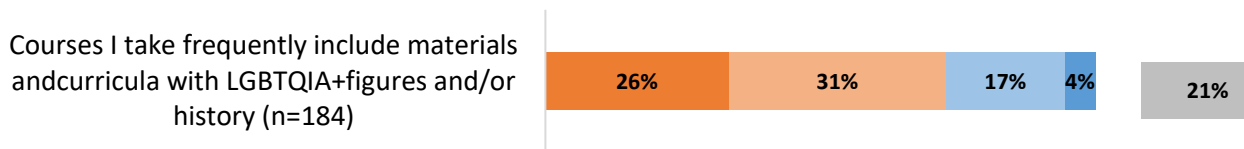
As a Member of LGBTQ+Community, I feel safe on campus (n=184)
3% | 11% | 58% | 21% | 7%

Most students agreed they feel safe on campus (79 percent vs. 14 percent).

As a member of theLGBTQIA+ community, I feel accepted by the staff and faculty at AVC (n=184)
4% | 12% | 51% | 21% | 12%

Approximately 72 percent of students feel accepted by faculty and staff at AVC.

I have identified at least one staff or faculty member who can help me throughout my student journey (n=184)
10% | 16% | 33% | 22% | 19%

Fifty five percent agree to strongly agree that they have identify at least one staff or faculty member who can help them throughout their student journey.

Courses I take frequently include materials andcurricula with LGBTQIA+figures and/or history (n=184)
26% | 31% | 17% | 4% | 21%

When asked to rate whether their courses frequently included materials or curricula with LGBT figures and/or history, more students (57 percent) said their courses did not have such curricula.

| I feel safe disclosing my sexual orientation or gender identity in the classroom (n=183) | 13% | 26% | 31% | 16% | | 14% |
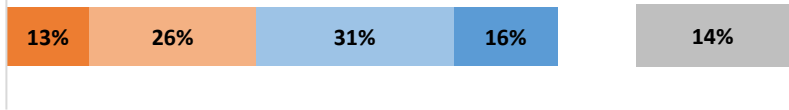
About 47 percent of students said they agree/strongly agree that they felt safe disclosing their sexual orientation or gender identity in the classroom. Yet, about 39 percent said they did not feel safe doing so.
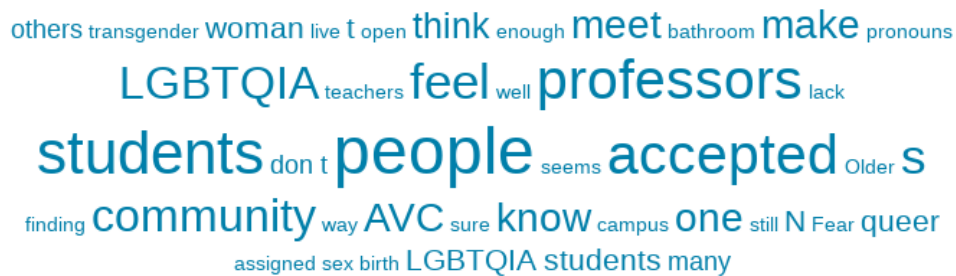
| My gender identity is respected in the classroom (n=184) | 5% | 9% | 46% | 15% | | 25% |
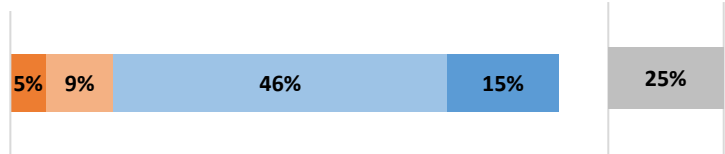
Although students were somewhat split on feeling safe about disclosing their sexual orientation/gender identity in the classroom, most (63%) agree/strongly agree that their gender identity is respected in the classroom.

BARRIERS AT AVC

Students were asked to identify barriers/challenges they face at AVC. When asked, "**What are the largest barriers or challenges LGBTQIA+ students face at AVC?**" Students largely identified people (faculty, staff, students) as their most considerable barriers. This is visualized in the word cloud below:

others transgender woman live t open think enough meet bathroom make pronouns
LGBTQIA teachers feel well professors lack
students don t people seems accepted Older s
finding community way AVC sure know campus one still N Fear queer
assigned sex birth LGBTQIA students many

Here is what students had to say about their barriers of navigating people at AVC:

Not feeling respected or affirmed by other students

- "Disclosing gender identity can be difficult in classrooms at times since some students occasionally make negative comments, which makes it discouraging."
- "Hatred from fellow students who don't seem to be educated in LGBTQIA+ contexts. Some people can just be hurtful because they don't understand their words have an impact."

Not feeling respected or affirmed by faculty/staff

- "Some students/teacher haven't adjusted to calling me by my pronouns, so it's a bit upsetting."
- "Some professors not respecting your status as a LGBTQIA+, they will make sometimes snide comments, its usually professors with tenure and are often the most difficult professors to pass classes for because of their rude attitude."
- "Some staff members refuse to use student's proper pronouns. I personally struggled with depression and anxiety to the point of Withdrawing from a class and my appeal to remove it getting denied."

Lack of understanding about the LGBTQ population

- "People not understanding what it is like to be born this way. Them not understanding that it's difficult to live this way when so many people judge you every single day."
- "Safety and lack of education on lgbtq for the straight population."

Affirmation that AVC is an LGBTQ+ Friendly Campus

- "I'd say lack of loud support from the school maybe? I feel like it'd be harder for people to be uneasy or make me feel uncomfortable if it was very loudly shown that campus is lgbtqia+ friendly because if it was like it we had posters with trans activists around and queer leaders I feel it would be less likely for heterosexuality to seem like the norm on campus you know."
- "I would like to see more active affirmation."

Fear of not being accepted by others

- "Being afraid of being accepted by faculty and peers."
- "Fear of discrimination/harassment. Fear of not being respected/and or hate crimed."

Students also identified other barriers at AVC, which are highlighted below.

Limited places for community-building or safe spaces

- "There's no real sense of community for LGBTQIA+ students."
- "There isn't very much of a community to convene with, there's no clubs to meet with. There's also no affirming LGBT-related mental health services."
- "AVC has little too no safe spaces for any Queer individuals whatsoever."
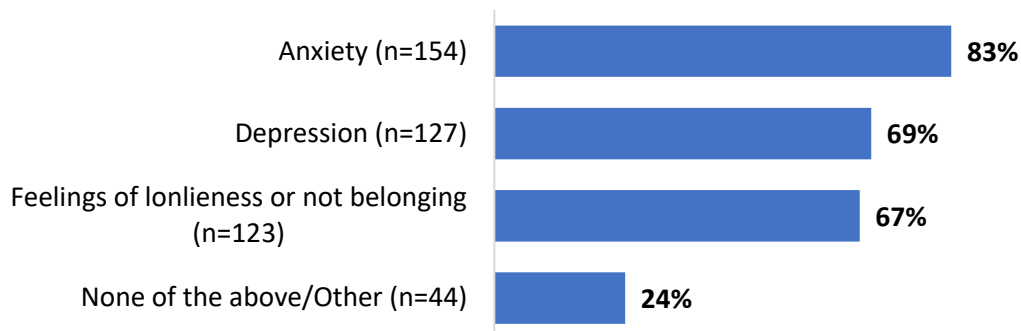
Limited LGBT-related curricula

- "I have seen no curriculum that includes influential queer people, queer history, or just queer people at all."
- "I think one of the challenges all LGBTQIA+ students in academia is a lack of incorporation into the canon. Queer history is not something separate from regular history."
- "The lack of LGBT courses and materials and the lack of LGBT knowledge."

MENTAL HEALTH

Students were asked whether they had experienced mental health issues in the last year.

Figure 5. In the past year, have you experienced any of the following (Select all that apply):

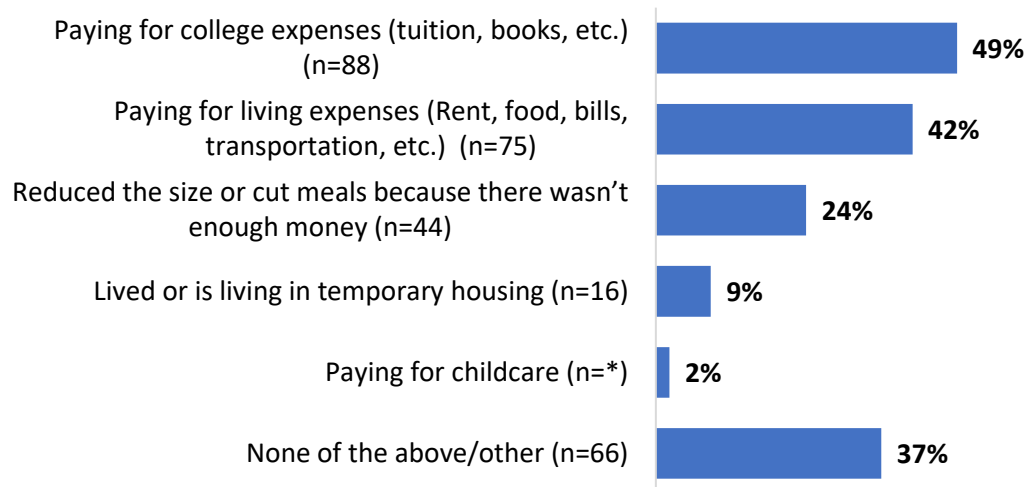| Category	Percentage
Anxiety (n=154)	83%
Depression (n=127)	69%
Feelings of lonlieness or not belonging (n=123)	67%
None of the above/Other (n=44)	24%

Most respondents said they had experienced anxiety in the past year (83.2%). Approximately 69 percent said they experienced depression in the last year, and 67 percent said they experienced feelings of loneliness and not belonging.

CHALLENGES WITH MEETING BASIC NEEDS

LGBTQIA+ students were also asked about their access to basic needs in the past year. They responded with the following:
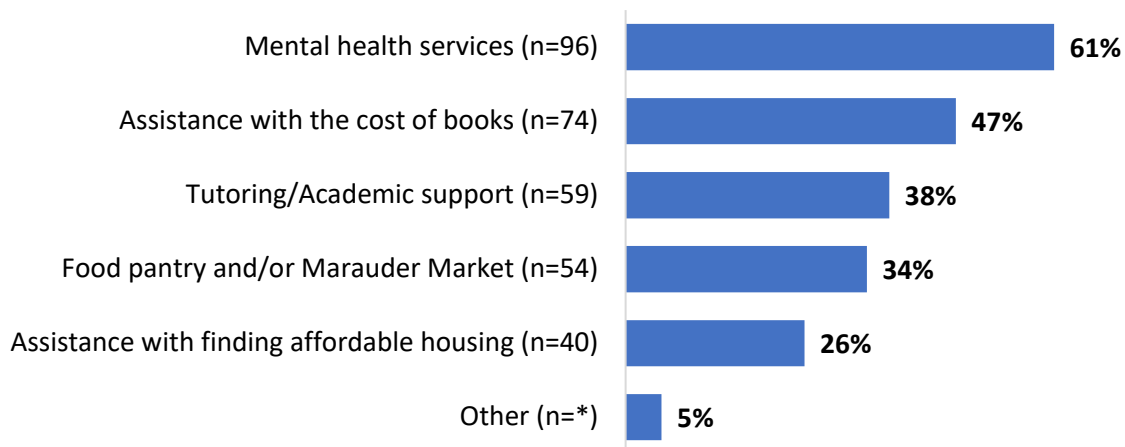
Figure 6. Which of the following challenges have you faced in the last year?

Challenge	Percentage
Paying for college expenses (tuition, books, etc.) (n=88)	49%
Paying for living expenses (Rent, food, bills, transportation, etc.) (n=75)	42%
Reduced the size or cut meals because there wasn't enough money (n=44)	24%
Lived or is living in temporary housing (n=16)	9%
Paying for childcare (n=*)	2%
None of the above/other (n=66)	37%

Forty-nine percent of students said they had trouble paying for their college expenses. A few students also wrote that they faced housing insecurity and illness, stress/poor time management, struggled with mental health or recovering from trauma, and lost financial assistance.

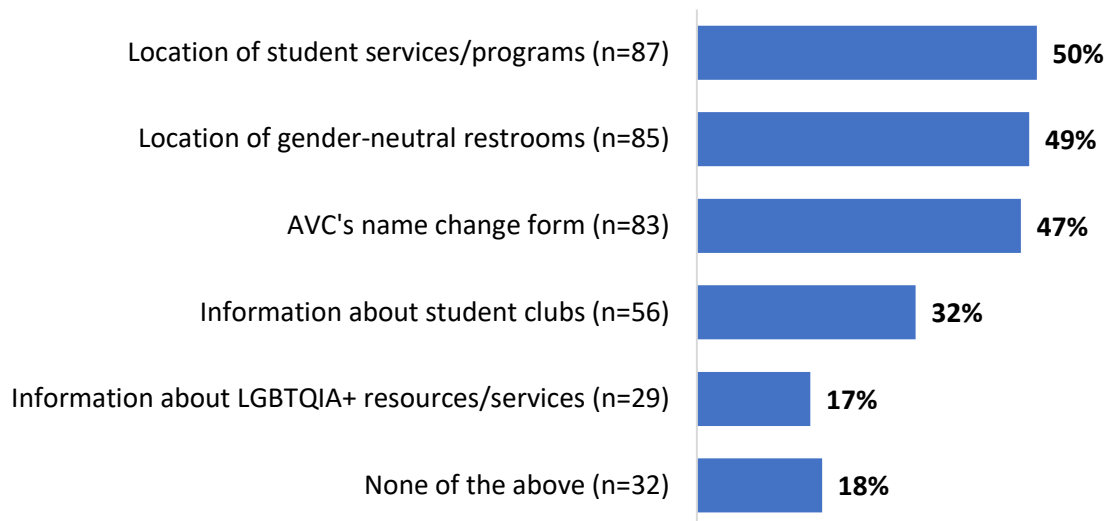They were also asked a question to gauge their interest in accessing services at AVC.

Figure 7. Which of the following services would you be interested in accessing at AVC [Check all that apply]:

Service	Percentage
Mental health services (n=96)	61%
Assistance with the cost of books (n=74)	47%
Tutoring/Academic support (n=59)	38%
Food pantry and/or Marauder Market (n=54)	34%
Assistance with finding affordable housing (n=40)	26%
Other (n=*)	5%

Most students (61.1%) said they are interested in accessing mental health services at AVC, followed by assistance with the cost of books (47.1%).

Figure 8. I know of the following resources on campus [Check all that apply]:

Resource	Percentage
Location of student services/programs (n=87)	50%
Location of gender-neutral restrooms (n=85)	49%
AVC's name change form (n=83)	47%
Information about student clubs (n=56)	32%
Information about LGBTQIA+ resources/services (n=29)	17%
None of the above (n=32)	18%

Approximately 50 percent of students said they were aware of the location of students services/programs, the location of gender-neutral restrooms, and AVC's name change form. Few students know infromation about LGBTQIA+ resources/services at AVC.

Figure 9. Which of the following would you consider an ideal safe space on campus?

- A dedicated LGBTQIA+ Center (n=103)
- A shared space with other students (n=38)
- Student club (n=29)

Pie chart: 61% (A dedicated LGBTQIA+ Center), 17% (A shared space with other students), 22% (Student club)
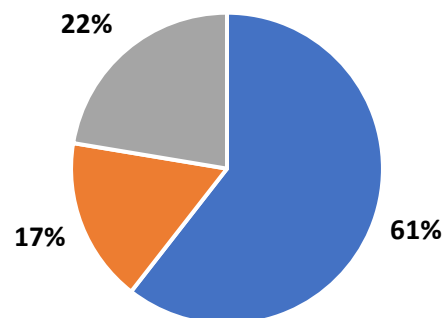
Most respondents said that a dedicated LGBTQIA+ center would be an ideal safe space on campus. However, in the open-ended questions students expressed that having any place where they can build community with other LGBTQIA+ students work. Students said they would like to have more comfortable hangout spaces and additional gender-neutral restrooms around campus.

Finally, students were asked about their interest in participating in a Lavender graduation.

Figure 10. When you graduate, would you be interested in participating in a Lavender graduation ceremony dedicated to celebrating the achievements and contributions of LGBTQIA+ students?

■ Yes (n=90)   ■ Maybe (n=72)   ■ No (n=18)
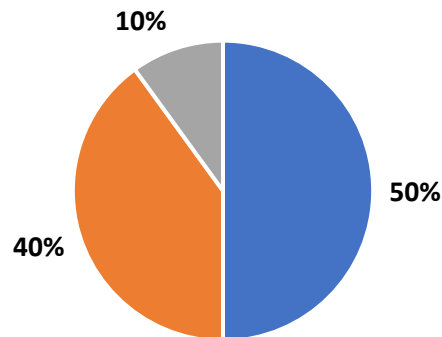
50 percent of students expressed interest in participating in a Lavender graduation. Forty percent of students said they were maybe interested in Lavender graduation ceremony.

LGBTQIA+ STUDENT EXPERIENCES AT AVC

When asked, "**Is there anything else you would like us know about your experiences at AVC?**" Students identified both areas improvements on campus, as well as the positive aspects of being a student at AVC.

- ♦ "AVC goes out of its way to make people feel not welcome on every level sadly it starts w/the professors who all but two I've encountered are openly homophobic and allow students to engage in behavior surrounding homophobia, I avoid taking classes on campus because it's bad enough on zoom I don't dare risk my personal safety attending in person."
- ♦ "I really like the school and I enjoy the faculty however we need more LGBT resources as well as more LGBT courses and more inclusivity."
- ♦ "It's important to understand that anyone can be LGBT, even if they don't "look" like they are. I've had professors assume that I'm a straight cisgender woman tons of times. I haven't corrected them because I am closeted."

While students identified many areas we need to improve upon, they also identified many positive aspects such as finding supportive faculty and staff members and small changes being made to create a more inclusive environment at AVC. For example, students said that faculty and staff were affirming of their identities.

- ♦ "Despite some professors who are incredible rude there are many professors who are truly wonderful and amazing. In fact, the first person I ever told I was genderfluid was to a professor at AVC and he immediately started using my chosen name. Truly AVC does have some incredible professors."
- ♦ "Most of the staff and faculty I've interacted with have been amazing and treat me with respect."
- ♦ "It was so important to me to finally have LGBTQ educators when I came to AVC."

Additionally, students are noticing changes that are occurring campus-wide and appreciate the progress.

- "…I am in a place of privilege because people don't discriminate against me because of my appearance. With that being said, this is the first I'm ever hearing of AVC asking questions about the LGBTQIA+ community and it makes me happy to know the campus I attend is trying to be inclusive even if it is baby steps, at least it is better than nothing."
- "I've been going to AVC since 2008 and took a break by 2017, and since I've been back I've noticed a DRASTIC change in how educators and the school accepts and treats queer folx. It's very heartwarming and promising to see. However, what I have noticed is that is still "on the low" and not something that is loudly expressed and there is a sense of caution about outside judgement from a larger source (if that makes sense)."
- "I look forward to seeing what kind of LGBTQIA+ representation is brought to the campus."

IMPROVING LGBTQIA+ STUDENT EXPERIENCES

Students were asked, "**What actions can AVC take to improve the experiences of LGBTQIA+ students at AVC?**" Students provided us with the following recommendations:

Professional Development for faculty/staff on LGBT experiences

- "I would say having options to more educational resources on LGBTQIA+ people and allowing people to learn about the lives of us. taking a stand against anti-trans rhetoric, and making it known about resources on other forms of care such as resources for abortions, medical resources, crisis resources, and maybe even making it more known about which teacher and staff is an ally!"
- "Tell the English professors that the use of the singular "they" pronoun is not improper English…"
- "Maybe talk about different identities."

Educational opportunities to learn about LGBT history and community

- "Include queer people, especially queer POC in curriculum…"
- "The actions AVC could take is including more LGBT courses and more LGBT resources."
- "More events, classes, and programs for LGBT faculty and students with notifications."
- "Assistance/advice for closeted LGBTQIA+ students."

Increase the number/awareness of gender-neutral restrooms on campus

- "Additional gender-neutral or single occupant restrooms."
- "I'd appreciate more gender neutral restrooms, as a trans woman who doesn't "pass" very well I'd be afraid to go into a women's restroom for fear of harassment, and I'd be uncomfortable in a men's restroom, whereas gender neutral ones bypass both scenarios."
- "Make the information regarding the locations of gender neutral bathrooms easier to find."

Information about student club

- "I didn't know there was a LGBTQIA+ club! Please make that more public."
- "Have a more active LGBTQ club."
- "Have a dedicated area for notices about clubs and programs that is visible to students in an area where students frequent (like on one of the boards near the cafeteria) that has a list of clubs that is updated every school year (after they're approved) of what they are and where they meet other than just the club fair that happens at the beginning of each semester. Most students don't check email like they should and so having a designated area to reference would be very helpful so that one can just direct someone to it. It could have

permanent posters/fliers about each club and also maybe bigger ones of the programs available. The way fliers are currently posted are rather haphazard and not eye catching. Just knowing that there would be a literal safe space to be queer on campus would be very helpful for our mental well-being. Possibly with security nearby as well."
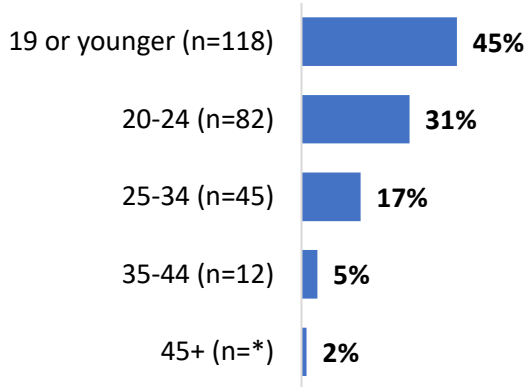
Create LGBTQIA affirming spaces

- "Give us our own space where we can govern ourselves, not a diversity stunt to prove to other colleges. Something for the Queer students of AVC."
- "A student center would be amazing, along with more LGBTQ centered classes."
- "Giving the LGBTQIA students their own space as well as the other student programs their own individual spaces."

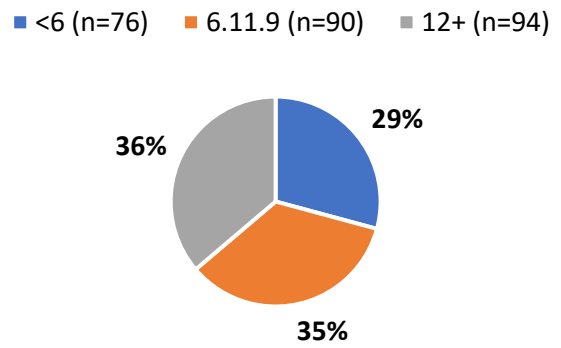## Pride Month celebrations

- "celebrate pride month."
- "Celebrating the Month of June for students enrolled in Summer session!"

Age Groups

19 or younger (n=118)	45%
20-24 (n=82)	31%
25-34 (n=45)	17%
35-44 (n=12)	5%
45+ (n=*)	2%

Enrolled Units

■ <6 (n=76)   ■ 6.11.9 (n=90)   ■ 12+ (n=94)

29%
35%
36%

Race/Ethnicity

Hispanic or Latino/a/x (n=111)	44%
White (n=58)	23%
Two or more (n=48)	19%
Black or African American (n=30)	12%
All other (n=*)	3%