



Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity & *Your Job Search*

INTRODUCTION

A person's sexual orientation and gender identity can have an impact on a number of factors related to career planning, including which career fields are most appealing, how to identify a positive work environment and organizational culture, and how to navigate the job search. The following is a partial list of questions to consider when planning your career. Please schedule a confidential appointment with a career advisor to discuss these and any issues related to your career search.

Evaluating Potential Employers:

- Which organizations have policies that support the LGBTQ community, such as inclusive nondiscrimination policies?
- Which organizations have LGBTQ and allied groups for their employees?
- What is the community climate like if I relocate to a new city?
- Which employers offer health and benefits for domestic partners?

Job Search Process:

- Have I determined how out I want to be about my sexual orientation/gender identity?
- If I identify as trans, am I prepared to negotiate issues related to legal identification, legal names, background checks, and job references?
- How should I present my LGBTQ organizational involvement on my resume?

Workplace Issues:

- Coming Out: How do I do that in the workplace? How do I deal with various reactions?
- Transitioning: How do I transition in the workplace? How do I explain my transition to colleagues?
- How do I present my relationship, introduce my partner, and deal with social events with coworkers?

RESUME WRITING: HOW MUCH TO INCLUDE?

Common questions asked by LGBTQ job candidates include "Should LGBTQ organizations be featured on my resume?" and "Do I have to list my legal name on my resume if it indicates my gender, rather than my preferred name?" The process of identifying how comfortable you feel about disclosing your sexual orientation and gender identity to a potential employer will help determine how you approach this portion of your resume.

First, you can list any name you choose on your resume. Many students list preferred names or nicknames rather than legal names. Some students will abbreviate their legal first name to one letter, then list their preferred name and last name (i.e., J. Marissa Jones). However, you are required to provide your legal name when completing a formal job application as this serves as a legal document.

Regarding LGBTQ organizations, the first option is to include your involvement, and proudly demonstrate the skills that you have developed as a result. If you're pursuing opportunities with organizations where your sexual orientation/gender identity is a non-issue, then the strengths and skills developed through these organizations will be seen as workplace assets and the activity in which you developed them will also be a non-issue.

The second option is to focus more on the accomplishments and skills developed through participation in the organization, as opposed to the cause itself. The strengths and skills developed will still be seen as workplace assets. This approach would allow you to demonstrate leadership experience and transferable skills such as communication, organizational, critical thinking and problem solving abilities. You might provide a more generic description of the organization, such as describing it as an organization supporting diversity.

The final strategy is to simply omit any reference to LGBTQ organizations. Some recruiters, gay or straight, will recommend using this approach. It is important to consider the relevance of the activity to the position for which you are applying, and whether or not you are providing information

that you are prepared to discuss during the interview. Remember, the purpose of the resume is to get you the interview, and you will need to be comfortable and prepared to elaborate on all achievements and skills in detail, as listed on your resume.

As you can see, there is no right or wrong way to handle LGBTQ activities on a resume. The answer depends on both the audience for the resume as well as your willingness to share and discuss your participation in LGBTQ groups and activities.

Please see Appendix A for an example of a resume that includes both LGBTQ activities and accomplishments and skills built.

EFFECTIVE INTERVIEWING

Preparing for interviews is important. You should decide how you want to be during the process. Research the organization and know the its policies and climate so you have additional information to help make the decision. If you have decided to emphasize LGBTQ involvement on your resume you should be prepared to talk about how your experiences have developed skills relevant to the employment/internship opportunity. An interviewer might ask, "I see you were president of Spectrum for two years. Can you tell me what kind of organization it is? What do you consider to be your most important contribution as a leader of Spectrum?" Employers highly value substantive experience gained through activities and leadership roles. In preparing for your interview, think carefully about what you have accomplished through your activities and your transferable skills.

If you have not included LGBTQ organizations on your resume, you can still reference the experience if it clearly relates to the position for which you are interviewing. If you prefer to be less open about the nature of the organization, you could refer to it as an anti-discrimination organization and then focus on the achievements that resulted from your involvement. Some students decide to wait to come out until after starting a new job when they can come out to co-workers as they feel comfortable.

If you're still trying to learn more about a

company's climate you can ask the interviewer about the organization's diversity directly or listen to hear if their answers contain information about such issues. These might not be your first questions, but can be added into the conversation. Make sure to focus on the job and how your skills meet the employer's needs first. After this, you can turn to other topics such as the corporate environment and diversity.

What constitutes appropriate interview attire? Professional attire typically means a business suit. Transgender students should dress as they identify– interview attire is not typically gender-specific, so students have a wide range of options to choose from and a basic gender neutral suit can be enhanced by a blouse and simple jewelry or a button-down shirt as preferred.

The interview will be your opportunity to communicate your value to the employer, and convince her/him that you are the best person for the job. Additionally, the interview will allow you to learn more about the organization's culture. Some general interviewing tips include: be prepared, be authentic, accentuate positives, emphasize accomplishments, and ask intelligent questions. For more information on interviewing, access the Career Services Interviewing guide on the Career Services Web site or pick up a copy at the Career Services Office in 200 Hoyt Hall. You can also schedule a mock interview with the Mock Interview Coordinator to practice your responses.

COMING OUT AT WORK: BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS

What should a person consider when deciding to come out at work? Consider some of the following:

What are the benefits of coming out?

- Allows you to develop as a whole individual on a personal and professional level.
- Ends the hiding game! You are more able to share your genuine self with others and who and what is important to you.
- Able to establish a network of friends and colleagues who can support and encourage you.

- You are more authentic in your professional work and contribute on a higher level. You experience and feel value and self-worth and are able to share significant life experiences with others, as others do.
- Able to be viewed as a role model, a mentor, and source of support for other professionals. You may challenge false perceptions and help develop an open, supportive work culture.

What are the drawbacks of staying in the closet?

- Stagnates your development on personal, interpersonal and professional levels.
- You live a dual identity, hiding your “true self” from others.
- You may filter and screen comments, behaviors, actions and attitudes that may “out” you. Energy is focused on covering up.
- You may experience isolation and sometimes decline to participate in group functions and activities.
- You may hesitate to share significant life experiences as colleagues do, making others reluctant to be open as well.
- Perpetuates the myth that there are “only a few” LGBTQ individuals at work and presents a limited view of the diversity of the culture.

At the same time, coming out may involve certain personal or professional risks that you are not willing to take in your first career. Ultimately, the choice to disclose your identity is your own.

CHECKING OUT A PROSPECTIVE ORGANIZATION OR COMPANY

In researching if an organization is open, safe, and accepting, you may wish to look for the following signals:

- Organization’s Affirmative Action Statement specifically includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.
- Recruitment and retention of openly, self-identified LGBTQ staff.

- Hiring policies and benefits programs include same-sex partners.
- Health benefits cover transition-related medical care for transgender people.
- Information sessions and job fairs focused on LGBTQ students.
- Publications, handbooks, policy and procedure statements and other official documents contain inclusive language for all individuals.
- Employee orientation programs include information related to LGBTQ support issues and concerns in the organization.
- Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Allies groups exist within the organization, and are supported by the organization.
- Staff training and development programs are inclusive of LGBTQ issues.
- Security officers participate in training sessions regarding bias-related incidents and hate crimes.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Visit the Career Services web site at: <http://www.miamioh.edu/careers> and GLBTQ Services site at: www.miamioh.edu/glbqtq.

- OUT for Work: Works with college career centers to help LGBTQA students research career options and develop successful job search strategies; sponsors a national annual career conference for LGBTQA students in September, register on the OUT for Work website. <http://www.outforwork.org/>.
- Human Rights Campaign: www.hrc.org.
- Corporate Equality Index: <http://www.hrc.org/issues/workplace/cei>.
- Transgender Resources: Articles on transgender rights and transitioning in the workplace, including Transgender inclusion in the Workplace and Coming Out in the Workplace as Transgender. <http://www.hrc.org/issues/transgender>.
- Federal Globe: Organization (and agency contacts) for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender employees of the federal government. <http://www.fedglobe.org/home>.

- National Center for Transgender Equality: <http://transequality.org/>.
- National Gay and Lesbian Taskforce: <http://thetaskforce.org/> and <http://thetaskforce.org/issues/transgender>.
- Out Professionals: LGBT networking site. <http://www.outprofessionals.org/>.
- ProGayJobs: Connects diversity-focused employers with LGBT workforce. <http://www.progayjobs.com/>.
- Sylvia Rivera Law Project in NY Trans Resource and Referral Guide: <http://srlp.org/resources>.
- Transgender Law and Policy Institute: Non-profit organization dedicated to engaging in effective advocacy for transgender people in our society, bringing experts and advocates together to work on law and policy initiatives designed to advance transgender equality. <http://www.transgenderlaw.org/>.

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APPENDIX A: RESUME EXAMPLE

Miles J. Woolway

Campus Address
522 Maple St.
Oxford, OH 45056

513-529-3707
woolway@muohio.edu

After December 20XX
352 Main Street
Cleveland, OH 56742

OBJECTIVE

To obtain a position as a congressional aide in Washington, D.C.

EDUCATION

Miami University, Oxford, Ohio Expected May 20XX
Bachelor of Arts, Overall GPA: 3.43/4.00
Major: Political Science and History Minor: Psychology

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Human Rights Campaign, Washington D.C. Summer 20XX
Workplace Project Intern

- Coordinated research efforts of 3 interns to analyze corporate survey submissions and SEC filings for Corporate Equality Index at nation's largest advocacy group for GLBT equal rights.
- Communicated with and educated HR professionals to effectively advocate for GLBT inclusion.
- Researched and drafted corporate implementation of domestic partner benefits packet for presentation to Bill Thomas, Chair, House Ways and Means Committee.

Planned Parenthood, Cleveland, OH Summer 20XX
Public Policy Intern

- One of 25 students chosen to participate in the Miami University Urban Leadership Internship Program, an integrated educational internship experience, funded by a \$3,500 grant.
- Advocated for reproductive rights and women's health issues alongside the Public Policy Director.
- Organized grassroots support for reproductive-choice issues at community events.

PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Academic Recognition Banquet for First-Year Students January 20XX
Student Speaker

- Delivered a 15-minute address entitled "Student Integrity, In and Beyond the Classroom" to an audience of administrators, faculty, and 300 high achieving first-year Miami students.

Corporate Equality Index: A Report Card on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) Equality in Corporate America
Contributor

- Contributed significant background research warranting byline in Human Right's Campaign's 20XX publication.

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Associated Student Government, *Off-Campus Senator* Fall 20XX-Present

- Represent over 3000 students and brought student concerns and issues to ASG.
- Sponsored a bill that doubled the number of blue safety lights in the off-campus area.

Spectrum, *Member* Spring 20XX-Present
Education Chair Fall 20XX-Spring 20XX

- Developed and coordinated Pride panels where Miami students shared experiences as part of the LGBTQ community.
- Represent Miami at regional and national conferences.

Beta Theta Pi Fraternity, *Member* February 20XX-Present

- Serve as an impartial "attorney" for in-house chapter trial regarding financially delinquent members and members who violate risk management policies.
- Initiated and developed a successful campus-wide relief effort and benefit concert for hurricane victims in Florida raising \$9600 for the Red Cross.



Miami University Career Services
200 Hoyt Hall, Oxford, OH 45056
www.MiamiOH.edu/careers