
Submitted to the 2015-2016 Council of the American Sociological Association

Prepared by the Committee on the Status of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Persons in Sociology

July 2015

Committee Members

C.J. Pascoe, Chair
Ashley Currier
Kim Davies
Joshua Gamson
Tey Meadow
Ellen K. Scott
Tom J. Waidzunas

Tina Fetner — ASA Council Liaison
John W. Curtis — ASA Executive Office Liaison
I. Introduction

From 2013 to 2015 the Committee on the Status of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Persons in Sociology (hereafter the Committee) has worked to implement the suggestions made in the 2009 Committee report. Below we summarize the findings and recommendations made in the 2009 report and what the Committee has done to respond to those recommendations, and conclude by listing recommended tasks for future committees. Given the ongoing work to ensure the equal status of LGBTQ members of ASA, we recommend that the charge of the Committee be renewed by Council.


This committee examined the experiences of GLBT persons in sociology through hosting an open forum at the 2008 Annual Meeting in Boston and investigated the representation of scholarship on LGBTQ topics in different venues: mainstream sociology journals, books, and annual meeting presentations.

The committee found the following:

1. This Committee and the ASA Executive Office/Council need to continue to educate members about the processes and procedures of ASA, as well as the existence and work of this Committee.
2. Members desire a higher-profile LGBTQ presence within the Association.
3. Working conditions vary widely, but homophobia and heterosexism remain a problem in classrooms, departments and institutions.
4. Many members have been disappointed by the Association’s attention and response to LGBTQ members and issues.
5. Members would like more information collected and compiled by the Association.
6. One direct and immediate product of the open forum held at the 2008 annual meeting was the rebirth of the LGBTQ Caucus.
7. LGBTQ scholarship is underrepresented at the meetings, in journals, and in book publishing.

Based on these findings the report recommended:

1. Organizing sessions at ASA meetings focused on LGBTQ issues.
2. Providing support for junior LGBTQ sociologists interested in organizing LGBTQ-related sessions.
3. Providing discussion forums and workshops to address specific challenges LGBTQ sociologists face, such as discrimination in departments and institutions, on the job market, and in interaction with students in classroom.
4. Improving accommodations for LGBTQ sociologists at the annual meeting.
5. Strengthening collaboration among this committee, the Sexualities Section, and the LGBTQ Caucus.
6. Improving the representation of LGBTQ scholarship published in journals and presented at the annual meeting.
7. ASA should take more public stances on LGBTQ issues.
8. Developing spaces for status committees on the ASA website.

III. Actions Taken by the 2013-2015 Committee

1. Clarifying the mission, history and composition of the committee

Upon being appointed to this Committee several members were unclear as to the Committee’s aim, its history, the nature of their appointment, and their roles as members. To rectify this the Committee drafted a mission statement (see below) and created a shared Dropbox folder to house annual Committee reports.

We recommend that the mission statement be displayed on the Committee’s webpage. This activity addresses concerns about raising the profile of LGBTQ members of ASA. It will also aid in the visibility of the committee, since when LGBTQ persons in sociology have a concern they are not always sure where to take it or what we do as a committee. It addresses the recommendation that spaces for status committees be developed on the ASA website by adding documentation of the Committee’s work to that page.

Proposed Mission Statement (with revised committee name as proposed below)
The purpose of the Committee on the Status of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) Persons in Sociology is to address topics pertinent to lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer-identified members of the American Sociological Association. The committee addresses educational, workplace, disciplinary, research, and visibility issues pertaining to LGBTQ sociologists. The committee monitors these issues primarily through conducting formal research on specific questions, fielding concerns raised by ASA members of all sections, and through appointing formal liaisons to the LGBTQ Caucus and LGBTQ concerns committees in regional disciplinary organizations. The committee endeavors to respond to problems faced by LGBTQ sociologists through recommending formal and informal changes to the ASA Council and/or by providing information to ASA members.

2. Changing the Gender Categories Available to ASA Members

The Committee made a formal recommendation in 2014 (see text below) to change the gender categories reported by ASA members. While Tom Waidzunas was not a signatory, he also endorses the recommendation (as per his statement at the 2014 Committee meeting). The recommendation was passed by the ASA Council at the Summer 2014 meeting. This change will be implemented for the 2016 membership year. As the implementation nears, the Committee will develop a communications plan that includes placing notifications in Footnotes, communications through sections, and Member News and Notes. This step addresses the report finding that LGBTQ members would like more information collected and compiled by the Association.
Statement regarding ASA’s Sex and Gender Categories (July 2014)

Committee on the Status of GLBT Persons in Sociology

As a committee we appreciate the work that has been put in to creating sex and gender categories that accurately represent the identities of our members. As a committee made up of members with personal interests and academic expertise in these topics, we suggest an alternate categorization schema as follows:

Please select all that apply: -Male-Female-Transgender Male/Transgender Man -Transgender Female/Transgender Woman -Genderqueer/Gender Non-conforming -Different Identity

This schema is drawn from the UCLA Williams Institute, an organization dedicated to research on sexual orientation and gender identity research. You can see more information about their suggestions here: http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/GenIUSSGender-related-Question-Overview.pdf. It allows members a broad range of options. It will likely reduce an undercount of transgender and an overcount of cisgender members of ASA, by providing several ways to identify. It is not perfect, but closer to member’s lived reality than some other options.

Again, thank you for addressing this important issue. Please contact us if you have questions about our recommendation.

Sincerely, CJ Pascoe, Tey Meadow, Ellen Scott, Kimberly Davies, Ashley Currier

3. Name Change

The Committee proposes a change in the name of the Committee from “Committee on the Status of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Persons in Sociology” to “Committee on the Status of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) Persons in Sociology” to reflect more current usage and mirror the name of the LGBTQ Caucus.

4. Appointment of Liaisons

The committee will now appoint liaisons each year to the LGBTQ Caucus and the Sexualities Section. Doing so addresses concerns raised by Committee and Caucus members as well as the recommendation to create stronger ties with other groups in the 2009 report. These liaisons will enable the Committee to be familiar with the work occurring in those organizations, be informed as to what members’ needs are, and provide a formal avenue through which Section and Caucus members can communicate with the Committee and vice versa.

5. Address Professional Challenges Encountered by LGBTQ Sociologists

A roundtable focusing on specific challenges LGBTQ sociologists face, such as discrimination in
departments and institutions, on the job market, and in interaction with students in classroom, is scheduled for the 2015 ASA Department Chairs Workshop. This responds to recommendations made in the 2009 report about addressing professional struggles faced by LGBTQ members of ASA.

6. Improving Accommodations at Professional Meetings

This committee has continued to work on the issue of gender-neutral restrooms at the ASA annual meetings. Arrangements for the 2014 meeting produced varying levels of success. The Hilton had unclear signage, while it seemed the Parc 55 replaced single-gender restroom signs with official signage designating the restrooms as gender inclusive. We are currently working with Meeting Services to develop more formal and consistent solutions.

IV. Issues for Future Committees to Address

1. Improving Accommodations at Professional Meetings

Continue to monitor their number, location, and signage.

2. Committee Composition

The Committee members raised questions as to how committee members were appointed, concerned about the lack of gender, racial and ethnic diversity.

3. Publishing and Scholarship

Address concerns raised by the 2009 report about the underrepresentation of scholarship on LGBTQ issues.

4. Mentoring LGBTQ scholars

This would also address professional concerns faced by LGBTQ scholars, especially those not necessarily performing LGBTQ scholarship. These include concerns like the following (included in an email we received from an ASA member): “the journal does not allow them to use their preferred pronoun (they) in their author bio; the journal requires ‘he’ or ‘she.’ ”

5. Other recommendations from the 2009 report: This committee was not able to address all of the recommendations made in the 2009 report. We encourage future committees to address the following points specifically.

- Support for junior sociologists to organize sessions, in terms of mentorship and providing opportunities for participation.
- Job market preparation for both candidates and hiring committees regarding issues of sexuality and gender.