

Sexual Orientation and Prejudice at Yale

A Report on the Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Members of the Yale Community

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Sexual Orientation and Prejudice at Yale: Summary of Findings

1. The majority of lesbian, gay, and bisexual respondents hide their sexual orientation from at least one member of the Yale community because they fear harassment or unequal treatment. Most respondents reported a pattern of hiding their sexual orientation from many different categories of individuals (e.g., undergraduates, faculty, staff, administrators).
2. Many members of the Yale community who have disclosed their sexual orientation to others have subsequently received unfair treatment. Among 95 undergraduates who responded to this item, for example, 32% received unfair treatment from another student, 22% from a roommate, 12% from a College Master, 12% from a staff member, 10% from an Administrator, and 7% from a faculty member. The majority of respondents appear to have avoided discrimination by simply hiding their sexual orientation.
4. Verbal harassment of lesbians and gay men is fairly common. 98% reported hearing other members of the Yale community make disparaging remarks about lesbians and gay men. 45% reported that this is a frequent occurrence. 65% of the respondents report that they have been the target of verbal insults because they were presumed to be lesbian or gay.
5. A majority of the respondents (57%) have feared for their safety while at Yale because of the threat of anti-lesbian/gay violence. This fear is most pronounced among undergraduate students, perhaps because they also are victims of anti-lesbian/gay violence more often than graduate students, faculty, and staff. One-third of the undergraduates reported having been threatened with physical violence while at Yale, one-third had been chased, one-fourth had objects thrown at them, and one-tenth had their personal property damaged or destroyed--all because they were presumed to be lesbian or gay.
6. Actual physical assaults were relatively infrequent but did occur. Undergraduates reported having been spat upon (5 respondents) and beaten or hit (6 respondents). One student was assaulted with a weapon. One faculty member also reported being physically attacked.
7. More than one-tenth of the respondents reported having been sexually harassed or assaulted because of their sexual orientation. This included female and male undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty.

8. 76% of the respondents personally know at least one other member of the Yale community who has been harassed, threatened, or physically attacked because of their sexual orientation. 58% know two or more such persons, and one-third know four or more.
9. Practically all of the respondents feel that an average lesbian or gay man at Yale is at least somewhat likely to be the target of harassment or attack. 51% feel that such attacks are fairly or very likely. Similarly, all but a handful of respondents believe that an average gay man or lesbian at Yale will be the target of discrimination or unfair treatment, and more than half believe that such treatment is fairly or very likely.
10. 39% of the respondents have modified their behaviors in various ways to protect themselves from anti-lesbian/gay violence and harassment. The most common strategies reported are to avoid specific locations or situations where harassment seems likely (e.g., certain parties or social events), avoid displaying physical affection with one's same-sex partner (e.g., not holding hands or touching if others might observe it), and actively hiding one's identity as lesbian, gay, or bisexual.
11. Instances of discrimination, harassment, and attacks against gay men and lesbians are not typically reported. Of the 96 respondents who reported having been harassed or attacked, 90% said they had not reported at least one such incident to an appropriate Yale official (police, dean, supervisor, etc.). The most common reasons cited for not reporting were the belief that the incident was not sufficiently serious and the fear that University authorities would respond negatively to the victim or would not take any action.
12. In summary, it appears that many lesbian, gay, and bisexual members of the Yale community live in a world of secretiveness and fear. Realistic worries about harassment and abuse inhibit them from disclosing their sexual orientation to students, faculty, staff, and administrators. This perceived need for secretiveness is directly in conflict with the need expressed by most respondents to feel comfortable about disclosing their sexual orientation to the people around them. 51% of the lesbian, gay, and bisexual respondents said it is "very important" to them to feel comfortable about disclosing, but more than half feel "not at all comfortable" or only "somewhat comfortable" about such disclosure (only 12% feel "very comfortable" about disclosing). This secretiveness extends even to reporting actual instances of abuse, which may mask the extent of anti-gay/lesbian prejudice in official records.

Sexual Orientation and Prejudice at Yale:

A Report on the Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual
Members of the Yale Community

Lesbian women, gay men, and bisexual women and men face hostility, persecution, and discrimination in the United States today. Prejudice exists at both the institutional and individual levels. In a recent survey of more than 2000 lesbians and gay men conducted by the National Gay Task Force, for example, many respondents reported that they had been personally attacked. More than 90% of the males and 75% of the females reported having been verbally harassed because of their sexuality; almost one-half of the males and more than one-third of the females had been threatened with physical violence because of their orientation; and one-fifth of the males and one-tenth of the females reported they had been punched, hit, kicked, or beaten because of their homosexuality.

Negative attitudes toward lesbians and gay men manifest themselves in other ways also. Discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations on the basis of sexual orientation is legal throughout the United States. The only exceptions are in one state (Wisconsin) and a few dozen municipalities that have enacted protective legislation. Attempts to pass anti-discrimination statutes elsewhere have been met by vociferous opposition and virulent attacks on gay people. In nearly one-half of the 50 states it remains illegal for consenting adults of the same sex to engage in private sexual relations. Lesbian and gay parents often lose custody of their children and often are accused of being unfit parents, despite extensive social scientific evidence to the contrary. Disclosing one's homosexual orientation carries with it the additional risk of rejection by family, friends, and colleagues.

The current epidemic of AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) seems to have exacerbated existing hostility against gay people. As a disease that has struck the gay and bisexual male communities especially severely, AIDS provides a convenient symbol for some heterosexuals to express their prejudice and hatred. Community groups monitoring violence around the country have noted recent increases in violent attacks, especially against gay men. Many of the attackers have included references to AIDS in their remarks to the victims. Employers have attempted to dismiss gay workers, using AIDS as an excuse. Insurance companies have openly stated that they will try to avoid insuring gay men. A mayoral candidate in Houston last year suggested publicly that the solution to AIDS is to "shoot the queers."

These trends are apparent at Yale as well. When the Yale Gay and Lesbian Alumnae (GALA) organization requested its members to describe some of their experiences at Yale, the responses revealed a history of prejudice, harassment, and concealment. [Statements from GALA members are included in Appendix C of this report, arranged chronologically according to graduating class.] Recognizing this problem, Yale students have petitioned the Administration for more than a decade to explicitly include "sexual orientation" in the University's Equal Opportunity Statement. They have based this request on their ongoing concern about discrimination and harassment of lesbian, gay, and bisexual members of the Yale community.

Do members of the Yale community continue to experience such harassment? Does fear of unequal treatment or outright violence affect their daily lives at Yale? The Sexual Orientation Survey described in this report was conducted to address these and other questions. Its approach was to assess the perceptions of lesbians, gay men, and bisexual persons at Yale concerning violence and persecution based on sexual orientation.

Method

Responses were obtained anonymously to a three-page questionnaire [reproduced in Appendix B]. Because lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals constitute a relatively invisible community at Yale (as elsewhere), it was not possible to obtain a scientific random sample. To compensate for this limitation, questionnaire responses were solicited through a variety of sources, thereby assuring a diverse set of respondents. Questionnaires were distributed to persons attending a campus dance sponsored by lesbian and gay student groups. Questionnaires also were distributed at meetings of various lesbian and gay campus organizations. Finally, questionnaires were distributed through friendship networks, whose members were encouraged to photocopy the survey form and pass it on to other members of the Yale community.

In all cases, respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire privately, without discussing their responses with others until after they returned the survey form. When the questionnaire was completed in a group setting, survey forms were collected by one person and returned to the author. Questionnaires distributed through personal networks were returned anonymously through campus mail.

Characteristics of Respondents

A total of 215 completed questionnaires were returned from approximately equal numbers of male and female respondents (117 males, 93 females, 5 not stated). The majority of respondents identified themselves as lesbian or gay (124 respondents); the sample also included 42 bisexual persons (17 who considered themselves primarily heterosexual, 25 who were primarily homosexual), and 43 heterosexuals. Six respondents did not state their sexual orientation. Most of the respondents were undergraduates (138 respondents); of those who indicated their class standing, 34 were seniors, 31 were juniors, 18 were sophomores, and 10 were freshmen. An additional 42 respondents were graduate or professional students, 11 were faculty, 12 were staff, and 4 were alumnae or visitors to campus (8 respondents did not indicate their University status).

Findings

The survey included questions concerning physical violence and attacks against lesbian, gay, and bisexual persons, as well as discrimination and unfair treatment. Each of these will be discussed in turn. Tables with data are presented in Appendix A.

Physical violence and harassment

A surprising number of the respondents had experienced physical abuse or had been threatened with it because of their sexual orientation. It can be seen in Table 1 that such abuse was especially common among the undergraduate students. A majority of respondents (65%) had been the target of verbal insults, and 25% had been threatened with physical violence. Respondents also reported having been chased (25%), having had objects thrown at them (19%), and having had their personal property damaged or destroyed (10%). A small number of respondents had been beaten (5%), spat upon (3%), or assaulted with a weapon (1%), all because they were presumed to be lesbian or gay. A total of 12% of the respondents reported having been sexually harassed or assaulted because of their sexual orientation--this included male and female undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty.

Some respondents wrote short descriptions of the harassment they received, which are quoted verbatim:

"I was walking through Beinecke Plaza late at night with another lesbian. We were walking without actually touching, but our assailants/abusers assumed we were lesbians (how is difficult to know). A group (4-5) of men approached us and shouted terms of abuse--'dyke,' 'disgusting bitches,' etc. Their behavior was threatening and suggested an intended attack. We walked on and for some reason they desisted."

"Been pushed and called a faggot at two parties for dancing with my boyfriend."

"At a party on Yale property, a lesbian friend and I were physically threatened by some heterosexual men, ordered to kiss in front of them."

"Being verbally intimidated at a Yale party because I was dancing with another man; we had beer thrown on us as well."

"Once was followed in a car with 5 rednecks (who were drinking). They told me they wanted me to give them a blow-job and to fuck me. They asked me initially if I was a dyke and repeated the question when I ignored them. They said they wanted to teach me about sex. I ran away."

"In my college dining hall, I have had food thrown at me."

"Obscene phone calls...obscene insults on my memo board...jacket with pink triangle¹ taken from common room and trampled in dirt, buttons removed."

A person need not directly experience violence or abuse in order for it to have a chilling effect. Violence also is intimidating when it happens to one's friends. Three-fourths of the respondents indicated that they knew at least one person who had been harassed, threatened with violence, or physically attacked at Yale because they were assumed to be lesbian or gay (see Table 2). More than one-half of the respondents knew two or more victims of attack, and almost one-third knew four or more.

One-half of the respondents consider it "fairly likely" or "very likely" that an average lesbian or gay man at Yale will be the target of harassment, threats of violence, or physical attack (see Table 3). With this pervasive awareness of attacks based on sexual orientation, it is not surprising that more than half of the respondents have at times feared for their safety at Yale (see Table 4). For 10% of the respondents, this is a persistent fear.

The fear of attack has caused 39% of the respondents to modify their behavior at Yale (see Table 5). The most common strategies reported are to avoid specific locations or situations where harassment seems likely (e.g., certain parties or social events), avoid displaying physical affection with one's same-sex partner (e.g., not holding hands or touching if others might observe it), and actively hiding one's identity as lesbian, gay, or bisexual.

Unfair treatment and discrimination

Lesbian, gay, and bisexual members of the Yale community not only fear physical attacks. Perhaps even more prevalent is the fear of discrimination or unfair treatment from others if one's sexual orientation is disclosed. It can be seen from Table 6 that a significant number of respondents (primarily undergraduates) have experienced such treatment from others who knew they were lesbian, gay, or bisexual. Additionally, intolerance has been communicated through disparaging remarks about lesbian, gay, and bisexual people made by members of the Yale community (see Table 7). Almost all of the respondents (98%) had heard such remarks; 45% reported that they were frequent occurrences. These factors contribute to a general perception that discrimination and unfair treatment based on sexual orientation are likely. More than one-half of the respondents (56%) expressed the opinion that the average lesbian or gay man at Yale is likely to be the target of such treatment (see Table 8).

How do lesbian, gay, and bisexual people at Yale deal with such realities? Many respondents reported that they have avoided unfair treatment by hiding their sexual orientation from the people around them. It is apparent from Table 9 that such behavior is common and extends to hiding from a variety of groups. On average, lesbian and gay respondents hide their sexual orientation from persons in five of the groups listed in

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1. In Nazi death camps, homosexual prisoners were forced to wear an inverted pink triangle to identify them (just as Jews were required to wear a yellow Star of David). In recent years, the pink triangle has become a popular symbol of the lesbian and gay movements, and many members and supporters wear buttons with a pink triangle. This is a common practice on the Yale campus.

Table 9 (see Table 10).

Hiding one's sexual orientation involves hiding a major portion of oneself. Heterosexuals can get a slight sense of this by imagining not touching their spouse or partner in public, not displaying that person's photograph on their desk, not wearing a wedding band, referring to their spouse or partner only as a "roommate" or "friend." Survey respondents indicated that it is very important to them to be able to disclose their sexual orientation to the people around them (see Table 11). Only 12%, however, feel "very comfortable" doing so (see Table 12). More than one-half feel "not at all comfortable" or only "somewhat comfortable" disclosing to other members of the Yale community.

This is in sharp contrast to the heterosexual respondents who completed the survey. It can be seen in Table 13 that, while heterosexuals felt it less important to be able to disclose their sexual orientation (presumably because one's heterosexuality is assumed by most people), they felt the most comfortable doing so. Lesbian and gay respondents displayed the opposite pattern: they felt it important to disclose, but felt uncomfortable doing so. This discrepancy between importance and comfort is indicated in Table 13 by the Difference scores (column 3). Difference scores were computed by subtracting each respondent's Comfort score from the Importance score. A negative mean score (as shown for heterosexuals) indicates that, on average, members of the group felt very comfortable in relation to how important they viewed disclosure of sexual orientation. A high positive score (as shown for lesbians and gay men) indicates that members of the group felt uncomfortable in disclosing, relative to the importance they attached to disclosing.

Reporting harassment and discrimination

The picture painted by the survey responses may differ from the perceptions of University administrators. This would not be surprising, given the data summarized in Table 14. The vast majority (90%) of respondents who were the target of harassment, threats, or violence based on sexual orientation did not report the incident to the proper authorities on at least one occasion. The most common reasons cited for not reporting were the belief that the incident was not sufficiently serious and the fear that University authorities would respond negatively to the victim or would not take any action.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Many lesbian, gay, and bisexual members of the Yale community live in a world of secretiveness and fear. They fear physical abuse as well as discrimination and unfair treatment due to their sexual orientation. These fears are reinforced by threats, attacks, and discrimination that they and their friends have experienced at Yale. Most of the respondents do not perceive the University to be sympathetic to their plight and, consequently, do not usually report such incidents. An even more serious consequence is that they hide their sexual orientation from other members of the Yale community, even though they consider it important to be able to disclose their sexual orientation to the people around them.

The findings of this report argue strongly for the need for explicit protection for lesbians, gay men, and bisexual persons in the Yale Equal Opportunity Statement. Including "sexual orientation" in the Statement will send a message to the lesbian, gay, and bisexual members of the Yale community that the University will not tolerate their persecution. A likely consequence of such a policy change will be an eventual increased openness on the part of gay people at Yale, an openness that will contribute to the University's historic commitment to diversity and tolerance. Such a policy change also will send a message to those members of the Yale community who would harass members of sexual minorities, conveying to them the message that they will not be allowed to intimidate others at Yale.

Simply changing the Equal Opportunity Statement, of course, will not immediately eliminate persecution or alleviate secretiveness and fear among lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals. Rather, the University should view this change as a first step. It should be followed by reevaluating the University's relations with the lesbian, gay, and bisexual communities, and developing positive strategies for fighting prejudice based on sexual orientation at Yale. The Administration might constitute a task force to identify specific steps the University can take to eliminate problems faced by lesbian, gay, and bisexual persons, and to integrate them fully in the Yale community. This task force should consist of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and heterosexual persons from Yale, and should include students (undergraduate and graduate), faculty, staff, and administrators.

Table 1: Threats and Attacks (Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Respondents)

"How often have you experienced the following at Yale because someone you to be a lesbian or gay man?"

		RESPONDENT'S STATUS					
		TOTAL	UNDER- GRAD	GRAD/ PROF	FACULTY	STAFF	OTHER
Had verbal insults directed at you?	NEVER	35%	22	25	4	4	2
	ONCE	16%	18	5	0	3	0
	MORE	49%	58	9	7	4	2
Been threatened with physical violence?	NEVER	74%	65	36	8	10	2
	ONCE	15%	18	2	3	1	1
	MORE	10%	15	1	0	0	1
Had your personal property damaged or destroyed?	NEVER	90%	88	37	7	9	4
	ONCE	6%	6	1	2	1	0
	MORE	4%	4	1	2	0	0
Had objects thrown at you?	NEVER	81%	73	36	11	9	2
	ONCE	10%	13	2	0	1	1
	MORE	9%	12	1	0	0	1
Been chased or followed?	NEVER	75%	65	35	9	10	3
	ONCE	17%	22	3	1	0	1
	MORE	8%	11	1	1	0	0
Been spat upon?	NEVER	97%	93	39	11	10	4
	ONCE	2%	3	0	0	0	0
	MORE	1%	2	0	0	0	0
Been punched, hit, kicked, or beaten?	NEVER	96%	92	39	10	10	4
	ONCE	4%	5	0	1	0	0
	MORE	1%	1	0	0	0	0
Been assaulted or wounded with a weapon?	NEVER	99%	97	39	11	10	3
	ONCE	1%	1	0	0	0	1
	MORE	0	0	0	0	0	0
Been sexually harassed or assaulted?	NEVER	88%	88	34	7	10	3
	ONCE	8%	6	4	2	0	0
	MORE	4%	3	1	2	0	1

Except where indicated by a percentage sign (%), figures refer to actual number of persons responding in that category.

Table 2: Knowledge of Others' Harassment

"How many other members of the Yale community do you know personally who have been harassed, threatened with violence or physically attacked at Yale because they were assumed to be lesbian/gay?"

Respondent's Status	NONE	ONE	TWO OR THREE	FOUR OR MORE
Undergraduates	12	15	26	42
Graduate/ Professional Students	16	7	11	4
Faculty	2	2	4	2
Staff	5	3	2	0
Other	2	1	0	1
Total	37 (24%)	28 (18%)	43 (27%)	49 (31%)

Table 3: Perceived Likelihood of Harassment

"In your opinion, what are the chances that an average lesbian or gay man at Yale will be the target of anti-gay/lesbian harassment, threats of violence, or physical attack?"

Respondent's Status	NOT AT ALL LIKELY	SOMEWHAT LIKELY	FAIRLY LIKELY	VERY LIKELY
Undergraduates	4	36	31	28
Graduate/ Professional Students	5	21	9	3
Faculty	1	3	4	3
Staff	3	5	3	0
Other	0	2	2	0
Total	13 (8%)	67 (41%)	49 (30%)	34 (21%)

Table 4: Fear for Safety (Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Respondents)

"How often have you feared for your safety at Yale because someone assumed you to be a lesbian or gay man?"

Respondent's Status	NEVER	OCCASIONALLY	OFTEN
Undergraduates	30	53	14
Graduate/ Professional Students	27	12	1
Faculty	5	5	1
Staff	6	5	0
Other	1	2	1
Total	69 (42%)	77 (47%)	17 (10%)

Table 5: Changes in Behavior to Avoid Harassment

"Have you modified your behavior at Yale in any way because of anti-gay/lesbian violence?"

Respondent's Status	YES	NO
Undergraduates	44	53
Graduate/ Professional Students	11	28
Faculty	4	7
Staff	1	9
Other	2	2
Total	62 (39%)	99 (61%)

HOW BEHAVIOR WAS MODIFIED	NUMBER
Avoided certain locations or situations	23
Avoided displaying physical affection when others might observe	16
Hid identity as lesbian or gay	9
Carefully monitored own behavior or speech to avoid revealing sexual orientation	8
Tried not to "look" lesbian/gay	4
Avoided specific other persons or types of persons	4
Moved off campus	3
Came out to others	1

Table 6: Perpetrators of Unfair Treatment

"...place a checkmark to the left of each category of persons who actually have treated you unfairly at Yale because of your sexual orientation."

	RESPONDENT'S STATUS				
	UNDER-GRAD	GRAD/PROF	FACULTY	STAFF	OTHER
A roommate?	21	1	0	1	1
An undergraduate student?	31	3	1	0	1
A graduate/professional student?	5	4	2	1	0
A University staff member?	12	0	1	2	1
A faculty member?	7	4	6	0	1
A University administrator?	9	1	6	0	0
A University admissions officer/committee member?	1	0	0	0	0
A health-care provider at DUH/Yale Health Plan?	5	0	2	0	0
Your college dean?	2	0	0	0	0
Your college master?	11	0	0	0	0
Your department chair/head?	0	0	4	0	0
Your supervisor at a University job?	3	0	0	1	1

Note: Many respondents indicated that they had not suffered from unfair treatment because they had kept their sexual orientation a secret from some or all of these groups.

Table 7: Disparaging Remarks (Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Respondents)

"How often have you heard other members of the Yale community make disparaging remarks about lesbians and gay men?"

Respondent's Status	NEVER	OCCASIONALLY	OFTEN
Undergraduates	2	46	50
Graduate/ Professional Students	2	30	8
Faculty	0	5	6
Staff	0	5	6
Other	0	1	3
Total	4 (2%)	87 (53%)	73 (45%)

Table 8: Perceived Likelihood of Discrimination

"In your opinion, what are the chances that an average lesbian or gay man at Yale will be the target of discrimination or unfair treatment?"

Respondent's Status	NOT AT ALL LIKELY	SOMEWHAT LIKELY	FAIRLY LIKELY	VERY LIKELY
Undergraduates	1	41	35	21
Graduate/ Professional Students	3	19	12	6
Faculty	1	2	0	8
Staff	0	4	4	3
Other	1	0	3	0
Total	6 (4%)	66 (40%)	54 (33%)	38 (23%)

Table 9: Persons From Whom Sexual Orientation Hidden

"IF YOU ARE GAY OR LESBIAN, has the possibility of harassment or unequal treatment at Yale ever led you to hide your sexual orientation from..."

	RESPONDENT'S STATUS				
	UNDER-GRAD	GRAD/PROF	FACULTY	STAFF	OTHER
A roommate?	49/91	7/18	1/1	3/5	3/4
An undergraduate student?	71/95	16/27	7/10	2/8	3/4
A graduate/professional student?	43/84	19/39	6/11	4/9	2/3
A University staff member?	55/85	21/34	9/11	11/11	1/3
A faculty member?	49/84	27/37	9/11	5/8	2/3
A University administrator?	43/75	14/29	9/11	6/7	2/3
A University admissions officer/committee member?	49/75	9/21	5/8	1/3	1/2
A health-care provider at DUH/Yale Health Plan?	25/75	9/35	6/10	2/7	0/3
Your college dean?	34/80	3/11	1/1	1/2	0/2
Your college master?	35/79	2/7	1/1	1/2	0/2
Your department chair/head?	23/63	16/31	7/11	4/6	0/2
Your supervisor at a University job?	35/62	2/12	2/3	7/10	3/3

Responses of "not applicable" are excluded from the table. Proportions represent the number of persons answering "yes" (numerator) divided by the total number of persons answering "yes" or "no" (denominator).

Table 10:
Mean Number of Groups Hidden From Broken Down By Sexual Orientation

Respondent's Sexual Orientation	Mean Number of Groups Hidden From
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Heterosexual (n=17)	0.12
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Bisexual, mostly heterosexual (n=13)	1.62
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Bisexual, mostly homosexual (n=24)	4.70
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Lesbian/Gay (n=123)	5.23
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"Number of groups" refers to groups listed in Table 9.

Table 11: Importance of Disclosing Sexual Orientation
(Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Respondents)

"How important is it that you feel comfortable disclosing your sexual orientation to the people around you?"

Respondent's Status	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT (1)	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT (2)	FAIRLY IMPORTANT (3)	VERY IMPORTANT (4)
Undergraduates	3	14	26	57
Graduate/ Professional Students	2	8	14	16
Faculty	0	1	2	8
Staff	1	2	3	4
Other	0	1	3	0
Total	6 (4%)	26 (16%)	48 (29%)	85 (51%)

Table 12: Comfort with Disclosing Sexual Orientation
(Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Respondents)

"How comfortable do you actually feel disclosing your sexual orientation to the majority of the people around you at Yale?"

Respondent's Status	NOT AT ALL COMFORTABLE (1)	SOMEWHAT COMFORTABLE (2)	FAIRLY COMFORTABLE (3)	VERY COMFORTABLE (4)
Undergraduates	12	31	40	17
Graduate/ Professional Students	11	18	10	1
Faculty	4	5	1	1
Staff	4	4	3	0
Other	1	0	2	0
Total	32 (19%)	58 (35%)	56 (34%)	19 (12%)

Table 13: Comparison of Disclosure Variables By Sexual Orientation

Respondent's Sexual Orientation	Importance (mean score)	Comfort (mean score)	Mean Difference Score
Heterosexual (n=42)	2.62	3.31	-0.62
Bisexual, mostly heterosexual (n=17)	3.06	2.59	0.67
Bisexual, mostly homosexual (n=25)	2.96	2.44	0.73
Lesbian/Gay (n=123)	3.38	2.33	1.19

Scores in the table are group means, based on the numbering indicated in Tables 11 and 12 (1= NOT AT ALL, 2=SOMEWHAT, 3=FAIRLY, 4=VERY). Difference scores were computed by subtracting each respondent's Comfort score from the Importance score. Higher difference scores indicate low comfort in relation to importance of disclosing sexual orientation.

Table 14: Incidence of Non-Reporting of Harassment

"If you have been the target of harassment, threats, or violence based on sexual orientation, have you always reported it to an appropriate Yale official (e.g., dean, police, supervisor)?"

Respondent's Status	YES, REPORTED ALL INCIDENTS	NO, DID NOT REPORT AT LEAST ONCE
Undergraduates	8	59
Graduate/ Professional Students	0	12
Faculty	2	8
Staff	0	5
Other	0	4
Total	10 (10%)	86 (90%)

REASONS FOR NOT REPORTING INCIDENTS	NUMBER
Expected negative/hostile reaction from University authorities	18
Did not feel the offense was sufficiently serious to report	17
Felt nothing could be done (e.g., perpetrators could not be caught)	11
Felt it not worth the trouble to report	9
Did not know how to report or whether to report such incidents	8
Feared exposure or further harassment	7
Handled the matter personally	2
Don't remember	1

We are attempting to assess the extent of prejudice and violence against lesbians and gay men at Yale. This information will be presented to the Yale Corporation in conjunction with a request to extend the University's Equal Opportunity Statement to officially include "sexual orientation."

Please answer all of the following questions.

Please do not complete more than one copy of this questionnaire.

YOUR RESPONSES ARE COMPLETELY ANONYMOUS.

1. How important is it that you feel comfortable disclosing your sexual orientation to the people around you? (circle one response)

NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT TO ME	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT TO ME	FAIRLY IMPORTANT TO ME	VERY IMPORTANT TO ME
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2. How comfortable do you actually feel disclosing your sexual orientation to the majority of the people around you at Yale? (circle one response)

NOT AT ALL COMFORTABLE	SOMEWHAT COMFORTABLE	FAIRLY COMFORTABLE	VERY COMFORTABLE
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3. IF YOU ARE GAY OR LESBIAN, has the possibility of harassment or unequal treatment at Yale ever led you to hide your sexual orientation from: [circle YES, NO, or NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)]

A roommate?	YES	NO	N/A
An undergraduate student?	YES	NO	N/A
A graduate/professional student?	YES	NO	N/A
A member of the University staff?	YES	NO	N/A
A faculty member?	YES	NO	N/A
A University administrator?	YES	NO	N/A
A University admissions officer/committee member?	YES	NO	N/A
A health-care provider at DUH/Yale Health Plan?	YES	NO	N/A
Your college dean?	YES	NO	N/A
Your college master?	YES	NO	N/A
Your department chair/head?	YES	NO	N/A
Your supervisor at a University job?	YES	NO	N/A

4. Using the same list, place a checkmark to the LEFT of each category of persons who ACTUALLY HAVE TREATED YOU UNFAIRLY at Yale because of your sexual orientation.

5. How often have you heard other members of the Yale community make disparaging remarks about lesbians and gay men? (circle one response)

NEVER OCCASIONALLY OFTEN

6. How often have you feared for your safety at Yale because of the threat of anti-gay/lesbian violence? (circle one response)

NEVER OCCASIONALLY OFTEN

7. How often have you experienced the following at Yale because someone assumed you to be a lesbian or gay man?

Had verbal insults directed at you?	NEVER	ONCE	TWICE OR MORE
Been threatened with physical violence?	NEVER	ONCE	TWICE OR MORE
Had your personal property damaged or destroyed?	NEVER	ONCE	TWICE OR MORE
Had objects thrown at you?	NEVER	ONCE	TWICE OR MORE
Been chased or followed?	NEVER	ONCE	TWICE OR MORE
Been spat upon?	NEVER	ONCE	TWICE OR MORE
Been punched, hit, kicked, or beaten?	NEVER	ONCE	TWICE OR MORE
Been assaulted or wounded with a weapon?	NEVER	ONCE	TWICE OR MORE
Been sexually harassed or assaulted?	NEVER	ONCE	TWICE OR MORE

8. If you have been the target of harassment, threats, or violence based on sexual orientation, have you always reported it to an appropriate Yale official (e.g., dean, police, supervisor)? (circle one response)

YES, REPORTED ALL INCIDENTS

NO, DID NOT REPORT AT LEAST ONCE

8A) IF YOU DID NOT REPORT AN INCIDENT, why not?

9. How many other members of the Yale community do you know personally who have been harassed, threatened with violence or physically attacked at Yale because they were assumed to be lesbian/gay?

NONE ONE TWO OR THREE MORE THAN THREE

10. Have you modified your behavior at Yale in any way because of anti-gay/lesbian violence? (e.g., avoided certain locations, stopped walking with others who are gay/lesbian)

YES NO

10A) IF YES, how have you changed your behavior?

11. In your opinion, what are the chances that an average lesbian or gay man at Yale will be the target of anti-gay/lesbian harassment, threats of violence, or physical attack?

NOT AT ALL SOMEWHAT FAIRLY VERY
 LIKELY LIKELY LIKELY LIKELY

12. In your opinion, what are the chances that an average lesbian or gay man at Yale will be the target of discrimination or unfair treatment?

NOT AT ALL SOMEWHAT FAIRLY VERY
 LIKELY LIKELY LIKELY LIKELY

13. Please indicate your gender.

_____ Female _____ Male

14. Please indicate your sexual orientation.

_____ Gay/Lesbian _____ Bisexual, primarily gay/lesbian
 _____ Heterosexual _____ Bisexual, primarily heterosexual

15. What is your University status?

_____ Undergraduate, Class of: _____
 _____ Graduate/Professional Student
 _____ Faculty
 _____ Staff
 _____ Other (Please specify) _____

Appendix C: Statements from Yale Alumnae

Reproduced on the following pages are statements from members of Yale's Gale and Lesbian Alumnae (GALA) organization. Shortly before the Corporation's meeting in March, GALA requested its members to mail in descriptions of their experiences at Yale. Because time was short, only a small number of responses were received. They are reproduced here verbatim. They provide documentation of longstanding prejudice against lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals at Yale. They also offer a fascinating and disturbing glimpse at an aspect of Yale's history that has remained largely invisible.

GALA members were asked to reply to any or all of three questions:

1. While you were at Yale, were you ever afraid to disclose your sexual orientation to other members of the University community because you expected unfair or discriminatory treatment?
2. While you were at Yale, were you ever a target of homophobia--insults or derogatory comments, physical violence, unfair treatment, or in any other form?
3. If sexual orientation had been explicitly included in Yale's Equal Opportunity Statement, how might it have changed your experience at Yale?

Replies on the following pages are arranged chronologically according to each respondent's graduation year.

1. EVER AFRAID TO DISCLOSE SEXUAL ORIENTATION?

Not "ever," always!

2. EVER A TARGET OF HOMOPHOBIA?

No, because I concealed my orientation.

3. HOW MIGHT CHANGE IN E.O.S. HAVE CHANGED YOUR EXPERIENCE?

I could have "come out" and relieved the pressure of concealment and celibacy.

--Member of the Class of '45, M.A. '49, Ph.D

1/2. EVER AFRAID TO DISCLOSE? EVER A TARGET OF HOMOPHOBIA?

I don't recall observing or hearing of any unfair or discriminatory treatment of homophiles at Yale while I was there (1945-48). Nor do I recall that anyone was insulted or otherwise mistreated. I had at one time a roommate who was bisexual. He seemed to have connections with a group of homophiles. I remember that some of them visited our suite one day. Outside of that occasion, I was not aware of meeting any homosexuals who were members of the Yale community.

3. HOW MIGHT CHANGE IN E.O.S. HAVE CHANGED YOUR EXPERIENCE?

In my brief period at Yale, immediately after the conclusion of WWII, the overt expression of homosexual behavior was not appropriate. The climate was not right. To Question #3 I reply that such a Statement could not have been promulgated. If attitudes toward sexual behavior had, in my day, been similar to today's attitudes, my experience as a Yale undergraduate would probably have been different. I would like to think that there would have been a concomitant improvement in intellectual activity along with the relaxation of attitudes toward sexual behavior. On the contrary, I remember the strength of the drive and lack of expression toward a person of either sex -- the lack of an "outlet," in the intellectuals' lingo of that time. It seems then that I have no documentation to be presented. I am not aware of the current situation at Yale. I expect, however, that I would agree with you that the Corporation's Equal Opportunity Statement should be modified. I would like to see the Equal Opportunity Statement changed to read: "...Yale does not discriminate...against any individual on account of that individual's sex, race, color, religion, age, sexual preference, or national or ethnic origin."

--Class of '48

1. EVER AFRAID TO DISCLOSE SEXUAL ORIENTATION?

I attended Yale in graduate school in Architecture ('53), afraid and inhibited and ignorant enough about gayness and the Yale community to remain closeted throughout the school years. There was a small clique of less inhibited gay men but they were somewhat isolated socially and academically. I didn't want to be judged as a member of this "special" and segregated group, but on my own merits.

2. EVER A TARGET OF HOMOPHOBIA?

Homophobia hit me only as an echo bounced off the gays who I saw treated with some disdain. It reinforced my wanting to stay closeted and at a distance from them.

3. HOW MIGHT CHANGE IN E.O.S. HAVE CHANGED YOUR EXPERIENCE?

A general campus community encouragement of acceptance of differences in sexual orientation would have freed me from time and efforts spent proving myself straight and I think would have allowed me to consider my gayness as an acceptable alternate. I think I would not have continued into marriage and family before coming to terms, in my forties, with my real sexuality.

--Member of the Class of '53

In the mid-50s, Yale was very homophobic. But so were the times--the McCarthy era.

Gay life did exist, of course--the two gay bars were the Casas Pivelli and George & Harry's. There was also Pa Kennedy's in Ansonia (CT) which was opened just on Sunday nights, when it was illegal to get a drink anywhere else. It was a drug store (sort of)--the shades were all drawn so that passersby would not be suspicious. Inside there was dancing in the back room. (This was a bar primarily for gay men although lesbians were welcome.) One Sunday night the place was raided by the police. The story was that Pa Kennedy didn't pay off the cops enough. All were taken to jail, booked, etc. The newspapers published the names, ages, occupations, and addresses of those arrested. The drug store was called a "place of assignation." There were Yale students there that night.

One young man (not a Yalie) who was frequently there got caught stealing money from nurses' purses in the Yale-New Haven Hospital. He was arrested for this, and broke down under interrogation, admitting he had had an affair with a student at Yale, that their liaisons occurred in the Yale student's room. This student, a classmate of mine, was asked to leave college, I think by Dean Carrol. He was then sent to two psychiatrists (away from the college) who I believe tried to "cure" him of homosexuality.

My classmate was allowed to graduate, but in absentia. He was disgraced, and his life has been affected adversely by this social injustice.

This must never happen again.

For my part, nothing more than the usual fag-baiting. There was a real bully in our class who made my life (and others) miserable.

Then therapy after Yale--it kept me out of the army, but it didn't "cure" me.

--A class of the 1950s

1. EVER AFRAID TO DISCLOSE SEXUAL ORIENTATION?

Of the six or seven gay men that I knew at Yale, I am the only one to belong to GALA--the others are afraid to join--and I am afraid to sign this statement, so that should tell you something about what we went through. The people who were hurt the most will never even see this questionnaire because they are still too afraid to belong to anything or tell anyone they are gay. My years at Yale were spent in deep social isolation and terror of exposure. This was the McCarthy era.

2. EVER A TARGET OF HOMOPHOBIA?

No, because I appeared straight and took extreme pains not to be detected as gay. I belonged to nothing. Friends of mine who were noticeably gay--either because of their mannerisms or associations--met with physical violence, threats, and persecution. One had a nervous breakdown and left Yale without graduating. Two others stuck it out although openly stigmatized by their whole residential college as queers. They ate only with each other. One of these has since had a long history of emotional problems. He is now a complete recluse and does not belong to GALA. Myself: I am very afraid of people, shun social contacts, and suffer terribly from loneliness and isolation. My years at Yale were a nightmare and I believe that I still, every single day, suffer the consequences of them emotionally, professionally, and socially now--25 years later. No one who has not suffered the formative years of their life in a hostile and persecutory environment, branded by law as a criminal, can even begin to imagine what I am talking about! There is no greater emotional cruelty in this world than that which gays suffer. Many of my friends drank themselves to death, etc.

3. HOW MIGHT CHANGE IN E.O.S. HAVE CHANGED YOUR EXPERIENCE?

To those who say there is no need to add the words "sexual orientation," that gays are already protected, let me tell you very clearly that the refusal to spell this out will be very well-noticed and understood by everyone for what it is: an open loophole, the clear permission and tacit encouragement of the University for the persecution of gays. Those who shrink from adding these words know that very well and that is why they refuse to add them! If you think it makes no difference, for God's sake add the words! There will always be gays at Yale. You cannot change that. They are a certain natural percentage of the population and you cannot change that. That is ordained by Nature, by God Himself.

There will always be bigots and cruel people at Yale. In this age of tolerance, many of their targets have been shielded from them. The gays must also be protected from these bigots by the letter of the law--clear, exact, and unmistakable forever! It is the beauty of Yale not to be intimidated by the prejudices of those who seek to injure others but to follow the light of reason and truth.

--Member of a Class of the 1950s

1. EVER AFRAID TO DISCLOSE SEXUAL ORIENTATION?

Of course. Remember the atmosphere of the 1950s. Being gay was a salacious secret. Small groups of gays knew each other in all the colleges and graduate schools, and would meet in a gay Fellow's suite or at Harry's Bar and Grill (and several other bars). The gay fellows were nervous as kittens. Some are very highly placed at Yale today. One fellow from Pierson (or Jonathan Edwards?) was asked to leave Yale because he was gay. Someone circulated the information that I was gay in our college (Silliman), and I was bitter and frightened.

2. EVER A TARGET OF HOMOPHOBIA?

No, fortunately, although "unfair treatment" is an elusive concept. The subject was truly verboten, in a way that is hard to imagine now, so it was possible to keep up a front and "pass" unmolested.

3. HOW MIGHT CHANGE IN E.O.S. HAVE CHANGED YOUR EXPERIENCE?

While such a written policy would have been inconceivable at the time, if it had been possible it would have made an immeasurable difference. As I became more involved in my gayness while I an undergraduate, I became more and more alienated from Yale. I remained so for decades after graduation -- till GALA came along. Such a statement (or a GALA chapter on campus) would have offered me respect, self-worth, and a sense of inclusion in the Yale community that was taken away from me when I became gay.

--Class of '58

1. EVER AFRAID TO DISCLOSE SEXUAL ORIENTATION?

Most of the Divinity School faculty, if they mentioned homosexuality at all, expressed a traditional psychoanalytic formulation -- all "up to date" with traditional psychiatry. This does not encourage disclosure. I did consult a health service psychiatrist -- not helpful on this issue. I suspect most Div School faculty are still in 1959 on this issue.

2. EVER A TARGET OF HOMOPHOBIA?

No.

3. HOW MIGHT CHANGE IN E.O.S. HAVE CHANGED YOUR EXPERIENCE?

For 1956-1959, an answer to this question would require a novel.

--Divinity, Class of '59

1. EVER AFRAID TO DISCLOSE SEXUAL ORIENTATION?

Yes.

2. EVER A TARGET OF HOMOPHOBIA?

Not directly and personally. I was not "out."

3. HOW MIGHT CHANGE IN E.O.S. HAVE CHANGED YOUR EXPERIENCE?

It might have given me the nudge I needed to be open and "out" during my educational years. I might have advanced by two decades my living "normally." I might have avoided much of the loneliness I felt. I might have identified other gay students with whom I could have shared my feelings, aspirations, and needs. I was a freshman counselor while in first-year medical school. I might have felt "free" to share my sexuality with and to reassure and truly counsel several gay boys who were in my group.

--Class of '62, Medicine '66

1. EVER AFRAID TO DISCLOSE SEXUAL ORIENTATION?

Yes, I was afraid to disclose my gayness to any official entity at Yale. The official discourses at that time were that homosexuality was (a) a "disease" [APA] and (b) an "immoral" condition -- you know, measles as a mortal sin.

2. EVER A TARGET OF HOMOPHOBIA?

My homosexuality became an "issue" for my roommates and for some friends in 1963-64, my junior year. That is, "difference" itself was a problem. For some, my sexuality was mine -- big deal, and let's just keep moving. These guys were saints, and we had discussions that gave new dimensions to integrity and friendship.

Others were more perplexed or just hostile. A "liberal consensus" emerged, i.e., a core group of my roommate complex (there were 13 of us who stayed together 4 years), but without my input or presence, who actively pressured me to seek counseling so that I "could change before it was too late." Their homophobia was invisible, it was the voice of enlightened reason and truth itself. It was "generous," "compassionate," "understanding," and "practically helpful" -- all in their view -- and inseparable from the concern that good roommates displayed toward one another. In retrospect, I was the "other," to be administered as a colonial subject by "men" who were my (sexual) "betters." To them my insistence that my gayness was right was evidence of my stubbornness or -- worse -- of my inability to play by club and corporate rules. These criteria are very much in "evidence," alas, today. Of course, a non-discrimination clause would rearrange the terms of not only a debate but also reduce the horrible sense of isolation a gay would feel.

And there were others less kind. Their behavior ranged from semi-whispered epithets to sneers to complete cold-shoulder silence. I was both hurt yet angry -- and invariably humiliated. In my view it's hardly asking the very symbol of reasoned discourse, truth and light to go against its own grain by insisting that sexism on the campus be given a big Blue Boot.

3. HOW MIGHT CHANGE IN E.O.S. HAVE CHANGED YOUR EXPERIENCE?

It's hard to imagine, but I would guess that I would have been even more a part of Yale than I was -- and I enjoyed myself immensely and participated in a spectrum of activities. All in all, I would have been less heartbroken and isolated at key moments. There was no one to talk with.

--Class of '65

1. EVER AFRAID TO DISCLOSE SEXUAL ORIENTATION?

[no response]

2. EVER A TARGET OF HOMOPHOBIA?

[no response]

3. HOW MIGHT CHANGE IN E.O.S. HAVE CHANGED YOUR EXPERIENCE?

I might have come out 15 years sooner. Since I kept my orientation a secret (even from myself to some degree) I never experienced discrimination. But if open gay life had been possible, with campus support groups and social events, etc., it might have made a difference to me.

--Class of '65

1. EVER AFRAID TO DISCLOSE SEXUAL ORIENTATION?

I did not make an issue of my sexual orientation while I was at Yale. Nonetheless, one individual guessed the situation and began a vicious whisper campaign against me. As a result, I was ignored and/or snubbed by the majority of men at my residential college. This situation continued until I graduated.

--Class of '65

1. EVER AFRAID TO DISCLOSE SEXUAL ORIENTATION?

Yes. I was able to tell only my closest roommate (straight, but with whom I had been to bed). He took me to a grad student advisor of his who told me, essentially, to "stop it."

2. EVER A TARGET OF HOMOPHOBIA?

No.

3. HOW MIGHT CHANGE IN E.O.S. HAVE CHANGED YOUR EXPERIENCE?

I don't know. A "statement" is only a statement, after all.

--Class of '65

1. EVER AFRAID TO DISCLOSE SEXUAL ORIENTATION?

Yes, in the sense of not being respected or accepted by the community--including my faculty advisors. It was an odd climate. Two of the faculty in my college were certainly gay but it was never discussed. On the other hand, their orientation and parties never seemed to impede their careers at Yale.

2. EVER A TARGET OF HOMOPHOBIA?

[no response]

3. HOW MIGHT CHANGE IN E.O.S. HAVE CHANGED YOUR EXPERIENCE?

The single biggest support I could have had would have been some very obvious helping hand I could have turned to when my sexual orientation became apparent in senior year. I was unable to deal with it and repressed my entire personality--felt extremely alone and the subject of a thousand eyes. My work fell off and I failed to complete an Honors Project that, in time, precluded me from accepting a [illegible] grant into Yale Grad.

Is this too vague? In spring of my senior year I allowed an older student to screw me. I was aroused but denied it. I avoided him and my advisor and wandered the campus for three months hiding from everyone, feeling utterly alone. I didn't, couldn't admit that I had liked the encounter, was infatuated with the man; but I couldn't see any future as a gay person. Despite the established gay faculty I knew, I felt the whole matter was a forbidden context in the Yale setting.

--Member of the Class of '66

1. EVER AFRAID TO DISCLOSE SEXUAL ORIENTATION?

University Health Services: Terrible fear of being "found out" and treated unfairly or with contempt. When I had hepatitis (sexually contracted) I did not go to Health Services from fear of discrimination.

2. EVER A TARGET OF HOMOPHOBIA?

No. I was able to "pass."

3. HOW MIGHT CHANGE IN E.O.S. HAVE CHANGED YOUR EXPERIENCE?

I certainly would have had more courage to be myself in the sense of a more complete development of my personality and my academic work. In hiding my sexuality, other things pertinent to achievement, self-worth, etc. in my major were dragged into this closet as well. The totality of a student, their self worth, their confidence, is wrapped subtly by their sexuality as well as other things in "the package."

--M.M., Class of '67

1. EVER AFRAID TO DISCLOSE SEXUAL ORIENTATION?

Initially I was quite fearful of exposure, largely due to my own discomfort regarding my sexual preference and observation of how more openly gay men were treated. The problems I observed were more related to peer treatment than University administrative policies or procedures. I suppose that, with regard to that side, I merely expected the worst.

2. EVER A TARGET OF HOMOPHOBIA?

There was one very ugly incident when I was a senior which resulted in a kind of kangaroo court trial by my peers as a result of "charges" brought to their attention by one person. The result was that my friends eventually supported me strongly in light of the irrational fears and allegations of my accuser, but the incident is one I never expect to forget.

3. HOW MIGHT CHANGE IN E.O.S. HAVE CHANGED YOUR EXPERIENCE?

In the '60s it's hard to imagine such a provision having been included. Regardless, I think there would have still been problems because the homophobic attitudes go far beyond anything which is legislated or made a matter of policy. Some of my most gratifying experiences involved breaking through some of the stereotypes (both on their part and mine) and establishing open, revealing friendships which were not only fun, but mutually enlightening.

--Member of the Class of '68

1. EVER AFRAID TO DISCLOSE SEXUAL ORIENTATION?

Most definitely. In the first month I was there (September, 1964), a suitemate returned from the Co-op to report a "fag" had approached him--a "townie." In no time at all, all but one other resident of my Durfee entryway (about 10-12 of them) had left with the suitemate to look for the "fag" and to "teach him a lesson." They chased him, but he escaped by car. Their attitudes changed almost none in the four years I was there. I was miserable the entire time and gained 60 pounds. I had to hide my sexuality the entire four years and it wasn't until a year after graduation that I was able to recover. The University did absolutely nothing to counter the pervasive homophobia rampant among students, advisors, gym personnel, etc.

Another example: in senior year (1967-68), one sophomore--probably gay--started growing long hair, anticipating the later trend. His hair was forcibly cut off by members of my class at Trumbull.

A senior classmate was 100% ostracized after he had the courage to "come out" to classmates. With that experience in mind, you can be sure I did not.

--Class of '68

1. EVER AFRAID TO DISCLOSE SEXUAL ORIENTATION?

While I was at Yale (1966-70), I was just beginning to come to terms with my sexuality. In the spring of my senior year (1970), a notice appeared in the Yale Daily News concerning a support group for homosexuals meeting at Dwight Hall. I struggled with myself to try to get up the courage to attend a meeting. I soon decided against attending when I overheard a group of students discussing the notice in the Morse College dining hall. It was suggested that one or more students either walk in on the meeting or at least hang around Dwight Hall to see if they recognized any of the "faggots." I didn't attend and went back into the closet for several years [because I was not] prepared to be a target of homophobes. One need only look at the response to Yale GALA's advertisement in YAM to realize that this kind of homophobic mentality is still prevalent among Yale students and alumnae.

2. EVER A TARGET OF HOMOPHOBIA?

[no response]

3. HOW MIGHT CHANGE IN E.O.S. HAVE CHANGED YOUR EXPERIENCE?

Perhaps if at that time Yale's policy specifically protected gay people those students might have been more concerned about disciplinary actions which may have resulted. Perhaps then I might have attended those meetings and had an earlier beginning in coming to grips with my sexuality. Changing Yale's policy to include sexual orientation as a protected class will at least give a message to those in the Yale community who would attempt to intimidate gays that their actions will no longer be tolerated.

--Member of the Class of 1970

1. EVER AFRAID TO DISCLOSE SEXUAL ORIENTATION?

No!

2. EVER A TARGET OF HOMOPHOBIA?

No!

3. HOW MIGHT CHANGE IN E.O.S. HAVE CHANGED YOUR EXPERIENCE?

Not much, although there might have been a more vital gay community. However, the reports I've heard indicate, with reference to my answers to one and two above, that the climate of tolerance and respect I experienced at Yale is gone! That the situation could deteriorate so thoroughly and so quickly, especially in view of the type of institution Yale presents itself to be, is all the more reason for strengthening Yale's Equal Opportunity Statement.

--Class of '72

2. EVER A TARGET OF HOMOPHOBIA?

Yes. I was called a faggot by fellow classmates (at least twice) and called "perverted" at a party at a teacher's house by another student in the class. Very humiliating.

3. HOW MIGHT CHANGE IN E.O.S. HAVE CHANGED YOUR EXPERIENCE?

It might have made me feel more confident in accepting my being gay and expressing it to others. If you're at the bottom, support from the top can help you fight antagonism from others on your level.

--Member of the Class of '73

1. EVER AFRAID TO DISCLOSE SEXUAL ORIENTATION?

As a graduate student in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, I had to listen to a great deal of homophobic comments from full professors whose attitudes toward gays were well-known in the department in the mid-'70s. In such a small department, with a long history of sexism and bias, such anti-gay sentiments made working on the graduate level quite difficult. Even visiting Latin American writers who are gay were insulted privately. Only the presence of several supportive assistant professors made life bearable. I'm willing to furnish names and specific instances of such anti-gay comments.

2. EVER A TARGET OF HOMOPHOBIA?

A long answer, that I'll try to abbreviate. Having been selected in 1974 to be a resident advisor on the Old Campus, I was later rejected because of my homosexuality. Asked specifically by a dean if I'm gay, I answered without hesitation that I was and a lengthy and messy exchange of letters and calls followed on all of this. I ended up refusing to be a "floating" advisor for gay students, rejecting the contention that I could not relate as well to the straight undergraduates.

3. HOW MIGHT CHANGE IN E.O.S. HAVE CHANGED YOUR EXPERIENCE?

My answer has to be less clear and less specific. Coming to Yale from Colgate, I found Yale to be immensely open and far easier for a gay man -- in comparison to Colgate, of course. Clearly, if there had been some sort of protection for students on the basis of sexual orientation, I'd've protested loudly or more loudly when homophobic comments were made. I did speak up when Professor Jose Juan Arrom (Yale BA, MA, PhD) said that the best thing Castro had done was to round up the gays in Cuba, but I had little recourse to university protection at that point. The homophobia at Yale, while pervasive, was very subtle, very upper-middle class, allowing for widespread defamation of gays (from secretaries to professors) and not permitting any formal recourse. To have known that I was protected from such slander while at Yale, and to have let those who were my attackers know that I was protected, would have helped a great deal.

-- MA '74, M. Phil. '77

1. EVER AFRAID TO DISCLOSE SEXUAL ORIENTATION?

I graduated from Yale in 1975. For most of the time I was at Yale, I was secretive about my homosexuality. I was the target of verbal harassment and negative comments from other students. I was not personally a target of physical violence, although I know of one gay man who was severely beaten up about a block from the Yale campus.

2. EVER A TARGET OF HOMOPHOBIA?

In a psychology class, a professor stated that a lesbian feminist author must have become a lesbian as a result of a traumatic event when she was very young. I felt that this comment was pure conjecture and reflective of homophobia. I challenged the reasoning behind this comment and the professor retracted the statement. I was absolutely terrified to be raising this issue.

3. HOW MIGHT CHANGE IN E.O.S. HAVE CHANGED YOUR EXPERIENCE?

If sexual orientation had been specifically included in Yale's nondiscrimination statement, I would have felt much more comfortable about myself and my time at Yale would have been much less tense. I know of one gay student who attempted suicide during his freshman year at Yale. If Yale had a more supportive atmosphere for gays, this might not have happened.

--Class of '75

I consider myself a victim of Yale. The fact of my homosexuality, and the hostility to it in the macho climate of Yale, accounted for my never having graduated, for two years of my life lost in mental institutions, for a year of my memory irretrievably stolen by electroshock treatments.

The events of those years are not only partially out of the reach of recall but too painful to recount in much detail. They occurred in 1973 and 1974, after the APA had declassified homosexuality as an illness. I went to a counselor at Yale Health Services shortly after having my first sexual encounter with another man. The doctor refused to allow the possibility I might be gay, since I did not fit the stereotype. He sent me, escorted by Yale security guards, to the Yale-New Haven hospital psychiatric evaluation unit. There I was classified as schizophrenic. Nobody credited my own opinion. My parents were notified that I was mentally ill. I believe but cannot prove that the Yale doctor broke my confidence and disclosed the content of our discussions to my parents. I cannot prove it because since that time there has been a great distance between myself and my parents.

I cannot remember, because of the shock treatments, whether I was actually committed to Yale-New Haven, or agreed to remain under the threat of commitment. I was told I was hostile, violent, and intractable, and would not be released until I proved my happy nature and good will. I would not cooperate. For the next year and a half, I was bounced from one institution after another (the shock treatments were not given at Yale-New Haven). I was forced to take 1200 mg of Thorazine per day while at Yale-New Haven, under the supervision of my psychiatrist, who was then completing his training at the Yale Medical School (this was not the same doctor as at the Health Plan, but one assigned by the hospital).

I at one time managed to escape with a group of visitors but returned after a day because I had nowhere to go. My "friends" at Yale somehow knew the whole story and believed that I was not responsible for myself. They called the hospital when I showed up asking them for help.

I did not trust and refused to discuss myself or my feelings with the psychiatrist assigned (whose name I do know). The one time I agreed to speak with him about my homosexual feelings, he asked if I wanted to give him a blowjob. I realize now that the question may have been rhetorical but such nice discriminations are not possible when one is so heavily drugged.

I pretended to play along so as to be released. A mere two months after my discharge, the doctor, unbelievably, recommended my return to Yale as a student. Under full medication. I did return to Yale. I did not take the medication. I saved it up and took several weeks' worth all at once in an effort to kill myself. Again I wound up in Yale-New Haven. With the same asshole assigned as my doctor. I had the presence of mind to sign a "three-" (or seven, I can't recall) "day paper" demanding my release. The doctors threatened to take legal steps to have me committed. I do not know whether they ever tried because I immediately left Yale and let no one know my whereabouts to avoid further imprisonment.

(continued)

Soon I was hounded by the bursar's office and their collection dogs. My student loans had come due while I was hospitalized during the previous years. I could not, of course, ask financial assistance from my parents who were looking for me in the belief I was a danger to myself and society, because they were told to do so by my Yale-New Haven-Yale-Med-School shrink. Yale threatened to garnishee my wages. I quit my job and left the state where Yale could not find me. This occurred four times. Of course, to get any decent job I had to lie about what I'd been doing the past years.

I have many times wished to bring suit against Yale for the ruin of my education, family relationships, memory, career, etc. I know such a suit would exact more mental anguish from me than could be recompensed in a court award. Also, because my memory is still faulty from the shock treatments, I doubt my testimony would be considered reliable.

I am telling the truth. I am withholding my name because I refused to be questioned or in any way victimized by Yale again in the future. I have a happy life and the career of my choice now. I will consider Yale's official recognition of sexual orientation as a respected and protected category of humanness sufficient revenge. But Yale will never get a cent or a word of thanks from me. I despise you all. I hope you awake some night to the sizzled smell of your own flesh and hair, not knowing who you are or what planet you're on, as I did sixteen times after shock treatment. I hope some day you stop on the street, suddenly having forgotten where you are, what city you're in, where you're going, and have to ask a stranger who fears you for information, as I did for years after the treatments. Hatred is an unattractive thing. But it is all I have for you.

--Member of the Class of 1974-75

1. EVER AFRAID TO DISCLOSE SEXUAL ORIENTATION?

Yes.

2. EVER A TARGET OF HOMOPHOBIA?

At the Yale Medical School I was part of a group called Gay Health Professionals at Yale. One of the higher-ups at the Yale New Haven Hospital (I can't recall the name off-hand, but might be able to if it would be useful) would not allow the group to distribute its notices through the hospital mailroom. This was 1979-8.

1. EVER AFRAID TO DISCLOSE SEXUAL ORIENTATION?

-- Ph.D '79, M.D. '81

1. EVER AFRAID TO DISCLOSE SEXUAL ORIENTATION?

I was unsure of my sexual orientation, but I feared being thought of as "gay." To explore my sexuality at Yale took great courage; to include the most candid writing I've ever done (on my homophobic and gay experiences) in my Scholar of the House novel required more courage than I had. Although my senior advisor tried to help me render my experience more honestly, he once intimated to me that he perceived himself as the object of a "gay purge" in the English Department; thus was his support largely negated.

2. EVER A TARGET OF HOMOPHOBIA?

At the risk of straining credulity, I can only say I was a continual target of homophobia at Yale. I was often insulted for "looking" gay; a close friend and I were widely and luridly regarded as "lovers;" I fought each fall against those in my singing group who stigmatized potential new members as "gay" (singing group members often played on freshman homophobia by referring to the supposed "gay image" of other groups); I was even threatened with death by one student who perceived my behavior as an affront to the jock sanctity of his favorite campus hang-out. I have since learned of many college friends who were gay but remained closeted because of the suffocating intolerance we all perceived. That we were thus isolated from each other is the primary injustice of homophobia on the scale I've described.

3. HOW MIGHT CHANGE IN E.O.S. HAVE CHANGED YOUR EXPERIENCE?

Such a provision might have significantly changed my experience: I might not have censored my writing so excessively, and the professor who encouraged me not to might have prevailed (and, incidentally, might still be teaching at Yale). I might have felt that I had some recourse against the bigotry I experienced--as I do in my current workplace, where I have suffered no such episodes--and I might have benefitted from a level of enlightenment I have found elsewhere, but in large part missed at Yale. Amid the many attitudes that discouraged diversity, I might have found in myself and my peers more of a will to discourage prejudice.

--Class of '80

1. EVER AFRAID TO DISCLOSE SEXUAL ORIENTATION?

Yes, I was afraid to disclose my sexual orientation. When I arrived at Yale I had known for several years that I was a lesbian. At St. Paul's, I had survived by believing that college would be better, that I would find a community within which my sexual orientation would be acceptable. For the most part, I did live at Yale without pretending to be heterosexual. When it came to applying to medical school, however, I had to put one foot back into the closet. I had to choose those whom I asked for recommendations carefully: if they knew me well enough to write a good letter, they would know that I was gay. Mrs. A.H. (Career Advising Service) had already informed me that I wasn't "bouncy" enough (yes, that was the word she used) to do well in interviews. What had she heard about me? Did she know how terrified I was of her writing the summary letter for my recommendations?

2. EVER A TARGET OF HOMOPHOBIA?

During my sophomore year, I co-wrote an article for the Yale Daily News which was designed to introduce freshmen to the gay scene--at least, that was the authors' intention. We used pseudonyms for the usual reasons...well, I won't say usual reasons, I'll call it abject terror of the consequences of having the world know we were queers.

When the article appeared in the Freshman issue, it bore a new title: "Rough Times for Yale Gays." Someone at YDN had transformed our article by deleting important negatives. Our message--that things were not perfect, but not too dismal if one dared enter the gay community--was gone. In its place was a picture bleaker than the reality. In addition, our friendly editor had mangled the paragraph describing gay organizations. I was surprised that anyone came out that year.

We had seen fagbaiting and fagbashing before. We were not prepared to face those consequences of having our true names appear with the article. Because of our fears we were voiceless--we were unable to complain even to the YDN people who had solicited the article! Is this the kind of relation which the Corporation desires members of the Yale community to have?

3. HOW MIGHT CHANGE IN E.O.S. HAVE CHANGED YOUR EXPERIENCE?

The above incidents are only a part of the difficulties I encountered as a lesbian at Yale. A sexual orientation clause in the Equal Opportunity Statement would encourage more openness and less intrigue.

Institutions like Yale have great credibility. They have a duty to stand against bigotry. Heterosexism is no more defensible than racism. While the inclusion of "race" in the Equal Opportunity Statement has not wiped out racism at Yale, can the Corporation imagine it not being included?

(continued)

It is the inner, the spiritual effect of homophobia which most concerns me. I have lost much to anger. I look forward to a day when we can grow up gay and proud without sacrificing mental and physical health. The Fellows of the Yale Corporation ought to as well (!). Ultimately, our morbidity will affect them no matter how straight they are.

--Member of the Class of 1983 [I'm in medical school, and would be tossed out if it became known that I was gay; no Equal Opportunity Statement protects me, so I am a non-person.]

1. EVER AFRAID TO DISCLOSE SEXUAL ORIENTATION?

While I was at Yale, I was never directly asked if I was gay--neither did a situation arise where I had to volunteer that information. However, I suspect that if certain people, including some faculty members were to have come to know of my sexual orientation, it may have biased them against me. The following incident should illustrate this.

I was a teaching assistant in the Computer Science Department and present in a conversation that involved a Ph.D. candidate who was teaching an Operating Systems course, and other faculty and students. This Ph.D. candidate was discussing the performance of an undergraduate student who was having some difficulty with his grades and having problems concentrating in class. I was familiar with this student's work in another course--he was obviously very clever but erratic and prone to absenteeism. In that course, his overall performance merited a "C" grade.

During the course of the conversation, it came out that the student's father had sought psychiatric help for him--and probably because the student was confused about his sexual orientation. The Ph.D. student described him as an "asshole" and said "He's expecting a 'C' but he's in for a shock--I'm going to flunk him." I am personally convinced he had worked enough to deserve a "C" grade and the decision to fail him in that course seemed malicious and unwarranted. The manner in which the student was described as an "asshole" suggested to me that this Ph.D. student considered him homosexual and therefore unworthy of fair and equal treatment.

2. EVER A TARGET OF HOMOPHOBIA?

While I was at Yale, I was never personally a direct target of homophobic insults or slurs. The friends I picked to confide about my sexual orientation were extremely helpful, supportive, understanding, and tolerant. All of these friends were heterosexual--both men and women. However, it is important to note that it took me two years to find the right friends and I do not believe that all heterosexual students at Yale would have been as tolerant. This is because I was present in many conversations where homosexual men and women were insulted and ridiculed. Since these people were unaware of my sexual orientation, I cannot claim those to be personal insults--but they did serve to inhibit and repress me, and cause me some worry and concern for my well-being. Here are some examples:

- (i) Homosexuality is unacceptable since the Bible says so (came up when I asked why did so many people always put down and harass gay people).
- (ii) A friend of mine mentioned that her mother was very open-minded--she often invited gay men to her home. A graduate student in the Physics Department was so put off by that remark he got up and left the room, saying that (i.e., homosexuality) was disgusting.

- (iii) A Divinity School student said "homosexual men were emotionally, mentally, and sexually stunted," implying homosexuality was a mental illness, "and that's why most ended up in jail."
- (iv) A business school student said of two male students (in the business school who were supposed to be romantically involved) that those "homos" should not be tolerated at Yale--they shouldn't hang around together so often. This same student, however, had no qualms in tolerating heterosexual couples at the business school who were romantically involved.

Finally, I'd like to record a very personal incident that I feel very strongly about. Just before I came to accept my sexual orientation at Yale, I had a hopeless crush on an undergraduate student there. I was having a hard time dealing with my emotions and sought psychiatric help at the Yale Medical Center. I explained to the counselor that I was having difficulties dealing with my homosexual instincts and that I had fallen in love with a student at Yale.

During the course of my counseling, which lasted 4-5 one-hour sessions, I came to the conclusion that my problems had to do with being homosexual, lonely, and isolated--I had no other homosexual friends (of either sex)--and in large part to do with how society in general was so intolerant of homosexuality. I was also very concerned about how I was going to explain it to my parents and relatives who I didn't think would accept and understand.

- (i) The counselor did not seem to accept or encourage my hypothesis that my problems with homosexuality had mostly to do with society's acceptance of it. I am now convinced that I was right and would have greatly appreciated her support and encouragement in helping me to realize that.
- (ii) Instead, she suggested my problems had more to do with me--or with the notion of "homosexuality" in general.
- (iii) She suggested I had failed my parents--let them down in their expectations. (A psychiatrist should be providing positive feedback--not negative.)
- (iv) When I suggested I needed to meet other gay people--or find out about gay publications--she was not encouraging. She did not directly discourage me but implied that it may not be the right thing for me to do. As it turned out, again she was wrong. She should have encouraged me to meet other gay people and find gay publications so that I could accept myself and realize that for many people homosexuality is normal, healthy, and satisfying.

3. HOW MIGHT CHANGE IN E.O.S. HAVE CHANGED YOUR EXPERIENCE?

The nature of my answers to #1 and #2 suggest why #3 may be of some use. Typically, homosexual students are lonely and isolated, unaware of their rights and scared to talk about their feelings with their parents and friends. This is only to be [expected] if they came from homophobic family backgrounds or homophobic environments in the United States or abroad. Consequently, when people make derogatory or false statements about homosexual people, they clam up even more. If they were aware of "an equal opportunity statement," they might be less fearful and perhaps be more inclined to educate their homophobic peers and faculty members, and also more likely to try and correct instances of injustice towards other homosexual students and minorities.

--Graduate student from 1980-1982

1. EVER AFRAID TO DISCLOSE SEXUAL ORIENTATION?

[no response]

2. EVER A TARGET OF HOMOPHOBIA?

[no response]

3. HOW MIGHT CHANGE IN E.O.S. HAVE CHANGED YOUR EXPERIENCE?

Had sexual orientation been included in Yale's Equal Opportunity Statement, my lover and I would, at the time of our application, have been able to make known our desire to come to Yale together. Yale, I know, does make an attempt, in the case of heterosexual married couples, to admit both members if it's at all possible. I am sure that had my "spouse" of 3 years been a woman, we would now be at Yale. As it is, my lover was wait-listed and ultimately not admitted to the English department's Ph.D program, while I was admitted in the History of Art. My lover is now a Ph.D candidate at Columbia, and we commute on weekends, which is logistically complex for us, more expensive -- having to maintain two separate households, and ultimately detracts from the time either of us can put in on departmental weekend functions, meetings with students, and so forth. This is a case in which the University as a whole and its gay members would have benefited from an explicit statement of equal opportunity for homosexual applicants.

-- Current Ph.D Candidate