A Short History of Gender and Sexuality Diversity (GSD) Work at Gordon

Board and Administration

2009 - The Diversity Committee conducted a study around human sexuality and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) work in independent schools and presented an administrative action plan to trustees in June of 2009

2009-2010 - Extensive parent education and professional development by Jennifer Bryan and Deborah Roffman

Middle School

Day of Silence recognized in the Middle School for 9 consecutive years

A strong Middle School health education program has laid the groundwork for all students to understand and have thoughtful conversations about GSD issues. Specific curricular content includes:

- 5th Grade: Family Configurations (including discussion about adoption, ART-Assisted Reproductive Technology)
- 6th grade: Biological sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation.
- 7th grade: Myths and Facts about LGBTQ & "coming out"
- 8th grade: Media literacy with a focus on how LGBTQ persons are represented

Middle School Faculty

Professional development to prepare Middle School faculty to support LGBTQ work in research-based ways with:

- Jennifer Bryan (2009-2011 school years) focused on parent education and provided professional development on GSD issues to administrators and faculty
- Rachel Legend (fall 2014-2015 school year) provided training for faculty and Diversity Committee members focused on LGBTQ history, current issues and terms/language
- Veronica Jutras (spring 2014-2015 school year) led a faculty meeting devoted to reflection and collaboration on inclusive LGBTQ classrooms using Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) resources. The faculty also wrote individual action plans for their work and professional development.

There are currently three "out" teachers in the middle school

Middle School Students

Students have shown strong interest in the Alliance Against Prejudice Committee this year and Prejudice Awareness Committee last year. In these committees, students

primarily wanted to focus on the advocacy piece of LGBTQ issues. These committees also served as the places students would go to find other students thinking about gender and sexuality identity.

Students have shown interest in having a Gender and Sexuality Alliance and have talked about it in advisory conversations over the years.

LGBTQ alumni/ae have shared that they recognized their sexual identity by the time they were in Middle School (if not long before) and yet did not feel comfortable talking about it with trusted adults and peers.

We currently have numerous students with same-sex parents who value the opportunity for affirmation of their family configuration.

We currently have at least three students in Middle School who have talked openly with close friends/faculty about their gender identity or sexuality. They need support and their peers need support in knowing how to support them.

Institutional

Events for prospective LGBTQ families since 2005

Advertising, publicity and outreach for prospective LGBTQ Families since 2009

Support for LGBTQ Families, Faculty and Staff

- Family potluck picnic spring and fall 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015
- Integration of LGBTQ community into Gordon news items on our website
- LGBTQ leadership panel (2009-2010)
- LGBTQ faculty met once this year and another time with straight allies to discuss LGBTQ issues, thoughts, and perspectives on Gordon's success and needs
- Gender and Sexuality Diversity Program Coordinator position established with the following objectives:
  - gathering faculty and staff in conversations about LGBTQ issues
  - coordinating LGBTQ family gatherings
  - researching and planning a Middle School Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA) with the goal of implementing this in the fall 2015/2016 school year
  - being available to students who seek support and advise faculty, staff, and administration on how to best support student's educational growth and development
  - Advise the Assistant Head and Academic Directors of professional development opportunities and best practices