



LGBT+ in STEM

Facts and Personal Experiences

L. David Finger, Ph.D.

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www.mariecuriealumni.eu



A Little About Me

- Grew up in New Jersey in the Philadelphia greater metropolitan area
- Went to Ithaca College in upstate New York where I received a BA in Biochemistry in Spring 1996
- Moved to LA in Fall 1996 to attend UCLA as a graduate student in Biochemistry
- Came out of the 'closet' to family and friends (not a surprise to many, but still difficult)
- I received my PhD in 2004 in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
- First postdoc at City of Hope Cancer Research Center (2004-2010)
- Moved to Sheffield in 2011 to be a MCIIF
- Stayed and am a Research Co-Investigator (looking for jobs though)

Diversity in STEM

Why is it important?

- We are aware that diverse teams can result in innovation
- Diverse perspectives give rise to unique solutions to problems
- Unfortunately, STEM fields glorify the one scientist changing the world (Einstein)
- Important point left out of discussions is that diversity in groups must be managed

LGBT+ in STEM

- Are LGBT+ people underrepresented in science?
- Women/minorities make up 70% of US universities student population, but only 45% are in STEM
- Diversity in STEM is increasing, but little info on LGBT+ in STEM (data not collected)
- American Physics Society March 2016 report on LGBT+ members showed that over one-third of respondents thought about leaving their jobs or school
- Queer in STEM study surveyed 1,427 LGBTQ+ STEM professionals – showed that more individuals were out in life, physical and social sciences – **openness correlates with women in the discipline**

<http://www.queerstem.org/search/label/results>

<http://www.bu.edu/research/articles/lgbt-issues-stem-diversity/>



My personal experience as an openly gay man in STEM

Advice is given but need not be heeded.

LGBT+ in STEM : Things said to me

- Misogyny and homophobia are related to one another (personal opinion)
- Things I hear: “Man up!”, “Be yourself!”, “Is that an act?”
- “No one cares that you’re “insert appropriate word”, they just care about your results.”
- “Why do you always bring it up that you’re gay? I worry it could affect your career.”
- Heteronormativity prevails in STEM
- Once you announce, some individuals do not know how to relate to you.

LGBT+ in STEM : New trends

- L and G have made significant strides in the last decade or two
- Still not at parity, but at least more acceptance for cis-gendered L and G
- The new media target is trans individuals (News stories concerning trans people and bathrooms)
- Bisexuals are also vilified by both sides of the spectrum
- Diversity within an LGBT+ is difficult to manage
- Discussion like this presentation are important to bridge the gap

Thank you!