Advice for GLBTQIA Students

As a gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intergender or ally (GLBTQIA) identified student preparing for entry into the workplace, you may have additional career development questions and challenges related to your sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Please feel welcome to discuss any of these issues with one of our Career Counselors in an individual appointment.

Do You Want to be “Out”?  
Whether or not to be out at work is a very personal decision and there is no generic answer. For some people, their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression are such integral parts of who they are that to be closeted in the workplace would be denying their true identities. Others prefer to separate their personal from their professional lives and only share this information with close friends. Being out at work may lead to discrimination or harassment, but hiding your true self could cause frustration or anxiety. The bottom line is this - do what is most comfortable for you.

To help determine what is right for you, consider the following questions:
- What has been your involvement with the SQuAd community both on- and off-campus?
- Are most of your friends identified as GLBTQIA?
- Are you out to everyone? Your family? Just close friends?
- If you have a partner, is that person out?

The GLBTIA Job Search
For the most part, your job search will be very much like your non-GLBTQIA counterparts. You will do career exploration, network with people in your field, research organizations, write resumes, and interview for jobs. Like them, you are looking for a good “fit,” but for you, the “fit” may be determined a little differently.

Targeting Companies/Organizations
What to look for:
- Do they have an antidiscrimination policy inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity?
- Is there an employee resource group for GLBTQIA employees?
- Are domestic partner benefits offered?
- Do they include sexual orientation in diversity training?
- Is the office located in a city with antidiscrimination laws and a substantive GLBTQIA community?
- Are there state or local laws banning discrimination in the workplace based on sexual orientation?

What about Interviews?
Even if the company has a non-discrimination policy, you do not want to risk encountering an interviewer who may evaluate you negatively because of his/her own prejudices. Asking suggestive questions to feel out the vibe of the organizational culture can be helpful. You could also ask about the company’s diversity initiatives and see if the recruiter mentions anything pertaining to sexual orientation.

Online Resources
Equality Pennsylvania – www.equalitypa.org
Gay Financial Network – www.gfn.com
Human Rights Campaign Corporate Equality Index – www.hrc.org/cei
Federal Globe - www.fedglobe.org
Out & Equal – www.outandequal.org
PA Diversity Network – www.padiversity.org
ProGayJobs – www.progayjobs.com
Out Professionals – www.outprofessionals.org
Out for Work – www.outforwork.com
GLPCareers.com - www.glpcareers.com
Lambda Legal – www.lambdalegal.org
National Center for Transgender Equality – www.transequality.org

Look for programs each semester
Co-sponsored by The Career Center and SQuAd

ALL students are welcome to attend regardless of orientation