Diversity Leadership Council Diversity Innovation Grant
Event Final Report

Date of event: 5/7/2014
Speaker: Caitlin Ryan, ACSW, PhD
Title of event: “The Family Acceptance Project: A Family-Based Approach to Wellness, Prevention & Care for LGBT Children and Adolescents”

Dr. Ryan’s lecture addressed the development of a comprehensive intervention program for LGBT youth and their families. Briefly, the Family Acceptance Project works with families that are at high risk of rejecting their LGBT-identified child; this rejection is known to precipitate myriad risks for LGBT youth. On a broader, thematic level, Dr. Ryan’s lecture spoke to the need to challenge existing paradigms of research (i.e., from a deficit model to a model of resilience) and the ethical imperative to follow research through to intervention.

We chose Dr. Ryan as our speaker for several reasons. First, we sought to bring a speaker who could address health issues relevant to multiple identities under the LGBT umbrella. Second, her work addresses the translational aspect of health research and intervention. As implementation science receives growing attention in public health, we felt that Dr. Ryan’s work would address a critical gap in LGBT health research: the gaps that often exist between public health research and intervention. Finally, her work has challenged and reshaped dominant assumptions in LGBT health research (e.g., that religious families are irreparably at odds with their LGBT children) and spoke to the field’s growing attention to resilience and not only health disparities.

Dr. Ryan is a nationally-recognized LGBT advocate. Her work has been recognized by the American Psychiatric Association, the National Association of Social Workers, the American Psychological Association, Division 44, and she has been a member of Committee on LGBT Health for the Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Sciences, and the LGBT Suicide Prevention Task Force of the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention.

Attendees included students, faculty, and staff from JHSPH, SON, and SOM, and several external community members; attendance was approximately 25 people. Following the lecture, Dr. Ryan fielded discussion questions from the audience. Audience members were particularly interested in the translational aspect, as well as the implications of this work for their respective health disciplines.

The event sought to cap the year’s work as the final Realizing Equality 2 event, and was chosen for the reasons articulated earlier in this report. The Working Group sees the impact of the Realizing Equality series as twofold. First, the event addressed a gap in available expertise at JHSPH; on an academic level, this is critical. Second, in the absence of a significant coursework presence, these events are critical to LGBT public health visibility. This visibility is important for student recruitment and retention, and providing students with a sense of an intellectual home and welcoming school environment.
The Family Acceptance Project: A Family-Based Approach to Wellness, Prevention & Care for LGBT Children & Adolescents

Caitlin Ryan, PhD, ACSW
Director, Family Acceptance Project
San Francisco State University

Wednesday, May 7, 2014
Noon – 1:15 p.m.
Room W3008
Wolfe Street Building


For more information, please contact dscicon1@jhu.edu.