

GENDER+ SEXUALITY

**PossePlus Retreat
2012 Report**



POSSEPLUS RETREAT:

a weekend-long gathering of college students, faculty and administration intended to promote dialogue around an important issue identified by Posse Scholars.

Introduction

In 2012, The Posse Foundation and 37 of its partner colleges and universities held a series of off-campus, three-day retreats—called PossePlus Retreats (PPRs)—with more than 3,800 participants. Attendees included Posse Scholars, members of the general student body, faculty and administrators. Since 1992, PPRs have been part of Posse’s programming and are intended to facilitate dialogue within and among selective colleges and universities. They also help to build more integrated and thoughtful campus communities.

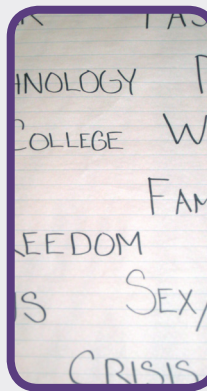
Gender and sexuality were the themes of this year’s PPRs entitled, “Born this way? Gender + Sexuality.” Through a series of small and large group activities, participants explored their personal views on gender and sexuality, the ways society shapes impressions of people’s gender and sexual orientation, and the stereotypes, privileges and inequalities associated with gender and sexuality.

At the start of the retreats, The Posse Institute (the research arm of The Posse Foundation) polled participants using an 85-question survey. Surveys were completed and submitted anonymously by 3,089 students and 334 faculty members and administrators.

The survey responses of the student participants revealed that most students believe the following:¹

- It is not important to retain traditional gender roles.
- There is truth to gender stereotypes.
- They are comfortable or very comfortable with their gender and sexuality.
- Little or no personal choice was involved in determining their sexual orientation.
- Men and women do not have equal opportunities in the United States.
- Sexual harassment or assault is a problem on their campuses.
- Their campuses are accepting of individuals of different genders and sexual orientations.
- Getting married is important.
- Child rearing should occur in a gender-neutral environment.
- They are comfortable with their partners making more money than they do.

This report explores these findings in greater detail.



COLLEGE + UNIVERSITY PARTNER RETREAT PARTICIPANTS

Babson College
Bard College
Boston University
Brandeis University
Bryn Mawr College
Bucknell University
Carleton College
Centre College
Colby College
The College of Wooster

Connecticut College
Denison University
DePauw University
Dickinson College
Franklin & Marshall College
Grinnell College
Hamilton College
Kalamazoo College
Lafayette University
Lawrence University

Middlebury College
Mount Holyoke College
Oberlin College
Pepperdine University
Pomona College
Sewanee: The University of the South
Trinity College
Tulane University
Union College
University of California, Berkeley

University of California, Los Angeles
University of Illinois at
Urbana-Champaign
University of Pennsylvania
University of Southern California
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Vanderbilt University
Wheaton College

Context

The series of retreats on gender and sexuality were introduced to over 3,800 participants with the following language.

Not that long ago women fought to use “Ms.” as a salutation, the Stonewall Inn erupted in violence, Roe v. Wade legalized abortion and Matthew Shepard’s name became synonymous with hate crime legislation. We look back on these as landmark moments that changed our history and culture. What about now? When future historians study gender and sexuality in the 21st Century, what will they find? Don’t ask, don’t tell? Pink is for girls, blue is for boys? Nicki Minaj? Ryan Gosling? An option to check “other” when identifying gender? Articles declaring, “The End of Men” and “Why Women’s Rights are the Cause of our Time?”^{2,3} A study revealing that half of all 7-12th graders experience sexual harassment?⁴ The legalization of same-sex marriage? Whatever they discover will likely reveal this country’s deeply divided beliefs around gender and sexuality.

But articles, statistics and even legislation are just part of the story. They don’t tell us which forces influence our values and views on this topic, how gender and sexuality shape our college experience, how other facets of our identity—our race, our class, our politics, our religion—interact with it, what the expectations of being a woman or man on campus are, what happens when you don’t adhere to these expectations or fit neatly into a category, or what happens if your “outside” doesn’t match your “inside.” How did you learn about gender and sexuality in the first place? And how many of us really understand “the difference between who you want to go to bed with, and who you want to go to bed as?”⁵ Are you really born this way?

You may have been grappling with these questions all of your life. You may just be arriving at your own crossroads, or maybe you’ve always stood firm in who and what you are. Regardless of where you stand or how you feel about these issues, we hope that you’ll take risks this weekend to engage this simultaneously visible and invisible aspect of your identity. We’ll explore the ever-changing state of femininity and masculinity in our society, on campus and from within. We’ll talk about being women or men, being gay or straight, or all of the above, and everything in between. We’ll talk about what it means when you fit neatly into a dichotomy or travel along a continuum. Whether it’s about pink or blue, going Dutch or paying first, true intimacy or just sex, this year’s retreat will explore the many intriguing dimensions of gender and sexuality in the 21st Century.

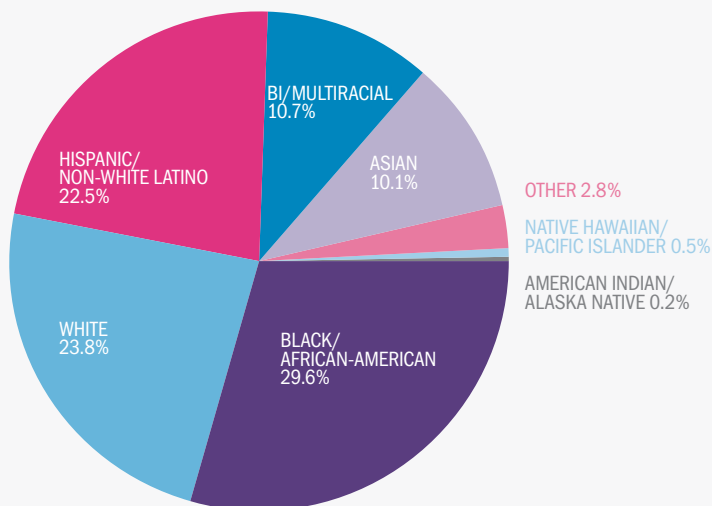
The national survey distributed to retreat participants aimed to gauge their views on the topic prior to the onset of the retreats. The findings described below reflect these students’ perspectives on gender and sexuality in the 21st Century.

Group Characteristics

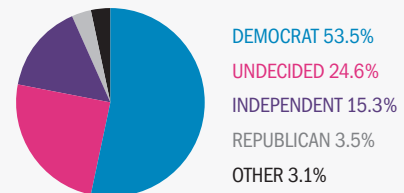
Data collected from the students surveyed revealed the following characteristics.

- Average age: 19.7 years.
- Percent who were born in the United States: 81 percent

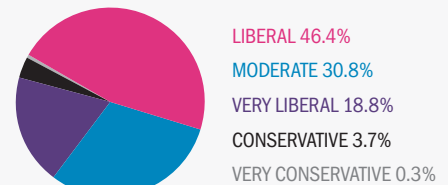
RACIAL/ETHNIC BREAKDOWN BASED ON SELF-IDENTIFICATION



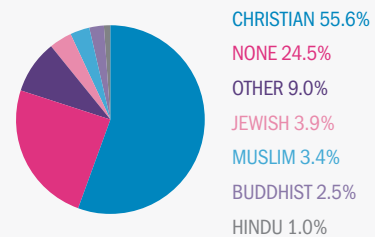
POLITICAL PARTY AFFILIATION



POLITICAL PHILOSOPHIES

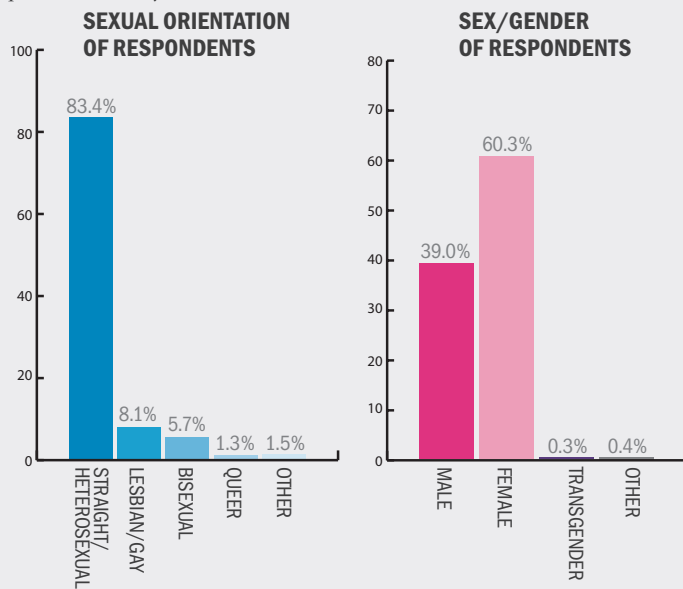


RELIGION



Perceptions of Gender + Sexuality

According to Morley Winograd and Michael Hais in their book, *Millennial Makeover: MySpace, YouTube, and the Future of American Politics*, individuals of the Millennial generation are generally “less hung up on sexual issues” and are supportive of an expanded role for women in today’s society.⁶ Responses from the students surveyed at the PPRs are in keeping with these findings. This section examines these Millennials’ specific attitudes about traditional gender roles and sexuality and their place in society.



GENDER ROLES, STEREOTYPES AND PERSONAL PERCEPTIONS

Like the Millennials in the Winograd and Hais study,

THE MAJORITY OF STUDENTS SURVEYED AT THE PPRS (61 PERCENT) DO NOT BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT TO RETAIN TRADITIONAL GENDER ROLES,

ARE SOME TRADITIONAL SEX/GENDER ROLES IMPORTANT TO RETAIN?

YES

“The husband should be the head of a household, but only if he honors his wife and household in general.”—Heterosexual female

“Motherly roles in women and bread-winner/father [roles] for men [are important to retain].”—Heterosexual male

“Because men are naturally more physically fit, it should be their job to protect women.”—Heterosexual female

NO

“Gender roles retain inherent structures of power over another and are inherently bad.”—Homosexual male

“Housework, breadwinning, and childrearing should be worked out equally between the two individuals, however it works for them.”—Heterosexual female

“I feel that all roles can be interchangeable and this is a good thing as it’s progressing to something positive.”—Heterosexual male

with almost equal percentages of men and women indicating they felt this way (60 to 61 percent of each group). Qualitative responses from students expressing this belief reflect the views that such responsibilities should be shared by all sexes and that it should be a personal choice as to which roles individuals adopt.

The popular belief among this population that gender roles are unimportant also extends to their views about childrearing. When asked, “Is it important to raise children with traditional gender roles?” a majority of students (64 percent) responded in the negative. Furthermore, a slightly larger group (68 percent) advocates raising children in gender-neutral environments.

When it comes to retaining gender roles in dating, however, approximately half of all the students surveyed (51 percent) believe they should be preserved—with 55 percent and 49 percent of male and female student respondents, respectively, holding this view (see Chart 1.1). Yet, on this issue, there was a major discrepancy between the responses of those who identified as heterosexual and those who identified as homosexual or bisexual. Of the latter group, only 25 percent hold the belief that gender roles in dating should be preserved, compared to 57 percent of heterosexual respondents.

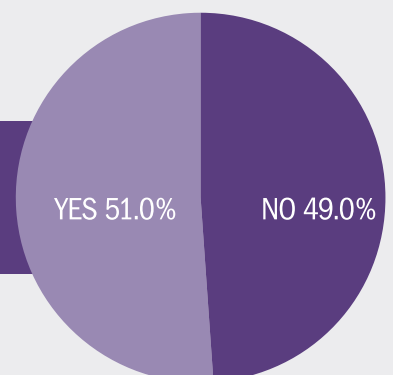
Of those who wish to maintain traditional gender roles in dating, most supported their position by citing an appreciation for the politeness and chivalry they believe to be characteristic of these roles. Many of the female survey respondents who advocate preserving gender roles in dating stated that their support for this view was contingent upon these roles not reinforcing a sense of patriarchy or contributing to the denigration of women. Of respondents who oppose gender roles in dating, most reasoned that such roles prevent people from being treated equally and that courtesy should not be gender-specific. Many also believe that these roles are problematic because they do in fact reinforce patriarchy and contribute to the oppression of women.

When specifically referring to heterosexual relationships, 68 percent of students agree that the financial burden of most dates in a relationship should not fall solely to the man. While this finding is a departure from traditional ideas about dating,

THE MAJORITY OF STUDENTS (55 PERCENT) BELIEVE MEN SHOULD PAY FOR THE FIRST DATE.

The main reasons given by this majority were that it is a tradition, a chivalrous act or a common courtesy for men to pay. Many others qualified their position by stating that men should pay only when they initiate the date.

CHART 1.1
SHOULD GENDER-SPECIFIC ROLES IN DATING BE KEPT ALIVE (E.G., MEN OPENING DOORS FOR WOMEN)?



A slightly larger percentage of men than women believe that men should pay for the first date (58 percent of men versus 53 percent of women). Fewer women than men also believe that men should pay for most dates. In this case, 38 percent of men believe they should pay for most dates compared to 28 percent of women. Responses to these questions also showed a difference in opinion between heterosexual respondents and homosexual and bisexual respondents. The majority of heterosexuals surveyed believe men should pay for the first date (60 percent), while 63 percent of homosexual and bisexual respondents oppose this, stating that the individuals' circumstances and the situational context of the date, rather than gender, should be the major factors in determining who pays.

IN A HETEROSEXUAL RELATIONSHIP, SHOULD THE MAN PAY FOR THE FIRST DATE?

YES

"I find it uncomfortable if a man doesn't pay [for a first date], which I know is TERRIBLE."—Heterosexual female

"Being a man, I feel obligated to pay for dates."—Heterosexual male

"I think in a society that objectifies women, it's comforting when guys show a gentlemanly/chivalrous sign of respect [by paying for a first date]."—Heterosexual female

"[The man should pay] because that's how it's supposed to be."—Homosexual male

"[Paying for the] first date shows your interest for and care for the person. Usually a man invites a girl on the first date, so I feel he should pay."—Bisexual female

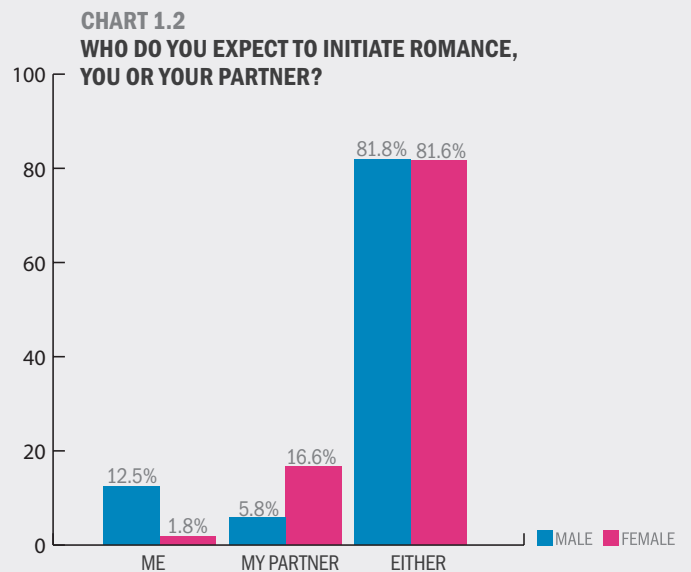
NO

"A balanced relationship means equally contributing funds."—Heterosexual female

"Buy your own stuff so he won't expect any favors."—Heterosexual male

"Go dutch! Gender equality!"—Homosexual female

"Whoever asked or whoever makes more money should pay [for the first date]."—Heterosexual female



Students were also asked whom they expect to initiate romance in a relationship—their partners or either person. For this question, gender roles do not seem to be a factor for most students as 82 percent chose “either” (see Chart 1.2). Of those who do expect their partner to initiate romance, 81 percent were female and only 18 percent were male. Conversely, of the respondents who expect themselves to initiate romance, 80 percent were male and only 18 percent were female.

While those surveyed lean towards minimizing traditional gender roles, these roles and gender stereotypes still appear to influence how they communicate with one another. Almost 50 percent report altering conversation topics depending on the gender of their interlocutor. Participants who reported doing this were asked to give examples, and the most polarizing topics listed were related to sports, sex and sexual orientation. More specifically, there are several topics that the women surveyed tend to avoid around men, such as those about emotions, make-up and fashion, and several topics that the men surveyed tend to avoid around women, including sports, sex and politics.



QUOTES FROM THOSE WHO SOMETIMES ALTER CONVERSATION TOPICS DEPENDING ON THE SEX/GENDER OF THE PERSON WITH WHOM THEY ARE COMMUNICATING:

"I'm more willing to talk about sex with men or queer people."—Pansexual female

"I don't talk about sports with women."—Heterosexual female

"Women do not want to hear about sports."—Heterosexual male

"It's easier to talk to girls about sex/dating."—Homosexual male

"I'm more polite around women."—Heterosexual male

"I won't talk or make jokes about sex in front of a girl."—Heterosexual male

WHEN ASKED, “IS THERE TRUTH TO GENDER STEREOTYPES?” THE MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS (61 PERCENT) ANSWERED “YES.”

The student responses to questions about specific gender stereotypes, however, vary. Almost 80 percent of students believe that there is no difference in intelligence between men and women. Interestingly, however, close to 17 percent consider women to be smarter than men and less than 5 percent consider men to be smarter than women. On the subject of math, 22 percent of respondents believe that men are naturally more skilled, while only 5 percent believe women are naturally more skilled. When asked about certain non-academic skill sets and dispositions, approximately half indicated that women are naturally better with children and are naturally more emotional, while less than 2 percent attributed such proclivities to men (see Table 1.1).

TABLE 1.1

IN GENERAL WHO IS...	MEN	WOMEN	THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE
Smarter?	4.7%	16.6%	78.6%
Naturally better at math?	21.7%	4.8%	73.4%
Naturally better with children?	1.1%	49.1%	49.8%
Naturally more emotional?	1.7%	51.0%	47.3%

GENDER IDENTIFICATION

When students were asked to rate themselves on scales measuring masculinity and femininity, male respondents rated themselves towards the high end of the masculine scale while female respondents rated themselves towards the high end of the feminine scale. The average masculinity rating for men was 5.2 out of 7, while the average femininity rating for women was 5.1 out of 7. Though the sample of transgender students was small, they rated themselves more neutrally, with an average masculinity rating of 4.1 and femininity rating of 3.8 (see Chart 1.3). On average, heterosexual females rated themselves slightly higher on the femininity scale than did homosexual or bisexual females (5.2 versus 4.7) and heterosexual males rated themselves as slightly more masculine than homosexual or bisexual males (5.3 versus 4.6).

THE VAST MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS (90 PERCENT) REPORTED BEING COMFORTABLE OR VERY COMFORTABLE WITH THEIR OWN GENDER

and, if given the choice, 94 percent indicated they would not opt to be a different gender. These students also tend to identify their role models as being of their same gender (see Chart 1.4). Of the small remaining percentage who indicated that they would opt to change their gender, 77 percent were women and only 17 percent were men (see Chart 1.5). In addition, of the 8 transgender students who answered this question, 3 would opt to be a different gender—that is, not transgender—if given the choice. When factoring in the sexual orientation of those who would opt to be a different gender, the majority were heterosexual women (57 percent), followed by 11 percent of heterosexual men, 10 percent of homosexual or bisexual women, and 5 percent of homosexual or bisexual men. The most frequent explanations from women who say they would opt to be male are that they are curious about how men experience life, they feel that men are more respected and privileged, and that being a man is easier.

CHART 1.3
ON A SCALE FROM 1-7,
HOW MASCULINE/FEMININE ARE YOU?

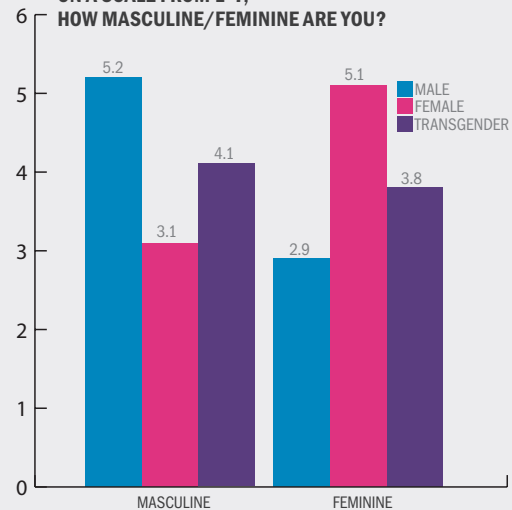


CHART 1.4
SEX/GENDER OF STUDENTS' ROLE MODELS

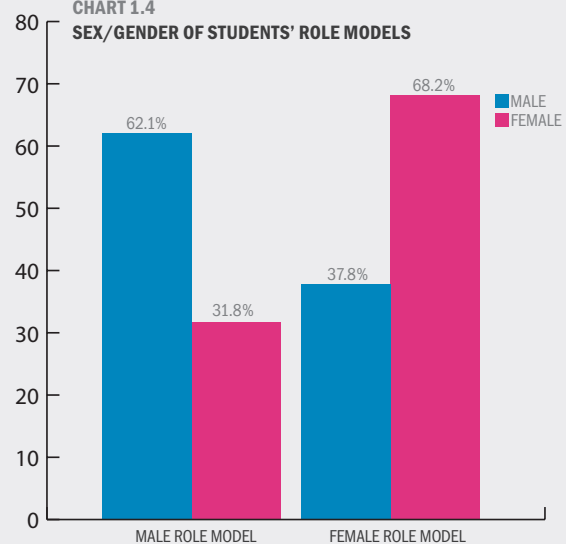
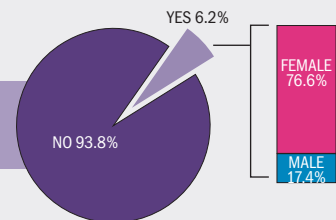


CHART 1.5
IF GIVEN THE CHOICE, WOULD YOU OPT TO CHANGE YOUR SEX/GENDER?



QUOTES FROM WOMEN WHO WOULD OPT TO BE MEN IF GIVEN THE CHOICE:

- “I feel that if I would have been born as a man, life would be easier. I would be taken more seriously and more opportunities would be available for me.” —Heterosexual female
- “Men aren’t judged and criticized the way women are.” —Heterosexual female
- “Men are perceived as dominant and at times have better opportunities.” —Heterosexual female

More women than men also admit to downplaying or hiding their gender at times—17 percent of women versus 6 percent of men. The most common reasons given by females for downplaying their gender are to avoid negative stereotypes of women, to be taken seriously in male-dominated environments such as STEM⁷ and business fields, and to avoid harassment. Among the small percentage of men who admit to sometimes downplaying their gender, most gave varied responses, but the responses they share in common include reasons similar to those the women gave, namely, to avoid negative stereotypes and to avoid harassment.⁸

QUOTES FROM WOMEN WHO ADMIT TO DOWNPLAYING THEIR SEX/GENDER:

“I ‘bro-out.’” – Heterosexual female

“When I’m hanging out with my guy friends, I don’t want them to leave me out of conversations just because I’m a girl.” – Heterosexual female

“In queer communities, I am discriminated against as a femme woman, so I’ve downplayed my femininity.” – Female of unknown sexual orientation

“I am a women pursuing a career in a ‘man’s’ field (economics). If I wish to succeed, I must be overly assertive and ‘one of the guys.’” – Heterosexual female

“Sometimes you’re taken more seriously when you aren’t as ‘female’ because it’s perceived as ditzzy.” – Heterosexual female

“If I’m alone at night sometimes I will try to cover up more because I don’t want to be cat called or preyed on.” – Heterosexual female

QUOTES FROM MEN WHO ADMIT TO DOWNPLAYING THEIR SEX/GENDER

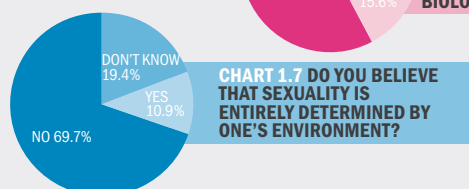
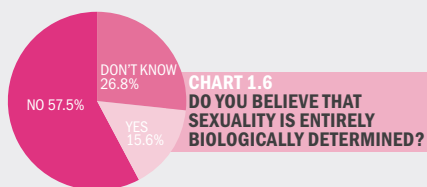
“When I feel ashamed to be a man [I downplay my gender].” – Homosexual male

“Sometimes I feel uncomfortable expressing my feminine side in front of a group of males.” – Heterosexual male

“Sometimes being a black male can make you seem dangerous.” – Heterosexual male

SEXUALITY PERCEPTIONS

Several questions were posed to students to capture their views on whether or not sexual orientation is a matter of choice. When asked if biology is entirely responsible for determining sexual orientation, the majority (58 percent) responded in the negative and 27 percent indicated they did not know (see Chart 1.6). A similar breakdown of responses was found when students were asked if one’s environment is entirely responsible for



determining sexual orientation. Most students (70 percent) did not think that the environment entirely accounts for sexuality, and an additional 19 percent did not know (see Chart 1.7). A small percentage of students do, however, believe that sexuality is fully determined by biology (16 percent) or by one’s environment (11 percent).

While most students do not consider biology and/or the environment to be the sole determinant of one’s sexuality, the vast majority feel that personal choice played little or no role in determining their sexual orientation. When given the options, “a large amount of choice,” “a small amount of choice,” and “none at all,”

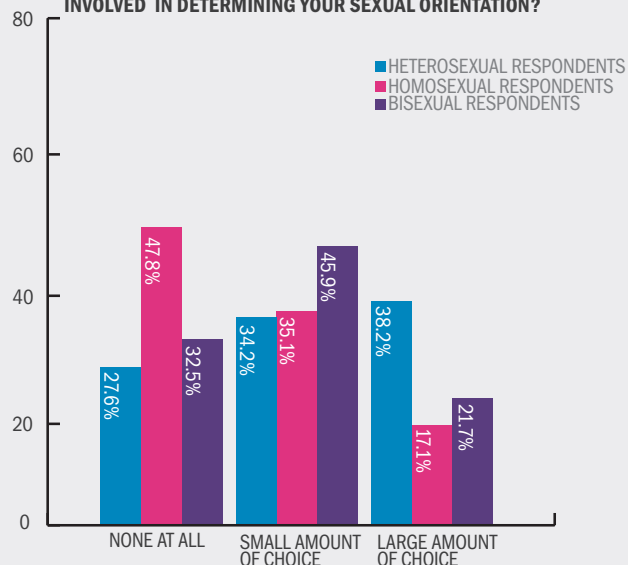
THE MAJORITY OF STUDENTS (65 PERCENT) INDICATED THAT THERE WAS A SMALL AMOUNT OF PERSONAL CHOICE OR NO CHOICE AT ALL IN DETERMINING THEIR SEXUAL ORIENTATION.

Notably, more homosexual and bisexual students indicated that no personal choice was involved in determining their sexual orientation than did heterosexual students (see Chart 1.8).

CLOSE TO 90 PERCENT OF THOSE SURVEYED CLAIMED THEY ARE “COMFORTABLE” OR “VERY COMFORTABLE” WITH THEIR OWN SEXUALITY.

A small percentage of men (7 percent) and women (5 percent), however, did admit that they would change their sexual orientation if given the choice. Only 4 percent of heterosexual respondents would opt to have a different sexual orientation, compared to 19 percent of homosexual and bisexual individuals (see Chart 1.9). Most of the responses from homosexual and bisexual students who would opt to change their sexual orientation indicated that they would rather be heterosexual and that this desire to change their orientation is to gain acceptance and to have an easier life. Of the heterosexual students opting to change their orientation, many indicated they would want to be bisexual and reasoned that doing so would give them more options for romantic relationships.

CHART 1.8 HOW MUCH PERSONAL CHOICE DO YOU FEEL WAS INVOLVED IN DETERMINING YOUR SEXUAL ORIENTATION?



Although the vast majority of students are comfortable with their sexuality,

MOST HOMOSEXUAL AND BISEXUAL STUDENTS (67 PERCENT) ADMIT TO DOWNPLAYING THEIR SEXUAL ORIENTATION,

explaining that they do so around their families and around people who hold conservative views. Many from this group also share that they hide their homosexuality or bisexuality to avoid being judged based on their sexual preferences or to avoid being harassed and bullied. Additionally, many more homosexual and bisexual respondents (34 percent) than heterosexual respondents (2 percent) reveal that their parents or guardians are unaware of their orientation. Regarding students' perceptions of how their parents feel about their sexual orientation, a significantly higher percentage of heterosexual students believe their parents to be comfortable with their sexual orientation than homosexual or bisexual students (see Chart 1.10). Only 24 percent of homosexual and bisexual students believe their parents are "very comfortable" with their sexual orientation compared to 77 percent of heterosexual students.

QUOTES FROM GAY AND BISEXUAL INDIVIDUALS ABOUT WHY THEY DOWNPLAY THEIR SEXUALITY:

"Sometimes it is important that I blend in to feel more accepted."—Homosexual male

"I only am 'out' when I feel safe. In some places, if feeling threatened, I will not make it obvious that I'm gay."—Homosexual female

"I often hide behind the heterosexual relationship that I'm currently in."—Bisexual female

"My sexuality is a bit more difficult to explain and others tend to feel that it does not exist and label me as something I do not consider myself."—Bisexual female

"I don't want to be judged as being broken."—Bisexual male

QUOTES FROM THOSE THAT WOULD OPT TO BE ANOTHER SEXUAL ORIENTATION:

"People would take me more seriously romantically if I were either gay or straight."—Bisexual female

"[I would opt to be] straight, because it doesn't come with the hardships that accompany being gay."—Homosexual male

"Although I'm comfortable with being bisexual, if I was straight it would save a lot of difficult reconciliation with my family."—Bisexual female

CHART 1.10 RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THEIR PARENTS' LEVEL OF COMFORT WITH THEIR SEXUALITY?

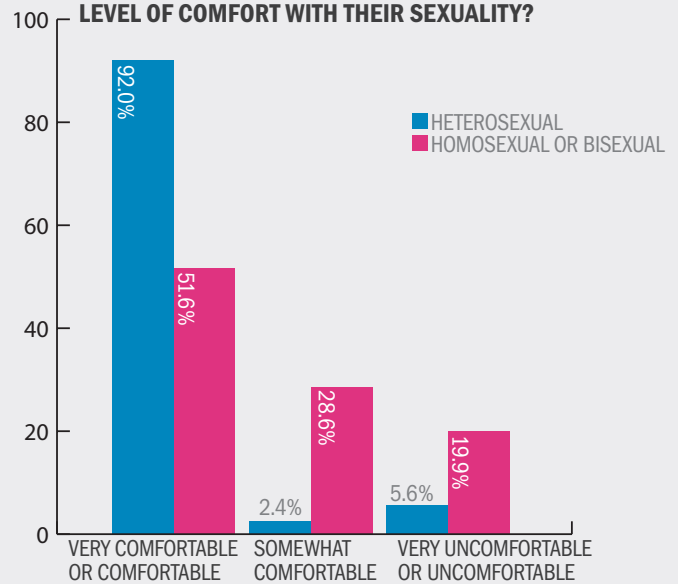
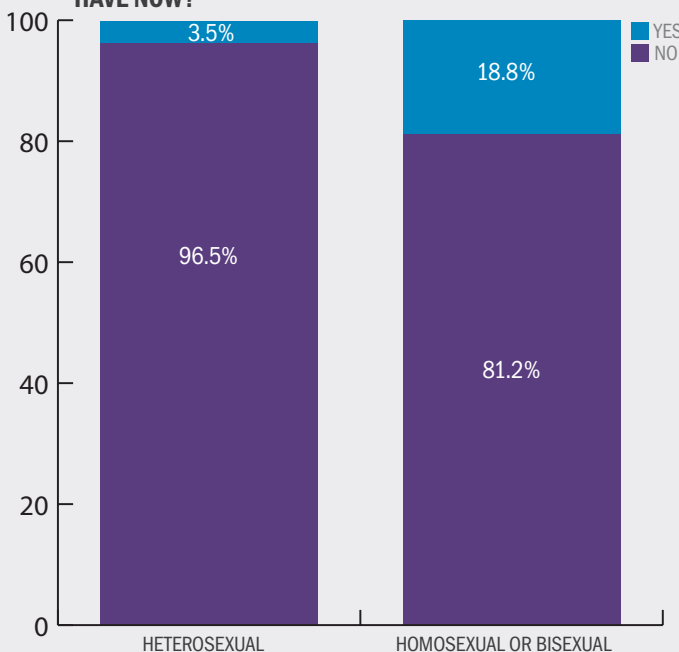


CHART 1.9 GIVEN THE CHOICE, WOULD YOU OPT TO HAVE A DIFFERENT SEXUAL ORIENTATION THAN THE ONE YOU HAVE NOW?



Gender + Sexuality and Discrimination

The Millennial generation has a reputation for supporting equal rights and freedom of sexual expression. They tend to be strong proponents of gay rights and to participate in third-wave feminism, which embraces diversity and makes efforts to include women of all ages, races and sexual identities.^{9,10} The views of the majority of student survey respondents bear out these descriptions of Millennials. Fifty-four percent believe that the social trend of more gay people getting married is a good thing for society, 89 percent are in favor of same-sex marriage, and 76 percent agree with the recent repeal of the U.S. military’s “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell” policy, which prohibited homosexual servicemen and women from serving openly.

Millennials’ tolerance, however, does not protect them from being on the receiving end of gender- or sexuality-based prejudice. This section examines this group of Millennials’ views on equality among the sexes and their experiences with harassment focused on gender and sexual orientation.

GENDER (IN)EQUALITY

THE MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS DO NOT BELIEVE THAT MEN AND WOMEN ARE TREATED EQUALLY IN THE UNITED STATES AND WANT MORE TO BE DONE IN ORDER TO REACH GENDER EQUALITY.

When asked if men and women have equal opportunities in the United States, 81 percent of students answered in the negative (73 percent of men and 86 percent of women) (see Chart 2.1). In addition, 69 percent of men and 85 percent of women do not believe that the government is currently doing enough to promote equal rights among the sexes. Eighty-five percent of students surveyed do not believe that a female candidate and a male candidate have an equal shot of becoming president of the United States (see Chart 2.2). And of those who do believe both sexes have equal chances, women are less optimistic than men, with only 11 percent of women subscribing to this view as compared to 22 percent of men.

The majority of respondents—

79 PERCENT OF FEMALES AND 66 PERCENT OF MALES—BELIEVE THAT A FEMINIST MOVEMENT IS NEEDED TODAY.

Most of the reasons given by students included their belief that sexism and gender stereotypes still exist and the fact that women are still not treated as equal to men. Many stated that the feminist movement they would support would not involve misandry, would be inclusive of individuals of all races and sexual orientations and would be a distinctly modern movement for equal rights.

Although there is extensive support from this group for women’s rights and gender equality, 56 percent believe that feminism as a term has a negative connotation. This is in contrast to the 75 percent of faculty members and administrators (whose average age is 41 years) who believe the term feminism

CHART 2.1 DO YOU BELIEVE WOMEN AND MEN HAVE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN THE U.S.?

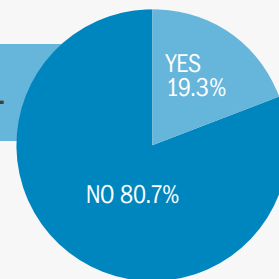
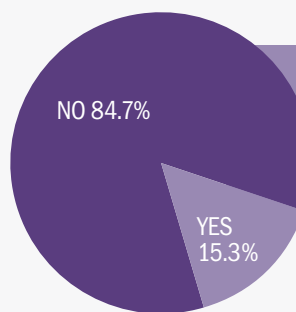


CHART 2.2 DO A FEMALE CANDIDATE AND A MALE CANDIDATE HAVE AN EQUAL SHOT OF BECOMING THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES IN TODAY’S AMERICA?



IS A FEMINIST MOVEMENT NEEDED TODAY?

YES

“A feminist movement [is needed] that does not degrade or blame men, but embraces its lack of female awareness and educates it.”—Heterosexual female

“A feminist movement [is needed] that is inclusive of women of color and not just upper-middle class white women.”
—Bisexual female

“All of the gender inequalities that exist in the workplace alone are enough for a movement.”—Bisexual male

“Both men and women should pressure society to treat both sexes with equal opportunity to succeed.”
—Heterosexual male

“It should be presented as a progressive, positive, non-resentful movement.”—Heterosexual male

NO

“Feminism in a light-medium sense is fine, but I feel (in my experience) that many ‘hard-core’ feminists are ‘anti-men’ and that is not productive!”—Heterosexual male

“For what reason? The world is probably as woman-friendly as it is going to get.”—Heterosexual female

“How about an Equal Opportunity Movement.”
—Homosexual female

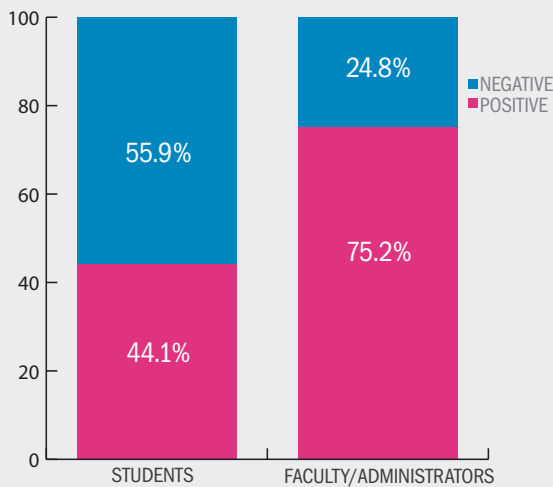
“I believe females have established themselves and have leveled the playing field.”—Heterosexual female

“I believe women have near or complete equality to men in most or all aspects.”—Heterosexual male

“I don’t think it is needed, we can just keep working the way we have been. We have made a lot of progress. I think sometimes feminism asks for too much.”
—Heterosexual female

has a positive association, suggesting a possible generational gap (see Chart 2.3). It may be for this reason that, even though 26 percent of students responded that they do not think a feminist movement is needed today, most argue that a broader humanist movement or an equal rights movement—which would include women’s rights and gender equality among its goals—is needed instead. A study published in 2008 confirms that many Millennial undergraduates have increasingly negative perceptions of feminists and reject the feminist label as outdated, which may explain why identifying as a feminist “occurs among only a minority of today’s undergraduates, both men and women, whereas a majority of students express concern for ‘women’s rights.’”¹¹

CHART 2.3 IN YOUR OPINION, DOES FEMINISM HAVE A POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE CONNOTATION?



GENDER- AND SEXUALITY-BASED VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION

A national survey of undergraduates conducted in 2005 found that sexual harassment is widespread on college campuses, with 62 percent of students experiencing sexual harassment.¹² The experience of the students responding to the PPR survey corroborate this, as

OVER 60 PERCENT FEEL THAT SEXUAL HARASSMENT OR SEXUAL ASSAULT IS A PROBLEM ON THEIR CAMPUSES.

The national study conducted in 2005 found that males and females have a similar chance of being sexually harassed on campus, and that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students are more likely to be harassed than heterosexual students.¹² This same study found that students’ peers were the most common harassers, as 80 percent of students who experience sexual harassment are targeted by another student or group of students on campus.¹² Results from this PPR survey reflect this finding with the majority of students admitting that they themselves or their friends have made sexist and/or homophobic comments in the past year (see Table 2.1). Despite these figures,

70 PERCENT OF OUR STUDENT RESPONDENTS BELIEVE THAT THE CLIMATE OF THEIR COLLEGE CAMPUS IS ACCEPTING OF INDIVIDUALS OF DIFFERENT GENDERS AND SEXUAL PREFERENCES.

CHART 2.4 HETEROSEXUAL STUDENTS’ LEVEL OF COMFORT WITH BEING AROUND A GAY COUPLE

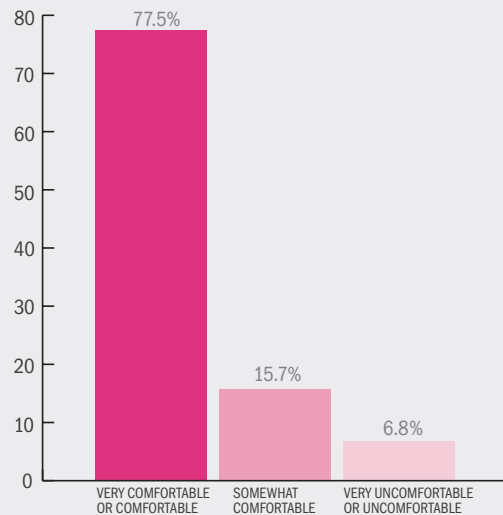


CHART 2.5 HETEROSEXUAL STUDENTS’ LEVEL OF COMFORT WITH BEING HIT ON BY A PERSON OF A DIFFERENT SEXUAL ORIENTATION

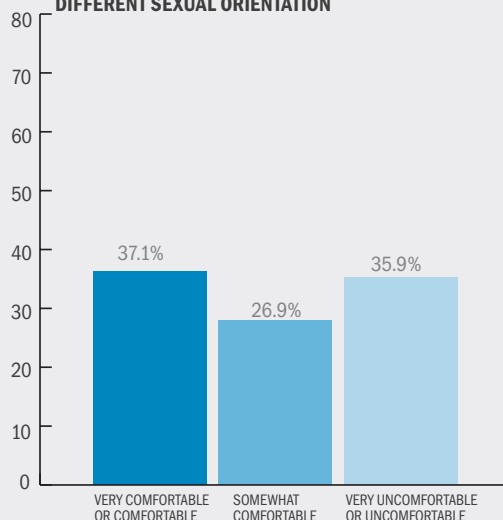


CHART 2.6 HAVE YOU EVER BEEN BULLIED BECAUSE OF YOUR SEX/GENDER?

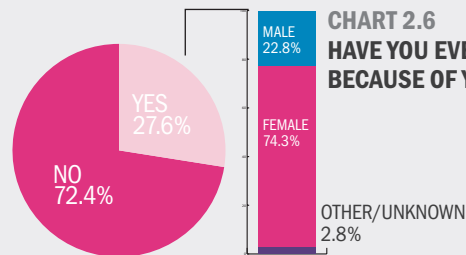
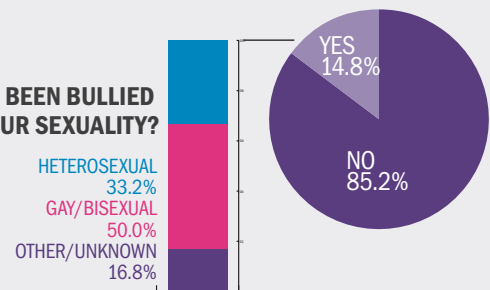


CHART 2.7 HAVE YOU EVER BEEN BULLIED BECAUSE OF YOUR SEXUALITY?



This was true for the majority of heterosexual, gay, bisexual, male, female and transgender respondents (68 to 73 percent of each group agreed).

While many students admit that both they and their friends have made homophobic comments, the vast majority of heterosexual students (77 percent) claim to be “comfortable” or “very comfortable” around homosexual couples (see Chart 2.4). They are, however, admittedly less comfortable when they are the target of advances by persons of a different sexual orientation; only 37 percent of heterosexual students are “comfortable” or “very comfortable” with being “hit on” by a person of a different sexual orientation (see Chart 2.5).

Overall, 28 percent of student respondents admit to being bullied because of their gender and 15 percent say they have been bullied because of their sexuality. Taking into account different gender groups, a greater percentage of women than men have been prey to gender-based bullying (see Chart 2.6), and eight out of the nine transgender students who responded admit to being bullied based on their gender. Regarding students who report being bullied due to their sexuality, many more were homosexual or bisexual students (50 percent) than heterosexual students (33 percent) (see Chart 2.7). A significant percentage of homosexual and bisexual students reveal that they sometimes hide their sexuality in order to avoid judgment, bullying and physical violence. Many female respondents also admitted to downplaying their gender at times, also in order to avoid harassment and to be safe.

Claims that the way women dress can invite sexual violence have become a focus of debate, particularly stemming from the SlutWalk movement, which aimed to fight sexual assault and stand up for victims’ rights, and which was prompted by a statement made by Toronto Police in 2011 that “women should avoid dressing like sluts in order to not be victimized.”¹³ The majority of students surveyed (85 percent) do not believe that sexual violence committed against a woman could in part be the woman’s fault because of how she was dressed (see Chart 2.8). However, 58 percent of men and 44 percent of women do believe that women should be careful about what they wear because it could invite sexual violence (see Chart 2.9).

TABLE 2.1

IN THE PAST YEAR, HAVE YOU OR YOUR FRIENDS MADE ANY...	I HAVE	MY FRIENDS HAVE
Sexist Comments?	75.1%	93.9%
Homophobic Comments?	36.5%	81.4%

CHART 2.8 IF SEXUAL VIOLENCE IS COMMITTED AGAINST A WOMAN, COULD IT IN PART BE HER FAULT BECAUSE OF HOW SHE WAS DRESSED?

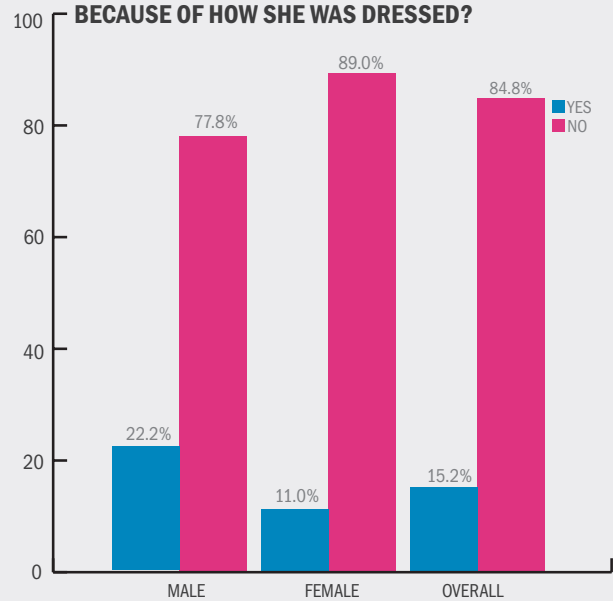
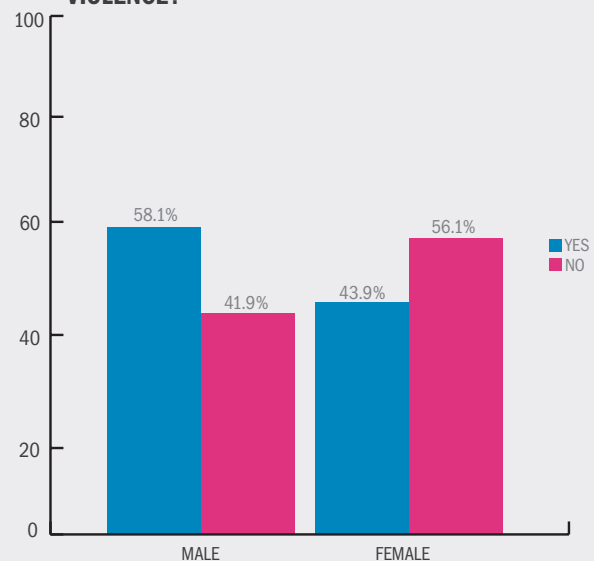
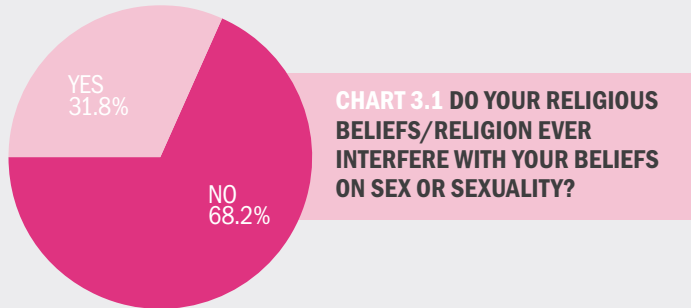


CHART 2.9 SHOULD WOMEN BE CAREFUL ABOUT WHAT THEY WEAR BECAUSE IT COULD INVITE SEXUAL VIOLENCE?



GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN RELATIONSHIPS AND FAMILY LIFE

The Millennials responding to the survey appear to have more open views about sex and more traditional views about love, family and relationships. Over 70 percent of them believe that pornography and casual sex are acceptable and many consider a “slut” to be a promiscuous person, regardless of gender. The majority of students are accepting of other sexual orientations and, although 68 percent of students identify with a specific religion, most do not feel that their religion or religious beliefs conflict with the open nature of their beliefs on sex or sexuality (see Chart 3.1).



QUOTES FROM THOSE THAT SAY THEIR RELIGION/RELIGIOUS BELIEFS DO NOT INTERFERE WITH THEIR BELIEFS ON SEX/SEXUALITY:

“Although I am Christian, I still believe same-sex couples have the right to marry.”—Heterosexual female

“I interpret the teachings of my religion in my own way.”—Heterosexual female

“God made everyone the way He wants them to be.”—Homosexual male

“On occasion I question, but I’m relatively of the mind that God is ok with me.”—Homosexual female



While they may hold more liberal views on sex and sexuality than previous generations, Millennials still prioritize marriage and family as among their top goals, much like their parents’ generation.¹⁴ Similarly, while most of the Millennial population surveyed seem to reject traditional gender roles and wish to raise children in a gender-neutral environment, many of their qualitative responses when describing the “ideal family unit,” reflect a preference for traditional gender roles, with many placing value on the genders of the children they may have.



DESCRIBE WHAT YOUR IDEAL FAMILY LOOKS LIKE:

“One biological child, one adopted child, a husband and a wife.”—Heterosexual male

“Two children, one boy and a daughter, four years apart in age.”—Homosexual female

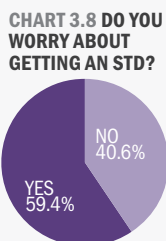
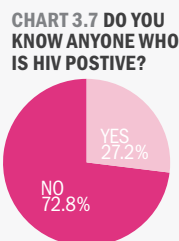
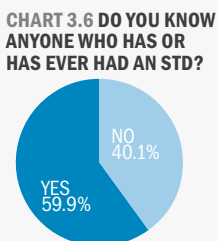
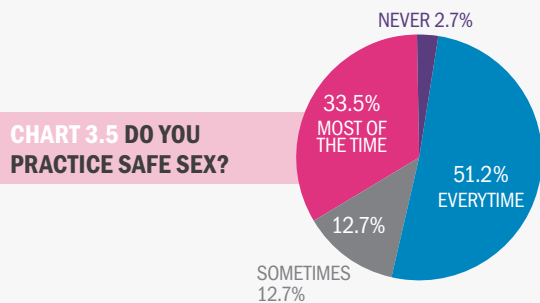
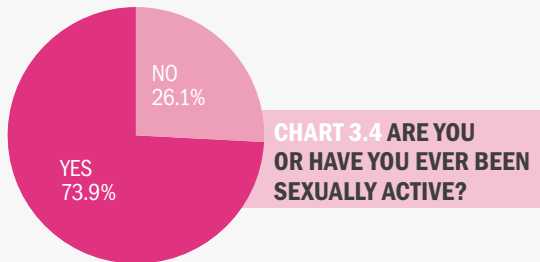
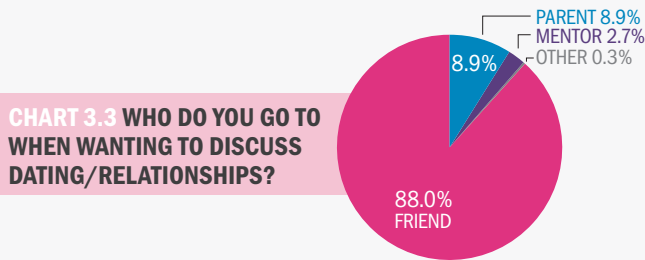
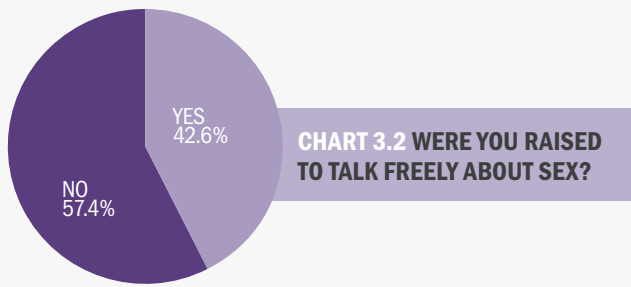
“Two happy adults living together who share the same (if not more) amount of love, respect, and support for each other in any circumstance.”—Homosexual male

“Two kids, myself and a happy marriage.”—Heterosexual female

“Two men, one to two children and a dog.”—Queer male

“Two men, three girls, a nice comfortable home, lots of love and a pet.”—Homosexual male

“Two mothers—both working—and two to three children and a dog or cat.”—Homosexual female



SEX, LOVE AND MARRIAGE

The majority of students surveyed believe that they were not raised to talk freely about sex (52 percent of men and 61 percent of women) (see Chart 3.2). This may be why most (88 percent) choose to talk to friends, as opposed to parents, about dating and relationships (see Chart 3.3). While 74 percent of students currently are or have been sexually active, and 72 percent believe that casual sex or sex without being in a relationship is acceptable, only half report that they always practice safe sex (see Charts 3.4 and 3.5). Sixty percent of these students know someone who has had a sexually transmitted disease (STD) and 27 percent know someone who is HIV positive (see Charts 3.6 and 3.7). These factors may explain why a majority

(59 PERCENT) WORRY ABOUT CONTRACTING AN STD (see Chart 3.8).

Casual sex aside, romance still plays a prominent role in students' ideas about relationships—most of them report having been in love (67 percent) and many of them cite love, stability and being happy as important aspects of their “ideal family unit.” Despite a rise in media recognition of non-monogamous relationships and marriages,^{15,16} 53 percent of the students surveyed at this year's PPRs still believe that monogamy should be the only acceptable way to have a romantic relationship. Furthermore,

75 PERCENT STATE THAT GETTING MARRIED IS IMPORTANT TO THEM

(76 percent of men and 74 percent of women) and the average age at which they would like to get married is 29. Before marriage, 87 percent of students would consider living with their significant other and 87 percent believe that more people living together outside of marriage is actually a good thing for society or, at worst, harmless. Approximately half of the students who indicated they would not live with their significant other prior to being married also belong to the same group of students who believe that this trend is a bad thing for society.

The young women and men surveyed still hold certain traditional views about marriage as it relates to last names. Only 18 percent of all women—heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual—would not change their last name after they get married. For homosexual or bisexual females, this percentage jumps to 29 percent. In comparison, 76 percent of men would not change their name after getting married. However, homosexual or bisexual men are more likely to change their last name than heterosexual men (see Table 3.1).

TABLE 3.1

WHEN MARRIED, WILL YOU TAKE YOUR SIGNIFICANT OTHERS' LAST NAME?	HETEROSEXUAL MALES	HOMOSEXUAL OR BISEXUAL MALES	HETEROSEXUAL FEMALES	HOMOSEXUAL OR BISEXUAL FEMALES
YES	4.0%	5.8%	36.7%	18.7%
YES, but will also keep my own name	12.8%	48.4%	48.5%	52.4%
NO	83.2%	45.8%	14.8%	28.9%

PARENTS AND PARENTING

Based on their personal descriptions of the “ideal family unit,” the majority of students hope to have children, and the average age at which they would like to have their first child is 30.

SIXTY-FOUR PERCENT DO NOT BELIEVE THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO RAISE CHILDREN WITH TRADITIONAL GENDER ROLES AND 68 PERCENT THINK THAT CHILD-REARING SHOULD OCCUR IN A GENDER-NEUTRAL ENVIRONMENT (see Charts 3.9 and 3.10).

These beliefs are held by students despite the large majority of them (84 percent) having been raised by parents who encourage(d) them to fit into traditional gender roles. A similar percentage of faculty members and administrators (87 percent) were also encouraged by their parents to fit into their traditional gender roles. This notwithstanding, compared to students, a greater percentage of the faculty members and administrators supports raising children without traditional gender roles (87 percent) or in gender-neutral environments (74 percent).



CHART 3.10 SHOULD WE TRY TO RAISE CHILDREN IN GENDER-NEUTRAL ENVIRONMENTS?

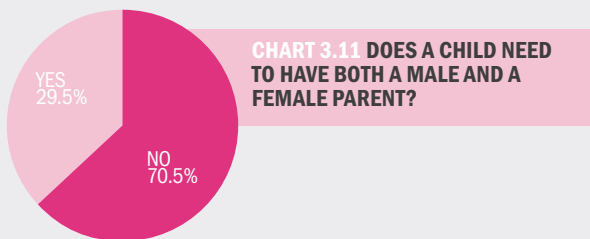
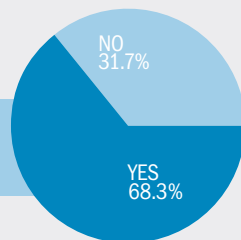
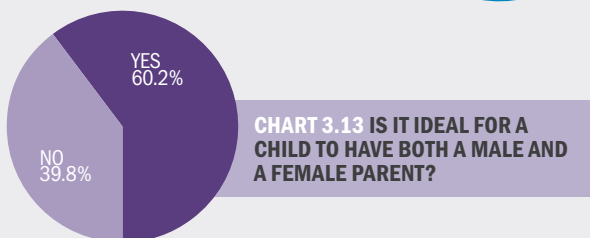
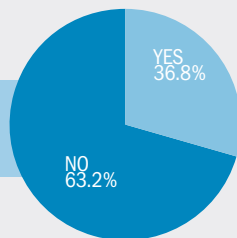


CHART 3.12 IS THE SEX/GENDER OF PARENT(S) IMPORTANT FOR CHILDREARING?



QUOTES FROM THOSE THAT FEEL IT IS IMPORTANT TO RAISE CHILDREN WITH TRADITIONAL GENDER ROLES:

“I feel that society has certain [gender] constructs for a reason.” – Heterosexual female

“I want to raise my kids how I was raised.” – Heterosexual male

“If not, then society would discriminate against them. It’s a system.” – Heterosexual male

“They need some guidance and then they can decide for themselves.” – Heterosexual female

QUOTES FROM THOSE THAT DO NOT FEEL IT IS IMPORTANT TO RAISE CHILDREN WITH TRADITIONAL GENDER ROLES

“Children should be allowed to make their own decisions about who they want to be, though they should be aware of traditional roles.” – Bisexual male

“Gender is socially constructed and essentially has no effect on a child’s intelligence or sense of self. Gender roles do need to exist to raise children.” – Homosexual male

“I want my children to develop their own beliefs.” – Heterosexual male

“Gender roles are constructed and serve to limit what people can/cannot do. So we shouldn’t force children through this.” – Heterosexual female

“I think that traditional gender roles are becoming pretty outdated.” – Heterosexual female

Although most students do not feel that a child needs to have a parent of each gender and that gender is not important for childrearing, the majority (60 percent) believe that it is “ideal” for a child to have both a male and a female parent (see Charts 3.11 to 3.13). Additionally, half of students think that it is important for a male child to have a male parent (51 percent) and a female child to have a female parent (52 percent). Slightly more males than females think that it is important for a male child to have a male parent (56 percent of men versus 49 percent of women) and more males also feel that it is important for a female child to have a female parent (57 percent of men versus 49 percent of women). Even though 52 percent of students believe that the trend of more single women deciding to have children without a male partner to help raise them doesn’t make much difference for society, 34 percent of students believe this trend to be a bad thing for society, which may reflect some of their sentiment that children benefit from having both a male and a female parent. When asked about the trend of more gay and lesbian couples raising children, 45 percent believe that it is a good thing for society and 47 percent believe that it doesn’t make much difference.



NINETY-TWO PERCENT OF THE STUDENTS SURVEYED INDICATE THAT THEY EXPECT THEIR FUTURE PARTNER TO WORK AS OPPOSED TO STAYING HOME TO CARE FOR THEIR CHILD(REN).

When asked about childcare for their future families, many indicated that gender and sexuality would play a factor in whom they choose to care for their children. Almost half of students admit that they would consider the gender and sexuality of a nanny they might hire. When specifically asked to rate how comfortable they would be with a nanny who was male, female, heterosexual, homosexual or transgender, respondents were on average more comfortable with a heterosexual nanny than a homosexual nanny and with a female nanny than with a male or transgender nanny (see Charts 3.14 and 3.15).

WHEN IT COMES TO THE SEXUALITY OF THEIR FUTURE CHILDREN, STUDENT RESPONDENTS WOULD, ON AVERAGE, BE COMFORTABLE HAVING A SON OR DAUGHTER WHO IDENTIFIED AS HOMOSEXUAL

and would be comfortable with their daughter engaging in male-dominated activities or their son engaging in female-dominated activities. There was very little difference between male and female student responses on this question. Faculty members and administrators were, on average, more comfortable than students with the idea of a daughter or son who identified as homosexual. The faculty and administrators' apparent acceptance of having homosexual children provides a striking contrast to what students believe to be their parents' more conservative views on the subject. Most students believe that their parents would be "uncomfortable" or "very uncomfortable" if they married someone of the same sex (see Chart 3.16).



CHART 3.14 STUDENTS' LEVEL OF COMFORT WITH THE SEXUALITY OF THEIR CHILDREN(S)' CAREGIVER

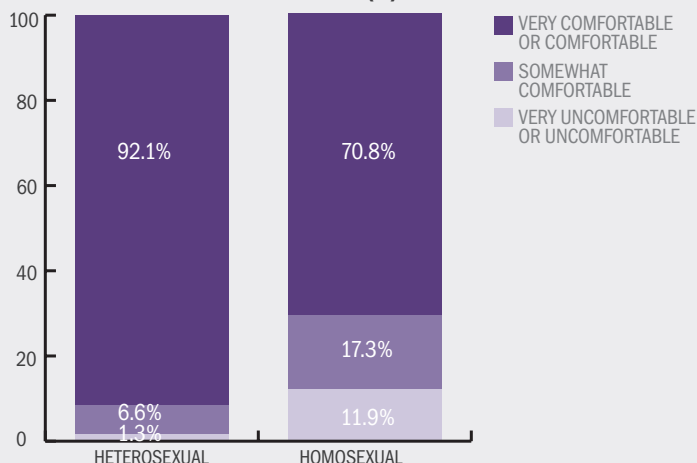


CHART 3.15 STUDENTS' LEVEL OF COMFORT WITH THE GENDER OF THEIR CHILDREN(S)' CAREGIVER

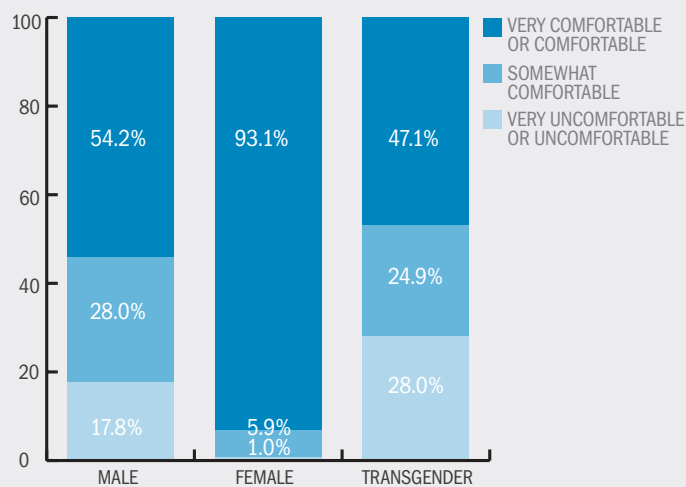
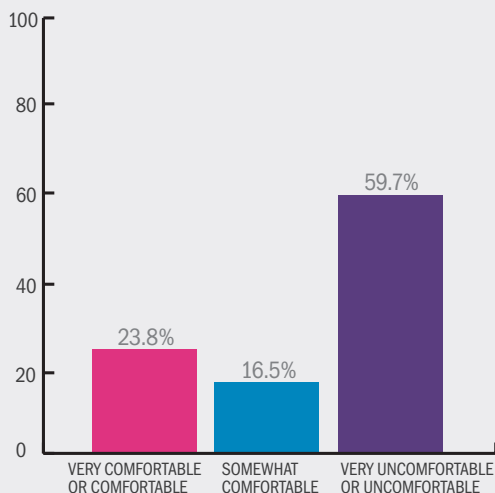


CHART 3.16 HOW COMFORTABLE WOULD YOUR PARENT(S)/ GUARDIAN(S) BE IF YOU MARRIED SOMEONE OF THE SAME SEX?



CAREER + MONEY

According to a Pew Research Center survey, Millennials seek the opportunity to hold high-powered jobs—almost half of Millennials state that “being successful in a high-paying career” is very important and an additional 15 percent believe that it is “one of the most important things in their lives.”¹⁴ Another survey by the Families and Work Institute found that young men and women of the Millennial generation report an equal desire for jobs with increasing responsibility and this desire appears to be just as strong in young women with children.¹⁷ If this is true, then what are Millennials’ views on the income-earning responsibilities within a relationship?

EIGHTY-EIGHT PERCENT OF STUDENTS INDICATED THAT THEY WOULD BE COMFORTABLE WITH THEIR PARTNER MAKING MORE MONEY THAN THEMSELVES.

Only 27 percent however, would be comfortable being solely supported by their partner financially and only 39 percent would be comfortable being the sole bread-winner (see Charts 4.1 and 4.2). More men than women reported that they would be comfortable being fully supported by their partner financially—32 percent and 25 percent, respectively. But, far more men than women would be comfortable fully supporting a partner—59 percent of men versus 27 percent of women.

Less than half of students (44 percent) believe that some jobs are naturally better suited for one sex or gender, listing construction work, teaching and nursing as examples. Yet, many more men than women feel this way (56 percent versus 37 percent, respectively). This same trend was seen in responses to the question, “Should sex/gender be considered when hiring for a job position?” Only 12 percent of women believe that gender should be considered, while 22 percent of men feel this way. Despite these considerations of gender in job choice and hiring,

THE LARGE MAJORITY OF MALE AND FEMALE STUDENTS WOULD BE COMFORTABLE ENTERING A CAREER FIELD DOMINATED BY THE OPPOSITE GENDER (90 PERCENT AND 86 PERCENT, RESPECTIVELY).

The majority of all students, 86 percent, also feels that women should be allowed in combat in the male-dominated military.

Millennials’ compulsion to obtain successful, high-powered jobs and to have happy, healthy family lives can raise issues of work-life balance. These Millennial students are optimistic about their ability to find such balance, with 96 percent believing they can have both a rewarding professional career and a fulfilling personal life (see Chart 4.3). On this point, both males and females agreed.



CHART 4.1
WOULD YOU BE COMFORTABLE BEING SOLELY SUPPORTED BY YOUR PARTNER FINANCIALLY?

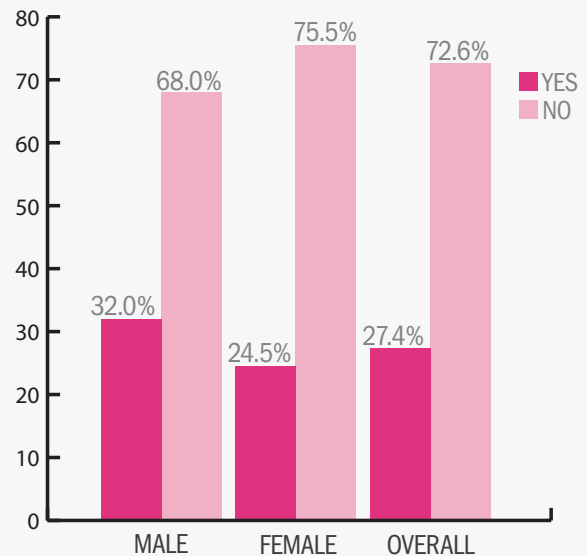
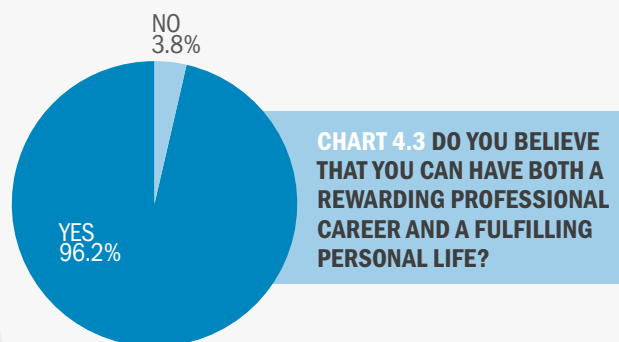
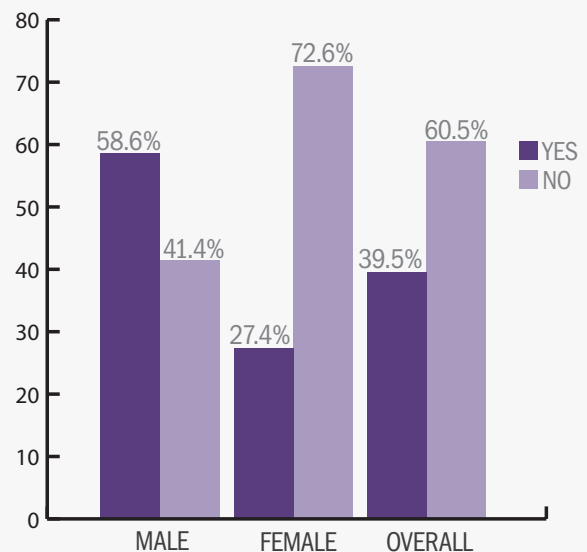


CHART 4.2
WOULD YOU BE COMFORTABLE SOLELY SUPPORTING YOUR PARTNER FINANCIALLY?



Conclusion

The data from this report point to a group of young people who are interested in changing traditional ideas about gender and sexuality. While traditional gender and sexuality norms still appear to influence many of the students' views on specific aspects of their lives, they are overall strong advocates for gender equality and largely reject the notion that certain behaviors and practices—like childrearing or military combat service—are better suited for individuals of a particular gender. The students in this survey are tolerant in their views about sex and sexuality and support LGBTQ causes, such as same-sex marriage and the recent repeal of the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy.¹⁸ These young people wish to minimize the emphasis that traditional gender and sexuality norms have in their personal and professional lives. Doing so, in their opinion, would go a long way towards creating a more equitable society.



Appendix A

NOTE: DATA IS FOR ALL SURVEY PARTICIPANTS—STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND ADMINISTRATORS

CITIZENSHIP	N	%
A. Born in the U.S.	2801	80.4%
B. Citizen of a Country other than the U.S.	302	8.7%
C. Naturalized Citizen	169	4.9%
D. Permanent Resident of the U.S. (Green Card)	63	1.8%
A. and B.	50	1.4%
A. and C.	13	0.4%
B. and C.	25	0.7%
C. and D.	24	0.7%
Left Blank.	36	1.0%

RELIGION	N	%
Buddhist	89	2.6%
Christian	1837	52.7%
Hindu	33	0.9%
Jewish	141	4.0%
Muslim	110	3.2%
None	843	24.2%
Other	313	9.0%
Left Blank	117	3.4%

ARE YOU A POSSE SCHOLAR?	N	%
Yes	1428	46.2%
No	1617	52.3%
Left Blank	44	1.4%

YOU ARE A: CIRCLE ONE	N	%
Student	3089	88.7%
Administrator	159	4.6%
Faculty Member	170	4.9%
Administrator and Faculty Member	5	0.1%
Left Blank	65	1.7%

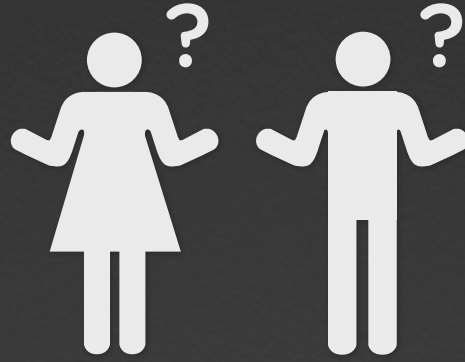
WHAT YEAR ARE YOU?	N	%
First	1043	33.8%
Second	842	27.3%
Third	530	17.2%
Fourth	577	18.7%
Fifth	26	0.8%
Sixth	4	0.1%
Graduate Student	14	0.5%
Left Blank	53	1.7%

AGE	N	%	AGE	N	%
17	13	0.4%	25	16	0.5%
18	682	19.6%	26-30	46	1.3%
19	869	24.9%	31-35	56	1.6%
20	661	19.0%	36-40	34	1.0%
21	553	15.9%	41-50	83	2.4%
22	239	6.9%	51-60	48	1.4%
23	34	1.0%	61-70	19	0.5%
24	18	0.5%	71-80	4	0.1%
			Left Blank	108	3.1%

SEX	N	%
Male	1349	38.7%
Female	2084	59.8%
Transgender	10	0.3%
Other	12	0.3%
Intersex	0	0.0%
Left Blank	28	0.8%

SEXUAL ORIENTATION	N	%
Straight/Heterosexual	2783	79.9%
Lesbian/Gay	299	8.6%
Bisexual	186	5.3%
Queer	44	1.3%
Other	50	1.4%
Left Blank	121	3.5%

RACE	N	%
Asian	324	9.3%
Black/African-American	952	27.3%
Bi/Multiracial	343	9.8%
White	972	27.9%
Hispanic (non-white)/Latino	6	0.2%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	706	20.3%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	16	0.5%
Other	88	2.5%
Left Blank	76	2.2%



GENDER+ SEXUALITY

PossePlus Retreat 2012 Report

END NOTES:

- 1) Unless otherwise noted, data presented in this report represents survey findings from the student participants only.
- 2) Kristof, Nicholas D., & WuDunn, Sheryl. (2009, August). The Women's Crusade. The New York Times. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/23/magazine/23Women-t.html?_r=1&ref=magazine#
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