

**San Diego State University**

**Program in Educational Leadership Dissertation Defense Announcement**

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Committee Member: Dr. Joshua Moon Johnson, College of San Mateo

Title of Dissertation: Transforming the Binary: Lived Experiences and Institutional Support for Gender Expansive Employees in the California Community Colleges

Date of Defense: November 20th, 2024

Time of Defense: 1:30 p.m.

Location of Defense: [Zoom](https://SDSU.zoom.us/j/81445715574), <https://SDSU.zoom.us/j/81445715574>

**Abstract**

This qualitative phenomenological study served to highlight the lived experiences of transgender, nonbinary, genderqueer, and otherwise gender expansive employees in the California Community College (CCC) system and illustrate what the CCC system can learn from these experiences to improve inclusion in policy and practice and move away from binarized and cisnormative structures. Eleven gender expansive employees at community colleges throughout California served as experts by sharing their lived experiences, suggestions, and opinions, providing insight into the influences of institutional policy and practices and the political landscape on lived experience in the workplace. Utilizing Preston and Hoffman's theory of traditionally heterogendered institutions as a framework, themes and subthemes that emerged from participant interviews highlighted the impact of institutional environment, policies and

practices, and support on lived experiences related to belonging, the political landscape, power, and representation. The results of this study seek to inform future practice for community college practitioners, offering recommendations for leaders, institutional policy and practices, and systemwide policy to improve inclusion for gender expansive employees by creating more welcoming and affirming working conditions within postsecondary education.