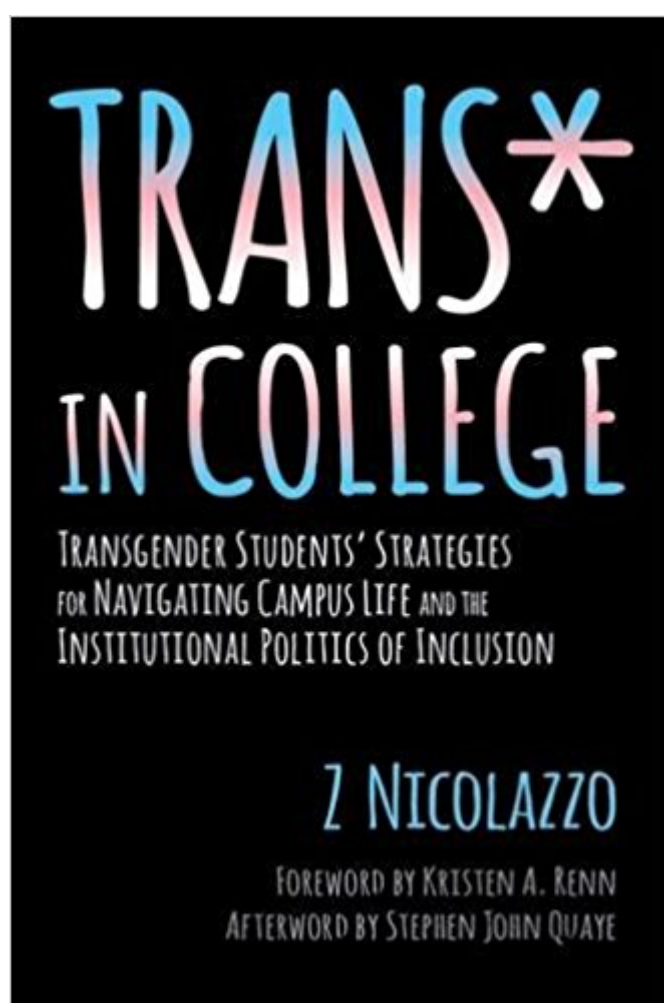


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# Trans\* In College: Transgender Students' Strategies For Navigating Campus Life And The Institutional Politics Of Inclusion



## Synopsis

WINNER of 2017 AERA DIVISION J OUTSTANDING PUBLICATION AWARD This is both a personal book that offers an account of the author's own trans\* identity and a deeply engaged study of trans\* collegians that reveals the complexities of trans\* identities, and how these students navigate the trans\* oppression present throughout society and their institutions, create community and resilience, and establish meaning and control in a world that assumes binary genders. This book is addressed as much to trans\* students themselves as offering them a frame to understand the genders that mark them as different and to address the feelings brought on by the weight of that difference as it is to faculty, student affairs professionals, and college administrators, opening up the implications for the classroom and the wider campus. This book not only remedies the paucity of literature on trans\* college students, but does so from a perspective of resiliency and agency. Rather than situating trans\* students as problems requiring accommodation, this book problematizes the college environment and frames trans\* students as resilient individuals capable of participating in supportive communities and kinship networks, and of developing strategies to promote their own success. Z Nicolazzo provides the reader with a nuanced and illuminating review of the literature on gender and sexuality that sheds light on the multiplicity of potential expressions and outward representations of trans\* identity as a prelude to the ethnography she conducted with nine trans\* collegians that richly documents their interactions with, and responses to, environments ranging from the unwittingly offensive to explicitly antagonistic. The book concludes by giving space to the study's participants to themselves share what they want college faculty, staff, and students to know about their lived experiences. Two appendices respectively provide a glossary of vocabulary and terms to address commonly asked questions, and a description of the study design, offered as guide for others considering working alongside marginalized population in a manner that foregrounds ethics, care, and reciprocity.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"With recent estimates of the trans\* population in the United States showing three to six times as many trans\* people under the age of 18 as there are over the age of 18, the work Z Nicolazzo undertakes in this book should be required reading for educators at every level of instruction. Gender is changing in ways we can scarcely comprehend, and millions of students already live lives that break the gender binary and contest what Nicolazzo calls 'compulsory heterogenderism.' We owe it to those students to acknowledge their reality, and reflect it in our pedagogy, curriculum, and institutional practices." (Susan Stryker, Associate Professor of Gender and Women's Studies University of Arizona, and founding co-editor of TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly) "A timely and persuasive contribution to the literature on communities on the margins of higher education, Nicolazzo offers deep insight into the multiplicity of intersectional and systemic barriers faced by trans\* collegians. But this book goes far past the expected story of trans\* suffering to powerfully center trans\* resilience and voice. The trans\* students at the heart of this work demand better from all of us. A must read for all concerned with true inclusion and change in the academy. For every higher education administrator and change agent, this book offers a clarion call to consider how the collegiate environment continues to be shaped without trans\* students in mind." (Sumun L. Pendakur, Associate Dean for Institutional Diversity Harvey Mudd College) "Z Nicolazzo offers a powerful analysis of trans\* collegian's experiences and honors their voices. Ze delivers a thoughtful and provocative book about resilience, kinship, and social justice, requiring readers to think more critically about safety, outness, engagement, and identity. Nicolazzo's book draws much needed attention to trans\* oppression in higher education, how we are all implicated, and calls for us to re-think our approach to practices that shape our campus environments." (Chase Catalano, Assistant Professor, College Student Personnel Western Illinois University) "In a society and educational system that repeatedly marginalizes trans\* people, Z Nicolazzo has done what few higher education scholars attempt; that is, Z not only centers the experiences of Trans\* college students but presents their stories in a way that brings visibility to their lives and wonderfully humanizes them as whole people. Trans\* In

College is an amazingly thoughtful and introspective examination of what it means to both navigate and transgress the exclusive structures, policies, and culture of post-secondary institutions.

Readers will appreciate Z Nicolazzo's approach in this book, particularly his capacity to complicate existing Trans\*-related research and the liminal space that Trans\* persons have occupied in gender and sexuality discourses. This book is a necessary read for anyone, particularly cisgender people, seeking to understand Trans\* lives and experiences in college. While the emphasis is on Trans\* students, this book has larger implications for facilitating social justice on college and university campuses. This book should be required classroom reading and would be an outstanding resource for professional development programs. Lastly, this book should serve as inspiration to prompt future research which centers Trans\* lives." (Lori D. Patton, Professor, Higher Education & Student Affairs Program Indiana University School of Education)"Dr. Z Nicolazzo's first book, Trans\* in College is a beautifully written, rigorous, and masterful insight into the lives of nine trans\* collegians at City University [a pseudonym] and how postsecondary educators can do better to support the education, resilience practices, and life chances for trans\* collegians. Through the use of critical theoretical frameworks and methodologies that begin from the experiences and needs of the participants, Nicolazzo also demonstrates new possibilities for both the doing and reporting of research in higher education. As a scholar, I look forward to sharing this book with future graduate students as an example of how we can proliferate possibilities through and for scholarship. As a trans\* parent of a trans\* child, I am unspeakably grateful to the nine trans\* collegians who have collaborated with Nicolazzo to create together this beautiful reflection of us." (Dafina-Lazarus Stewart, Ph.D., Higher Education and Student Affairs Bowling Green State University)"There has never been a more important time for a book like this one that helps readers know that trans\* college students are not only possible, but they face the seemingly impossible task of speaking their stories and, in the tradition of minoritized peoples, writing themselves into existence. As is so clear throughout this book, trans\* students are not impossible people in higher education. For centuries higher education has constructed itself to be an impossible place for trans\* people to be themselves, to be safe, to be seen. We with power in higher education (e.g., tenured and tenure-stream faculty, administrators, majoritized students) have allowed it to be so, and benefitted from it. We can change it. We can read the stories represented in this book and we can make higher education live up to its best image of itself as an institution that provides opportunity. It's time we see, and let them be seen on their terms, not ours." (From the Foreword by Kristen Renn)

Z Nicolazzo is an assistant professor in the Adult and Higher Education program and a faculty associate in the Center for the Study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality, both at Northern Illinois University, DeKalb. Z's research agenda is focused on mapping gender across college contexts, with particular attention to trans\* collegians, as well as the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, and disability. Prior to becoming a faculty member, Z worked as a full-time student affairs professional experience in the functional areas of residence life, sexual violence prevention, and fraternity and sorority life. You can follow Z on his website at [znicolazzo.weebly.com](http://znicolazzo.weebly.com) or on twitter at @trans\_killjoy. Kristen A. Renn is Assistant Professor of Higher, Adult, & Lifelong Education and Coordinator, Student Affairs Administration Program, Michigan State University.

This was challenging in so many ways. I would recommend this as required reading for higher education professionals and most any other cisgender individual who has never thought through the lived experiences of those who identify within the spectrum of gender variance.

This book touches on many aspects of supporting transgender college students. It is helpful in many ways and urges us to recognize what we can and cannot do, what we should and should not do and how to help move our institutions forward in the right ways.

Reading this book for class, but I love this story. Great information for a narrative different from many people out there.

THIS BOOK IS AMAZING! Z does an amazing job.

The summary does an excellent job of telling you what this book is about, so I won't repeat it here. I will say that even though this is an academic book and will probably largely be read by an academic audience, you don't need a deep knowledge of trans\* studies to appreciate and understand this work and the experiences navigating a university that the nine trans\* students in the study relate. Dr. Nicolazzo does an excellent job of explaining the literature and how this study fits into it, and explaining terminology (even going so far as to provide a glossary of terms in the back of the book). Anyone should be able to read and understand this book. It's well written, tells you what you need to know and gives you the context you need, and is on a very important topic. Highly recommended for anyone who wants to learn how trans\* students navigate college spaces, and administrators or instructors who want to serve their students (and I mean all their students, not just trans\* students)

better.

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