# THE VERMONT CONNECTION

THE STUDENT AFFAIRS JOURNAL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

VOLUME 29 • 2008
BURLINGTON, VT

*The Vermont Connection* welcomes manuscripts addressing concerns of common interest among higher education and student affairs professionals. Of particular interest are articles exploring current issues, suggesting creative programming, and presenting original research. The opinions and attitudes expressed within this journal do not necessarily reflect those of the Editorial Board. *The Vermont Connection* acknowledges that scholarship is ever-changing; we include both traditional and non-traditional scholarly works in this volume.


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208 Mann Hall
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Printed at Queen City Printers, Inc.

THE VERMONT CONNECTION
VOLUME 29
2008

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# EDITOR'S NOTE

*The Me and We in TVC*

Being in a field saturated with acronyms, I sometimes wonder if we ever lose sight of what these letters stand for: RA, CDA, PCRD, PB, ARD, IRA. They all make up what I have learned to be the metaphorical big bowl of higher education and student affairs "alphabet soup." Although these letters can sometimes dominate my professional vocabulary, there is one acronym I will most likely never forget: *TVC*.

*TVC. The Vermont Connection*. In its twenty-eighth year, these three letters have come to represent so much more than a student-run and published journal that continues to remain fresh and cutting-edge among its counterparts in the field. It is more than a nationally-esteemed graduate program with a distinguished line of faculty. *The Vermont Connection* is not just thirty-two intellectually stimulating graduate colleagues who continually amaze me with the care they practice. In this past year serving as editor, I have come to learn that *The Vermont Connection* is an intersection of the aforementioned statements, which cannot and will not stand alone.

This lesson in my life is best described by the theme of this year's Moral Conversation, *Identity: From Awareness to Action*. As our own identities are open to meaning making, the identity of *TVC* is as well. I have seen how *TVC* is a chance for individuals to find, as our Final Word author Alvin Sturdivant says, "hope, faith, and friendship." For others, I have seen how it serves as a training ground for developing "trailblazers," learning how to work toward social justice. I have observed how it is a chance to sit in Jess Belue Buckley's (last year's Kenneth P. Saurman Award recipient) proverbial "chair" to ponder our "moments of mistake and uncertainty."

Some may agree with me that HESA can be a salient identity while one is in the program. At one point during my HESA career, I became aware of all that is tied to this four-letter acronym, and at times was rather tired of wearing this identity. In the moments where I wanted to leave it all behind, I was reminded that there were others that shared a much larger-than-HESA identity, *The Vermont Connection*. There was a greener side to it all. I was inspired to take action that would invoke and sustain the same awareness I realized, watching, with a "bird's eye view" (similar to that of Jan Walbert's), today's deans, presidents, directors, and practitioners who shared a common experience. They walked comfortably in their own shoes with such style, integrity, compassion, and grace, all the while actively engaging those around them. They, alongside all those that share in *The Vermont Connection*, such as my current graduate colleagues, faculty, UVM employees, family, and friends, inspire me day after day to continue the work that we do for our institutions, for each other, and ourselves. They give me pride for an identity that I have come to intimately know and love as *TVC*.

I am proud to say this editorial board "took action" with great creativity and innovation. This year, we joined the environmental sustainability movement and became greener by printing the journal on recycled paper. We also reduced the number of journals printed by utilizing technology: for the first time, we are offering an easily accessible online journal. May it be a small sustainable action rooted in an awareness that can last, as Pat Brown notes in his reflection, "seven generations."

I probably cannot capture the words that reflect the gratitude I have for the efforts of all those involved in the making of the 29th Volume of *The Vermont Connection*. Our advisors, Patty Eldred ('80) and Nicholas Negrete ('06), are true role models for *The Vermont Connection* in action. This volume would not be possible without the generosity of their expertise, time, and hearts. Many thanks to our re-established Faculty Liaison, Deborah Hunter, for providing the rich historical context we now know we cannot intentionally act without in the future. To the HESA faculty, thank you for continually giving us the tools to open our minds and hearts and inspire the voices in this text. To the alumni, thank you for the sometimes short but powerful interactions that lend themselves to a heartfelt reminder of the amazing connection we have. I would like to thank last year's editorial board and the 2007 cohort for giving us the confidence to navigate our own *labyrinths*; they helped this graduating cohort build a stable foundation that cannot be destroyed, no matter what the *debacle*. To the current full board, thank you for making a task so big, feel so intimately small. To my fellow editorial board members, I thank you with the utmost sincerity for giving me the honor to serve by your side and to share in a tradition that is so uniquely ours.

On behalf of *TVC*, I am pleased to present the 29th Volume of *The Vermont Connection*. May the open hearts and minds of the authors across these pages open yours, and allow you to find a place to intentionally and gently look within, so that you may intentionally and gently act out.

Patricia Nguyen



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# ARTICLES

# Leaders of Color in Higher Education: Transforming a Negative Climate

Adam-Jon Aparicio

*Within higher education, leaders of color face a history of racism expressed through negative experiences of bias and discrimination in today's colleges and universities. In the book, Leaders of Color in Higher Education: Unrecognized Triumphs in Harsh Institutions, Leonard A. Valverde (2003) illustrates the pain felt by leaders of color as they navigate an unwelcoming system. He provides readers with the tools necessary to recognize systematic injustices and examines ways in which leaders of color can "act" as the change they wish to see within the institutions they serve. The following book review explores how Valverde examines the unheard and unrecognized voices of leaders of color and provides ways to create awareness in today's increasingly diverse college and university environments.*

As educators within higher education, our primary role is to further nurture the intellectual, personal, and professional development of the students with whom we work and the communities in which they learn. For educators of color, this goal is often partnered with the tools needed to survive in institutions that continue to devalue, underestimate, and ignore the work that leaders of color provide to institutions. In Leonard A. Valverde's (2003) book *Leaders of Color in Higher Education: Unrecognized Triumphs in Harsh Institutions*, the experiences of leaders of color are examined to provide a voice to a population of leaders who have been historically, and currently, silenced. The following book review examines Valverde's exploration of how our institutions of higher learning became paradoxical beacons of both racism and pluralism, how leaders of color navigate these institutions, and what is needed to end such racist practices.

Valverde (2003) opens his book with a powerful statement regarding the future of higher education and the type of leaders needed to transform this system. He expresses this need here:

> The new leaders, no matter their ethnic or racial identity, no matter their gender, their religious beliefs, or their sexual orientation, will have to be strongly committed to helping shape a better future that not only guards the rights of all persons but promotes substantially the celebration of cultural democracy, in which all cultures are equal. (p. xix)

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This call for *transformational leadership* immediately attracts the reader with an unapologetic goal of systematic change. Transformational leadership is defined as leadership that transforms practices by establishing morals and ethics as the norm (Burns, 1978). Valverde espouses this need through an assessment of the harsh reality of inequity throughout United States history. The book's historical examination identifies key examples of how certain groups of color have been discriminated against. This account expresses that in order to understand the injustices of today, one must first accept the realities of our past. Valverde eloquently builds a foundation of facts and narratives that causes one to explore connections between incidents of bias and leadership systems within higher education.

Valverde provides specific examples of what leaders of color experience throughout their development within undergraduate, graduate, and later professional journeys. This sobering list of experiences is the book's greatest strength as it fervently explains why transformational leadership is needed to protect the well-being of these leaders who are, quite literally, under attack. More specifically, readers of color (or other underrepresented group members) may find that the experiences listed evoke specific connections to their current experiences in higher education. Valverde (2003) describes the graduate school experience specifically for leaders of color here: "Typically, because the numbers are so small, the dynamics are more intense; hence, the experience becomes painfully personal" (p. 30). He further examines such experiences with the following telling example:

> Even worse, it is amazing that many experience the following scenario: In a setting the only person of color or woman in the group will make a suggestion or observation, and it will not be heard (acknowledged) by the group, yet when later said by a white male, it will not only be listened to but accepted as good thinking! (p. 40)

Such examples not only grab the reader's attention, but also thrust the conversation of White privilege into the forefront; thus, connecting the audience through dialogue of a controversial conversation and topic.

As the book continues, the author calls for real change in campus climate to occur through individual transformational leadership as well as through the very system that has hindered the holistic development of leaders of color. Valverde examines the complexities of those who have privilege with efforts to provide systematic change. He further adds that with these privileged leadership roles comes a voice that is heard, valued, and invested in. Moreover, these voices act as a remedy to the goal at hand–equity.

To further investigate equity as a possibility, Valverde discusses how ally work can function as a solution. Moreover, he explains how those who hold privilege can help others with similar privilege become more aware of certain inequities. This involves understanding the ways that both White men and women in higher education add to the perpetuation of privilege. He also discusses how, conversely, these same individuals can work to eradicate the presence of inequity and privilege. Valverde provides an example of such eradication here:

> From past to the present, white males have related more with white women than persons of color. As a result, white women are in a position to bridge misunderstandings and forge more appreciation between white males and persons of color. Given that white women have better and closer access to white men because of their color than to women of color due to their gender, in the future, they can act as the natural link to white men as communicators and advisers. (p. 115)

Valverde's specific examples state that discrimination affects not just those who hold targeted identities, but those who hold non-targeted identities alike. By bringing this idea to fruition, Valverde asserts that both leaders of color and their White colleagues must be aware of discrimination for it to be eradicated.

Valverde has found an authentic voice in developing the thesis of his writing, which is a guide for leaders of color and White leaders who work in higher education systems laced with racism and inequity. As mentioned before, the author emphatically states that higher education will indeed remain a racist institution if not for new leaders who stand for their rights and the rights of others through transformational leadership. Valverde (2003) avows the importance and significance of transformational leadership here:

> For a person of color or a woman to be a leader is to be a change agent. To be an agent of change is not to tinker around the margins of the institution; it is to work on the core…to demonstrate leadership, they now had to transform campuses. This agenda will continue to be the main purpose of future leaders of color. (p. 141)

This assertion urges the reader to question the future of higher education and the leaders that it will foster.

Valverde's writing speaks to both leaders of color and White leaders through the language of challenge. He provides his readers with examples of current inequities on campuses nationwide and uses narratives to unfold the negative impacts they have on all leaders. With each experience Valverde discusses, leaders of color become further validated and ultimately energized to create real change. Valverde's hope is delivered by lifting the unheard voices of leaders of color as they fight in a system that so often tears at the soul. This book is a powerful representation of how one person can provide such change in an institution where change was once thought to be achieved only through power. Valverde has now redefined power and is responsible for the change he wishes to see within higher education.



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# The Sorting Hat: SATs and College Access

Rachel de Simone

*Standardized tests are under scrutiny for no longer being reliable, valid predictors of college success. Because scores differ markedly based on race, income, and opportunity, their use in college admissions reduces access for students of color and students from lower income families. With the surge in SAT preparation, some students spend thousands of dollars to improve their score, further widening the score gap. Tests like the SAT give the illusion of achievement by merit, reward privilege, and mask differences in opportunity. In this paper I will explore the "dark side" of standardized tests and the relationship of the SATs to college access for students of color and students from lower income families.*

The sorting out of individuals according to ability is very nearly the most delicate and difficult process our society has to face. Those who receive the most education are going to move into virtually all the key jobs. Thus the question "Who should go to college?" translates itself into the more compelling question "Who is going to manage the society?" That is not the kind of question one can treat lightly or cavalierly. It is the kind of question wars have been fought over." - John Gardner (as quoted in Lemann, 1999, p. 348)

College admissions can be a high-stakes gamble. Admissions committees read essays, interview students, and comb through recommendations trying to predict which students will be successful at a given college or university. Sometimes this prediction is based upon "fit" and prior accomplishments. Other times, this prediction is based upon numbers. But can grade point averages (GPAs) and SATs really predict a student's success? If they can, which students are prepared to achieve the high numbers expected at top colleges? In an educational culture where money can buy a high score, who is benefiting from standardized tests and admissions and who is getting left out? In this paper I will explore the "dark side" of standardized tests and the relationship of the SATs to college access for students of color and students from lower income families.

## History of the Big Test

James Bryant Conant, President of Harvard from 1933 to 1953, wanted to use

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education to create a new aristocracy not based on class and inheritance, but on scholastic aptitude (Lemann, 1999). He believed this new aristocracy would become public servants and work for the greater good of society (Perry, Brown, & Sawrey, 2004; Lemann, 1999). At the time, Harvard drew applicants from a select number of local private schools. Admission decisions were subjective and based more upon merit (i.e. character, manliness, athletics, family) than scholarship. This policy allowed colleges to pick students from "proper" backgrounds, further solidifying the advantages for those in the aristocracy (Karabel, 2005).

Moving away from this elite practice, Conant wanted to reform higher education by recruiting talented students from outside of Harvard's traditional feeder schools. He established a scholarship program for talented male students from the mid-western United States, and charged Henry Chauncey, Assistant Dean, with developing a standardized measure of applicants. Chauncey, future founder of the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and psychometrics aficionado, adapted an early form of the SAT to select scholarship students. Conant and Chauncey chose the SAT because they believed, "tests of achievement would always favor those who had the financial resources to attend the best preparatory schools and saw in the SAT a tool for restructuring society by counterbalancing the benefits of inherited privilege in favor of innate talent" (Perry et al., 2004, p. 109). Gradually, the SAT began replacing the college boards for all admissions – substituting a test of achievement with a test of aptitude as the standard college entrance exam. By claiming the ability to predict a student's success in college, the SAT gained widespread use. Despite its original intent, the test quickly began to signify elite status:

> The idea was beginning to take root among the students who took the tests and their parents that they measured inherent worth and were determinants of success in life – that the test score was the contemporary equivalent of the "virtue and talents" that Jefferson thought would qualify the members of a natural aristocracy. Yet from a technical point of view, all the tests were meant to do was predict a student's grades six months into the future. (Lemann, 1999, p. 86)

Henry Chauncey's life goal was to develop a "census of abilities" which would help people determine their most appropriate jobs and careers, not to create a test to predict initial grade success in college. In the late 1950s, the ETS ran a few trials of the Test of Developed Ability, designed to help students identify the best course of study. Although this test would have focused more on guidance than elite selection, it never passed the experimental stage. It was a longer test than the SAT, included an essay that could not be machine scored, and was more expensive. The SAT was already in use, was sponsored by Harvard, and "because it supposedly measured each student's innate ability, aptitude testing did not threaten high schools with the prospect that the quality of their teaching might be rated" (Lemann, 1999, p. 95). Much to the chagrin of Henry

Chauncey, the SAT became the official standardized test for college admission.

Can't Buy Me Aptitude

The big debate over standardized testing for college admissions revolves around the most appropriate type of test. Some believe that aptitude tests are more appropriate because they aim to measure innate ability. The president of the University of California system, Richard Atkinson, questions whether any test can really measure innate ability and has called for SAT reform. He notes the usefulness of standardized testing stating, "grading practices vary across teachers and high schools, and standardized tests provide a measure of a student's achievements that is independent of grades. But we need to be exceedingly careful about the standardized tests we choose" (Atkinson, 2002, pp. 16-17). Atkinson advocates for achievement-based tests instead of aptitude tests.

When the SAT was designed, it was accepted as both valid (accurately measured innate aptitude and predicted grades) and reliable (an individual's score would stay in the same range no matter how many times they took the test). Yet, even in the early days of the SAT, the exam only had a validity of .4 on a zero-to-one scale, and a validity of .5 if looked at in conjunction with high school grades (Lemann, 1999). After studying almost 80,000 first-year students over four years, the University of California found that the SAT II (subject area achievement tests) is a better predictor of first-year college grades than the SAT I. They also found, "the predictive validity of the SAT II is much less affected by differences in socioeconomic background than is the SAT I" (Atkinson, 2002, p. 18). Because the SAT I is not as valid a predictor of college success, Atkinson suggested colleges require SAT II tests instead of the SAT I until a better exam is developed.

Another argument for an achievement test instead of an aptitude test is the connection between K-12 education and college. University admissions requirements and standardized tests can influence the high school curriculum and raise standards of education by testing students on what they learned in high school. At present, "the SAT I sends a confusing message to students, teachers, and schools. It says that students will be tested on material that is unrelated to what they study in their classes" (Atkinson, 2002, p. 20). Because so many colleges place emphasis on SAT scores, students now study for an exam that is not designed to measure achievement. This distracts from their learning in their final year of high school, and further pushes the exam from its original purpose.

Even though the SAT was originally designed as a test for which students could not study, they can now pay for test preparation programs designed to increase their scores (Lemann, 1999). Incidentally, Stanley Kaplan began his SAT tutoring business in the 1950s, just as the SAT was becoming a national standard. Kaplan believed the SAT was an equalizer because it gave all intellectual students a chance to attend college, regardless of their educational background. However, the SAT had always been a reliable test since a person's score would stay in the same range no matter how many times they took the test. Once Kaplan developed a method for increasing scores, the SAT neither had validity nor reliability. The test preparation business also creates a socioeconomic achievement gap. Students who can afford to pay for test preparation are more likely to improve their SAT scores. Prices for SAT preparation courses differ by location and type of course. In Vermont, Kaplan charges $899 for a 12-session Kaplan Prep course. In Connecticut, the same course is $999. Connecticut students also have the option to take a 20-hour Review Program for $2,999, a 26-hour Honors Program for $3,499, or a comprehensive 32-hour Masters Program for $4,199; none of these are even offered in Vermont (www.kaptest.com/sat). In Vermont, the Princeton Review offers a basic course for $600, and three levels of private tutoring for $2,875, $5,175, and $8,050. The price differences for students in Connecticut are $1,199, $3,600, $4,800, and $6,000, respectively (www.princetonreview.com/).

Kaplan and Princeton both have money-back guarantees. They promise their courses will help students raise their scores and do this effectively by teaching students test-taking strategies. The Princeton Review website explains, "It's not about learning more algebra, it's about knowing how to approach a standardized test. Try one of our free classes to see why we guarantee your score will improve" (http://www.princetonreview.com/college/testprep/testprep.asp?TPRPAGE=13&TYPE=NEW-SAT-PREPARE). If it is guaranteed that you can learn a few tricks to improve your score, does the SAT really measure innate intellectual and academic ability, or does it measure achievement? The success of SAT preparation courses may send students the message that it does not really matter how smart you are, it matters if you know how to take the test. And knowing how to take the test can cost upwards of $8,000. If you can study for the test and improve your score, the question remains: Is the SAT an aptitude test or an achievement test? And which will be more useful for student success?

The Myth of Meritocracy: Access Denied

This country operates under the myth of meritocracy: If you work hard, you will earn rewards. What is left out of the equation are the advantages, such as money and family pedigree, which give some people a head start. With an uneven playing field created by class, economic, and educational disparities, some people have an easier time acquiring said "merit." Those with high scores are invited to join elite institutions, whose degrees open connections to influential positions and lucrative, powerful jobs (Perry et al, 2004; Lemann, 1999). Because the SAT is based upon the IQ aptitude principle, people who receive high scores feel as though their success is the result of merit, not of inheritance. It is this principle that perpetuates the illusion of fairness and equal opportunity, defines merit as an intellectual property, and excludes other types of intelligence. As Lemann notes, the SATs "judge people on their potential, not on their actual performance" (1999, p. 345).

The trouble with the SAT meritocracy myth is that education and status can be transferred to the next generation. Children with educated, wealthy parents inherit the opportunity for their own strong education and all the connections that ensue. Even though the SAT was designed to create a new aristocracy based on education and merit, not wealth and inheritance, the result was still an aristocracy. Ironically, the SAT was originally designed as an aptitude test that would minimize disparities between high schools and socioeconomic class. Today, scores vary tremendously by high school, with well-funded, high-income public and private schools having significantly higher SAT averages than poorly-funded, low-income public schools. We are left with burning questions: Should there be an aristocracy at all? How do we choose the new elite? Who gets in and who is left outside the gates?

In the 1980s, Winston Manning, a researcher for the ETS, tried to answer these very questions. He conducted a study in which he correlated SAT scores with parental income and education, creating a score predicted by class. He hoped this information would allow colleges to identify students who had achieved better than expected given their background. However, colleges never had the opportunity to use this information because the ETS refused to back the study. The Measure of Academic Talent (MAT) was "an SAT score weighted and revised to account for background factors" and showed a decrease in score difference between races (Lemann, 1999 p. 271). The key political issue with the MAT was that students from higher economic backgrounds had lower MAT than SAT scores, and students from lower economic backgrounds had higher MAT than SAT scores. In order for the ETS to use this measure, which took into account privileges that help some students attain higher "merit," the power elite would have to sacrifice their high scores. As is the case with all issues of social justice, in order for the marginalized groups to have more equal opportunity, the dominant groups must give up some of their power. The ETS was not about to risk the very condition that keeps it in business: the myth of meritocracy.

## SATs, Predictions, and Success

As discussed above, the SAT is not a valid predictor of first year college grades. According to some studies, "pre-college variables that most significantly predicted college GPA were high school GPA, gender of student, and leadership experience prior to applying. Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores failed to predict success as measured by college GPA" (Mattson, 2007, p. 9). Several questions are raised: Are SATs a redundant measure in college admissions? Are tests the most appropriate measure of success? Can we really measure success in numbers? What else do SATs predict?



SAT scores are positively correlated with income: low socioeconomic status (SES) students have lower SAT scores on average than high SES students. Guinier and Strum found that "average family income rises with each hundred-point increase in SAT scores" (2001, p. 14), with students in the bottom income quartile scoring an average of 864 and students in the top quartile scoring an average of 1123 (see Table 1; Digest of Education Statistics, 2003). Colleges that use the SAT as a basis of merit will find fewer "qualified" students from low SES families. In fact,

> Students from the bottom-income quartile are only one-sixth as likely as students from the top-income quartile to be in what is defined as the credible pool of candidates for admission to academically selective colleges and universities; students who lack a parent with some experience of college are one-seventh as likely as other students to be in the credible pool. (Bowen, 2006, p. 25)

This practice segregates students by class into different types of colleges, with students from high SES backgrounds with high SAT scores at more prestigious colleges and students from low SES backgrounds with lower SAT scores at less selective colleges and open enrollment community colleges (Fullinwider & Lichtenberg, 2004).

*Table 1: SAT Distribution by Family Income (2002-2003)*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Less than $10,000 | 864 | $50,000-$59,999 | 1012 |
| $10,000-$19,999 | 889 | $60,000-$69,999 | 1025 |
| $20,000-$29,999 | 927 | $70,000-$79,999 | 1041 |
| $30,000-$39,999 | 964 | $80,000-$100,000 | 1065 |
| $40,000-$49,999 | 993 | More than $100,000 | 1123 |

Source: Digest of Education Statistics 2003, Table 133

There is also a correlation between race and SAT performance. The average score for White students is higher than the average score for students of color (see Table 2). This creates a slippery slope as the SAT is supposed to measure innate intelligence. How can an aptitude test differ between races when race is a social, not biological, construct? One thought is that racial differences in test scores are minimized when students of color are compared with White students with similar SES, parental education, and current high school course offerings (Schmidt & Camara, 2004), making the differences more about opportunity than about race. However, the SAT still has less validity for students of color than White students, over-predicting college GPA for students of color (Fullinwider & Lichtenberg, 2004). There is also evidence that suggests that "comparable Black students in every SAT range graduate at higher rates the more selective the school they attend" (Bowen, 2006, p. 22). This indicates that the SAT is neither an accurate measure of merit, nor an accurate predictor of success, for students of color.

*Table 2: SAT score distribution by race*

| *Race* | *Verbal* | *Math* |
|---|---|---|
| White | 532 | 536 |
| Black | 433 | 431 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 463 | 469 |
| Mexican American | 453 | 463 |
| Puerto Rican | 460 | 457 |
| Asian American | 511 | 580 |
| American Indian | 489 | 493 |
| Other | 495 | 513 |

From Table 126: SAT score averages of college-bound seniors, by race/ethnicity: Selected years, 1986-87 through 2004-05. Digest of Education Statistics 2005

What is it about the SAT that leads to such disparities? Is it simply a result of unequal educational opportunity? Does it ask culturally biased questions? Some researchers speculate that questions involving high SES activities, such as regattas and polo, automatically exclude students from lower SES backgrounds (Fullinwider & Lichtenberg, 2004). Others suggest that the ETS intentionally eliminates questions that more students of color answer correctly. Jay Rosner of the Princeton Review examined the experimental sections of SATs, which are used to test the validity of new questions for future exams. He found that some questions were answered correctly by more Black students than White students, yet none of these "Black preference" questions were used in future versions of the SAT. Rosner argues that the ETS has not used a "Black preference" question in ten years (Soares, 2007). He points out,

> If high-scoring test-takers – who are more likely to be White – tend to answer the question correctly in pre-testing, it's a worthy SAT question; if not, it's thrown out. Race/ethnicity are not considered explicitly, but racially disparate scores drive question selection, which in turn reproduces [racially] disparate scores in an internally reinforcing cycle. (Rosner, as cited in Soares, 2007, p. 159)

Furthermore, there is some evidence that Black students correctly answered more hard questions (questions less likely to be answered correctly) on the verbal analogy section (now eliminated from the SAT) than easy questions (questions more likely to be answered correctly), whereas the pattern was reversed for White students. Roy Freedle, a former ETS researcher, suggests this difference indicates that easy questions may be more culturally biased because they allow students to rely on words more common to dominant cultures. Hard questions require students to rely more on education than cultural or social capital (Soares, 2007).

Fullinwider and Lichtenberg (2004) offer another perspective, suggesting that low SES students and students of color are disadvantaged by other measures of college selection as well. Selective colleges admit students with high GPAs and



GPA, like SAT scores, are similarly distributed by class and race. Zwick found in 1995 that "29 percent of Asian Americans, 21 percent of whites, 10 percent of Latinos, and 4 percent of African Americans" had a high school GPA of 3.5 or above (as cited in Fullinwider & Lichtenberg, 2004, p. 112). Achievement gaps by race and SES are found in all quantitative measures of students' academic success. This is not surprising given the difference in educational quality found between low-end and high-end K-12 schooling. The average low SES school has 50% fewer Advanced Placement (AP) courses than the average high SES school and fewer students enroll in such courses at low SES schools (Gandara, 2002). There is also a disconnect between high school graduation requirements and college admissions requirements. "Less than half of U.S. high schools required three years of math, and just over one-quarter of high schools required three years of science. Students in private schools generally take more courses in the core academic areas than students in public schools" (Schmidt & Camara, 2002, p. 194). Thus, differences in SAT scores by race and income are compounded by unequal education, further widening the college access gap.

With such differences in educational opportunity, will removal of the SAT really improve access for students of color and students with low SES? If standardized tests shift to achievement-based tests, students of color and low-income students still may not be able to compete. Ideally K-12 education would equally prepare all students. Perhaps a shift to an achievement-based test will encourage educational policy change. If students are admitted to college based on what they learned in high school, will high schools be held accountable to higher standards? Until education reforms occur, colleges must be aware of differences in opportunity and stop relying on biased scores to make admissions decisions.

## Conclusion

What is all the fuss about SAT scores? The SAT does not achieve its purported function. It does not accurately predict student success. It is not reliable, and it is reinforcing the elitism of higher education. Because high scorers are mostly upper class, White students, and because elite colleges value high scores, students from dominant groups are more likely to be accepted at elite colleges. It is unfair to compare scores between students with different levels of opportunity. If we want to increase access to higher education, we need to stop relying on standardized tests.

Approximately 740 colleges have already stopped requiring the SAT I for admission; ranging from open-admission to selective colleges such as Bates, Hamilton, and Bennington. Contrary to popular belief, it is possible to select an incoming class without using SAT scores. Eliminating standardized tests will reduce anxiety and expense for college applicants, allow students to focus on academics and learning instead of studying tricks to raise SAT scores, and begin to level the admissions playing field. It will also allow colleges to admit students based more on fit than a false measure of merit and will help to stop the cycle of elitism in higher education (www.fairtest.org).

More research needs to be done regarding the admissions practices at colleges that no longer use the SAT. What do they find predicts success? How did their recruitment strategies change? Did the demographics of their applicants and enrolled students change? Fairtest.org reports, "Colleges that have made the SAT optional report that their applicant pools are more diverse and that there has been no drop off in academic quality" (www.fairtest.org/facts/satfact.htm). When colleges eliminate the SAT, they can focus more on essays, recommendations, and interviews and consider opportunity when evaluating candidates.

As a profession, we need to shift away from standardized assessment and towards a more personalized admissions process. While this may be difficult for larger schools with a high volume of applications, it is essential for increasing college access and decreasing the admissions frenzy. The current system reinforces the myth of meritocracy and deepens the opportunity gap. It is time to eliminate measures of "merit" and privilege and start considering factors of opportunity, fit, and learning.



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# A Cultural History of People with Disabilities

Jian Guan

*When student affairs professionals talk about diversity or culture, we tend to think about people of color, the Queer community, socioeconomic class, religion, or region. Student affairs professionals, however, are often not consciously aware of people with disabilities. During an experience in the Office of Students with Disabilities Services at the University of Vermont in 2006, I was exposed to another cultural group: people with disabilities. I intend to raise awareness of this group's history and culture. I will then explore what disability is, the history of this population, the obstacles facing this marginalized group, and why people with disabilities are rarely acknowledged in society and higher education. I will conclude with tangible examples of this issue being addressed at certain institutions.*

During my experience in the Office of Students with Disabilities Services at the University of Vermont in 2006, I learned of a new cultural group: people with disabilities. Student affairs professionals are comparatively less consciously aware of this group than others such as the Queer community, people of color, socioeconomic class, religion, and region. I would like to raise awareness of this group's history and culture.

People with disabilities, whether physical, mental, or sensory, comprise approximately 23% of the population, making them one of the largest minority groups in the United States (Liquerman, 1997). This population cuts across racial, ethnic, religious, economic, and social lines, and members are not necessarily eligible by birth, but more often by circumstance. Such a population should be considered as differently-abled rather than disabled.

## What is a Disability?

Federal law defines a "disability" as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits or restricts the condition, manner, or duration under which an average person can perform major life activities, such as walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, or taking care of oneself (Harvard College Accessible Education Office, 2006). With that said, does having a disability mean you are part of a cultural group? Viewing people with a disability, or differing-abilities, as a specific cultural group is a new development. When people think about culture, they think of populations that share values, rituals, customs, traditions, language, folklore, and art. Such populations have developed a sense of unity and shared identity because of these aforementioned aspects of culture.

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Traditionally, differently-abled people have been categorized exclusively in terms of physical, sensory, or mental differences with little attention paid towards their shared socio-cultural history. Nevertheless, groups within the differently-abled community often share characteristics such as a common language, (i.e. American Sign Language), customs and traditions (i.e. Disability Awareness Month), and visual and performing arts. They also share political goals stemming from a history of oppression, such as the need to lobby for legislation to protect the civil rights of differently-abled people (American Psychology Association Task Force, 1998).

## What are Hidden Disabilities?

Some differing-abilities are obvious. For example, it is hard not to notice an individual utilizing a wheelchair. In contrast, some disabilities are hidden and can lead individuals with these disabilities to sometimes make self-sacrificing accommodations for those of the dominant culture. Examples of hidden disabilities include multiple sclerosis, epilepsy, full or partial deafness, psychiatric disorders, or learning disabilities. They also include medical disabilities such as cancer, diabetes, ostomy, lung disease, kidney failure, hemophilia, or heart conditions. Many individuals with hidden disabilities experience chronic or intermittent pain, muscle weakness, occasional blurred vision, dizziness, ringing in the ears, blackouts, seizures of varying intensity, or other symptoms which have effects ranging from aggravating to debilitating (Liquerman, 1997).

Learning disabilities further illustrate this misconception. Some individuals with hidden disabilities may not be aware of their own disability. They develop coping mechanisms without being fully aware of doing so. They may feel frustration because they are unable to perform up to their own or others' expectations. The individual is at times not fully responsible for this lack of awareness. For example, one may not be able to pay for the costly diagnostic exams for learning disabilities. As Andrew Proffers (2006) mentions, "most insurance companies do not cover psychological testing costs" (http://compasspoints.org/compasspoints/Psychological%20Testing.html).

When a person with a learning disability does not naturally excel in an academic subject, it is often assumed the person is unmotivated or not committed. However, many people are unaware of the efforts these individuals put forth to succeed. Who would like to be called unmotivated? Student affairs professionals should acknowledge that the emotional pain caused by hidden disabilities can be as frustrating and intense as, if not more than, a physical disability.

Since the differently-abled population is a relatively large group, why do people not talk about disabilities? Suzanne Liquerman (1997) indicates that a person with a hidden disability appears to be "okay," and is expected to be totally self-sufficient with no limitations in ability. If a person does not disclose the disability, he/she/ze might be labeled as lazy, belligerent, or uncooperative. If the disability is disclosed, a person may be pitied or shunned because of fear or misunderstanding. Because the disability is not visible, requests for accommodations may be seen by others as a ploy to get attention, forgiveness, or special advantages; or as an excuse not to participate or meet expectations. In addition, persons with hidden disabilities may appear moody, disagreeable, or unpleasant for no reason (Liquerman, 1997).

History of the Disability Movement

Education specifically designed for differently-abled people has existed in the United States for almost two hundred years. According to *A Chronology of the Disability Rights Movements*, the first school for Deaf children in the Western Hemisphere, the American School for the Deaf, was founded in Hartford, Connecticut in 1817. In 1864, President Abraham Lincoln signed an act giving the Columbia Institution for the Deaf and Dumb and Blind, later renamed Galludet University, the authority to confer college degrees. This act made this institution the first college in the world specifically established for people with differing-abilities (Chronology, 1996). Gallaudet is still the only university in the United States designed specifically for the Deaf population.

The movement to establish public institutions which recognize the rights, needs, and culture of differently-abled people has been long and arduous. As stated in *A Chronology of the Disability Rights Movements*, the passage of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 marks the greatest achievement of the disability rights movement. Title V, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, confronts discrimination against people with differing-abilities. Section 504 prohibits programs receiving federal funding from discriminating against "otherwise qualified handicapped" individuals (Chronology, 1996).

The passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 marked the peak of the disability movement. According to the article, *Disability as Diversity*, the ADA is a federal statute designed to prevent discrimination and promote equal opportunities for individuals with physical, sensory, or mental disabilities. The law is described as the most sweeping disability rights legislation in history. It brought more comprehensive legal protection for Americans with disabilities (Chronology, 2000). The law mandates that local, state, and federal governmental programs be accessible; businesses with more than fifteen employees make "reasonable accommodations" for differently-abled workers; and businesses, such as restaurants and stores, make reasonable modifications to ensure access for differently-abled members of the public. The act also requires access to public transportation, communication, and other areas of public life. With the passage of the ADA, most universities now recognize that people with differing-abilities face difficulties similar to those of other minority populations (APA Task Force, 1998). Though it was claimed that the ADA increased rights for people with differing-abilities, discrepancies still exist.



Legal Ramifications of the Passage of the ADA

During the last fifty years, the U.S. Supreme Court has played a significant role in three major civil rights movements. In 1954, Brown vs. the Board of Education helped launch the campaign to give African Americans full equality in education. The women's movement greatly influenced the Supreme Court's decision in 1973 when Roe vs. Wade gave women abortion rights. Unfortunately, in a series of rulings on the ADA, the court disappointed disability rights activists by unintentionally limiting gains made by the disabled rights movement. Charles Lindner (2002) of the Los Angeles Times points out the problems of the ADA:

> The only disabled people protected under the ADA are people who do not need protection. For the high court, then, some people are not disabled enough; some people are too disabled; but, so far, nobody has been disabled "just right." (p. 2)

According to the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, only the "truly" disabled, people who have physical or mental impairments that "substantially limit" daily life activities, are protected.

The Supreme Court interpreted the ADA and Section 504 as only applying to people who are: (a) disabled enough to be qualified for protection, and (b) in the context of employment, not disabled enough to maintain employment. For many people with differing-abilities, meeting both sets of criteria is almost impossible. Employers can determine conditions that may lead to disqualification in an application process, or dismissal from employment, which may not be viewed as sufficient criteria for protection under the ADA. While the ADA has been hailed as a triumph for the disability rights movement, the nation's highest legal system is on a path to reverse the long-term success of the ADA (Young, 2002). Linder (2002) describes the following cases: In Sutton vs. United Airlines and in Murphy vs. United Parcel Service, the plaintiffs, the Sutton sisters, were not hired because of a correctable vision deficiency, and Murphy was fired because of his medicinally corrected blood pressure, the court found that none of them were disabled for the purpose of employment under the ADA. (pg. 2) The inconsistency here is if individuals are able to do a job with glasses or medication, they do not fit the criteria of "disabled" under the ADA.

The discrepancies are not only illustrated from the legal ramifications, but also in the social welfare system. According to the documentary, *When Billy Broke*

*His Head*, Billy was a rock star until he suffered a brain injury in a traffic accident. Through his persistence, he gained his masters degree, but he could not secure employment. The government gave him $1,000 a month, but because of different deduction fees, he took home roughly $500 a month on which to live. The agency offered Billy a very limited welfare fund and told him that everyday many people were in the same situation (National Disability Awareness Project, Inc., 1994). Billy's story represents the plight of the majority of people with disabilities, whose lives depend on welfare from the government.

## Support for Disabled Students in Higher Education

It is not common knowledge that almost everyone uses assisting technology, whether or not they have a disability. Eyeglasses, a letter-opener, a straw, and a wagon are examples of tools that make life easier. Technology and assisting devices enable people with differing-abilities to accomplish activities with more ease. Basic technology devices include reachers or grabbers, invented by shopkeepers who needed to reach items on a top shelf. More advanced technology devices, such as computers that speak or recognize speech patterns, are examples of technology designed to assist people with certain differing-abilities. These later examples are not too different from the ones mentioned earlier.

Universities are currently providing accommodations for students with documented disabilities as part of the ADA. In the U.S. higher education system, an increasing number of professors are putting lecture notes on the course websites, and some even have video or voice recordings of classes for students to download. The University of Vermont provides the following assistance to differently-abled students: adaptive technology (software that can read text out loud for disabled students), note-taking systems, exam proctoring, and sign language interpreters. Additionally, the University of Vermont is promoting Universal Design in campus buildings.

Universal Design is a concept or philosophy for designing and delivering products and services that are usable by people with the widest possible range of functional capabilities. Examples of Universal Design are curb cuts and captioning of television and movies (Roy, 2003). Curb cuts for those in wheelchairs would also create added convenience for people carrying luggage and utilizing a trolley. Online lecture notes assist non-disabled students with their class assignments. Voice recording of classes allows students to download lectures and listen anywhere in order to reinforce course content. Subtitles on television screens assist people in understanding content when equipment malfunctions or it is too noisy in the room to hear the sound. It is evident that Universal Design is beneficial for all people.



## Conclusion

People with differing-abilities are one of the largest marginalized populations in the United States and are often overlooked by society and underserved by higher education. Although the federal government has passed Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the American Disabilities Act, those with differing-abilities are still experiencing inequitable working and living conditions. People with hidden disabilities are often misunderstood by their communities because they appear "normal." A great number of people with differing-abilities are receiving insufficient welfare benefits which lower their standard of living.

Despite some efforts made at some institutions, challenges still exist in the higher education system. The lack of proactive community-building makes it more difficult for students with disabilities to foster a sense of identity. This is very similar to the historical experiences of other marginalized groups such as students of color on predominantly white campuses. "The students are lacking the sense of community, therefore it is hard for them to foster an identity," says a specialist from the Office of Students with Disabilities at the University of Vermont (personal communication). Accommodating students with differing-abilities is very expensive for universities and often involves hiring note-takers or sign language interpreters and/or creating special access to buildings and advanced technologies. According to the Director of the Office of Students with Disabilities at the University of Vermont, such offices often do not receive enough funding from universities to hire more disability specialists, purchase more efficient advanced technology devices, or promote their programs to better support these students (personal communication). These offices are not sufficient enough to support to the large population of students with differing-abilities on campuses.

Funding plays a significant role in terms of supporting the differently-abled community. Universities should implement more universal designs on campuses in order to offer more conveniences to students. Offices such as Disabilities Services need to form institutional committees to make plans to promote their programs on campus in order to tighten the community. Student affairs professionals should encourage such student populations to recognize themselves as differently-abled, rather than disabled, so that the students will become more confident throughout their personal development. It is obvious that this may create financial stress on the institution, but must not be overlooked. It is important to raise awareness of students with disabilities. If all the changes were implemented, it would provide a more supportive and conducive community for differently-abled students and students with disabilities to attend and graduate from college. In the long run, all students will be able to influence society on how to respect and recognize such a unique group through their college experiences.

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# Buying in to Sell out? Supporting Women's Authentic Forms of Involvement and Leadership in Outdoor Programs and Adventure

Sarah Hoffert

*Millions of women and girls participate in outdoor recreation and adventure each year (Henderson, 1996), and yet they exist in appallingly small numbers as (student and professional) technical trip leaders, directors of outdoor programs in university settings, and directors of national organizations with outdoor emphasis. This disparity in leadership indicates the need to increase the quality of women's experiences in the outdoors. In this paper, I will review feminist critiques of outdoor adventure theory and explore the controversies surrounding gender-specific outdoor experiences and/or trips. Additionally, I will address alternative theories and practices that empower, support, and enable women to buy into outdoor adventure and leadership without personally or professionally "selling out."*

With the millions of women and girls participating in outdoor recreation and adventure (Henderson, 1996), educators and student affairs professionals might wonder if there is still a need for gender-specific programming, mentoring for women, and/or change to the outdoor and experiential education trainings, programs, and curriculum. Current literature in the field indicates that it is imperative to continue to empower women to become leaders in outdoor education.

I will address what is needed to prepare girls and women to continue to pursue or to begin a personal and/or professional relationship with the outdoors. An additional issue is addressing ways to support women in forming an authentic leadership style, so buying into outdoor adventure and leadership does not require selling out to culturally dominant and/or ineffective methods. There are different perspectives on what type of leadership opportunities are appropriate to encourage confident, empowered female outdoor leaders. One of the most prominent controversies that I will explore involves gender-specific adventure programming and trips.

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Outdoor Leadership and Mentoring Opportunities for Women

The importance of mentoring women and fostering women-centered leadership has been emphasized in college and university settings since the 1960s. Although the movement was halted in the 1970s due to the false impression that separate groups only enforced inequality, today it is acknowledged that women need and deserve access to leadership skills to progress through education and government, and to affect change (Nagai, 1997). An ongoing challenge surrounding institutional support for women undergraduate leadership involves students' lack of awareness of their own needs. Undergraduate women tend to equate equality with female representation in leadership roles. Nagai emphasizes that this assumption is false: Having a critical mass of women in positions of power does not indicate a lack of institutionalized sexism within a society or organization. She also states that educators need to encourage women students to speak out about their concerns, recognize gender inequities on campus and in society, and become visible leaders throughout all aspects of campus. This includes the representation of women leaders in outdoor organizations (1997).

Undergraduate women can gain support and leadership opportunities in outdoor adventure through all-women groups and ongoing exposure to feminist role models. Feminism can play a large role in liberating outdoor adventure experiences for women. As Crepezzi explains,

> When women encounter feminism it can significantly alter their previously held beliefs, like bell hooks' experience at Stanford University when feminism "rocked" the campus, hooks (2000) reflects, "feminist thinking helped us unlearn female self-hatred. It enabled us to break free of the hold patriarchal thinking had on our consciousness" (p. 14). Feminism ultimately gave women the right to draw from experience rather than training. (2007, p. 10)

Undergraduate women in outdoor education have the same opportunity especially through the increase of all-women programs and trips and access to gender-specific learning environments.

Gender and Women-specific Outdoor Experiences

Two questions traditionally evolve out of learning about women-only trips: "Why are there women-only trips?" and "Why would a woman choose a women's trip?" Interestingly enough parallel questions, such as "Why a men's trip?" are never asked of men. McClintock believes the reasons women choose to go on women-specific trips are quite obvious. The growing popularity of women's trips would indicate that women want to be in the outdoors with other women. "Outdoor-trip businesses run all-women's trips for the simple reason that they sell" (1996, p. 19). Although the literature overwhelmingly lends credence to gender-specific environments for women, choosing these experiences still carries a stigma due to lack of awareness and education.



In addition to the popularity of women's trips, gender-specific learning environments have shown positive results for women and girls. In fact, it was found that all-girl schools consistently provided a better educational environment when resources were equal. Implications for adventure education were explored through a review of research published throughout the mid 1980s which determined that in various education systems boys usually received more attention than girls. It has been shown that this trend carries into higher education (Henderson, 1999). A different source elaborates on the findings involving gender and leadership. "Riordan's (1990) more recent review of the literature showed that males are more likely to assume leadership positions, be more orally active, and more influential than females in all types of groups and situations" (Henderson, 1996, p. 249). Without gender-specific learning environments women will continue to be relegated to second class citizens in various aspects.

Gender-specific experiences in outdoor education have shown little variance since 1982. Several themes emerge from research on gender-specific groups in outdoor settings. Those themes transcend the literature in specific fields. They include emotional and physical safety, the freedom to throw out gender role stereotypes, the opportunity to develop close connections with other women, a comfortable environment for both a beginner or highly skilled outdoorswoman, and opportunities to have or be a role model or leader (Henderson, 1996). It is apparent that these qualities are important to women in outdoor settings. It is noteworthy that Henderson is hesitant to suggest that these goals could be accomplished in mixed-gender settings (1996).

Positive outcomes of gender-specific trips and leadership opportunities correlate to women's feminist identity development where "embeddedness-emanation, is integral to development" (Crepezzi, 2007, p. 11) and "characterized by a first phase involving the discovery of sisterhood, and immersion in women's culture, and a preference for socializing with women to the exclusion of men" (Bargad & Hyde, 1991, p. 183).

Feminist identity development is one approach to answering the continuous stream of questions raised about women-specific experiences, though most questions are never answered to the level of satisfaction that they have stopped being asked. The most common question posed is, "Why are you going on an all-women's trip?" Mary McClintock (1996) reflects on her experience with this never-ending question:

> I have lost track of the number of times I have been asked [this]…Nor can I remember the wide variety of responses, ranging from flippant to serious, that I have given over the years. Sometimes, the question

> is asked with a genuine interest and support, but often the question is asked in a hostile, offensive manner. Other all-women's groups and organizations regularly face similar questions, especially if their activity or purpose challenges traditional gender roles. After twenty years of experience on all-women's trips, I thought that question would not be asked anymore. But I continue to hear "Why?" (p. 18)

When McClintock further explored the reasons that women choose gender-specific trips she found a variety of answers. Yet there were some clear themes that emerged in her *Mountains, Back Roads, Rivers, and Women* class. Those themes include the emotional and physical safety of all women's trips, the freedom to step out of gender role stereotypes, the opportunity to develop close connections with other women, and a comfortable environment for either a beginner learning new skills or an expert with highly advanced skills. These same themes are woven throughout Henderson's (1996) and McClintock's (1996) findings of female participants on all-women trips. This indicates several universal positive outcomes for women participating in gender-specific excursions.

## Women's Purpose in the Outdoors and Reverse Discrimination

Additionally, McClintock avoids assigning purpose to women's experiences. She emphasizes one's own choice and reasoning for participating in women's trips. She cautions that this may be one of the most difficult questions to answer because, "In answering to herself, a woman often has to overcome the social conditioning that has trained her not to choose to meet her own needs, but rather, to meet the needs of others" (1996, p. 19). After answering ourselves, the next step involves having to answer those around us, perhaps a spouse, partner, parent, friend, co-worker, boss, or children. Even strangers we met on the trail or on the water are curious and have questioned why McClintock chooses women's trips, "or as they often see it, why we exclude men" (1996, p. 19).

Notions of excluding men are the most common reactions to women-centered outdoor experiences. Male questioning of why women choose to participate in an activity void of men usually comes from a place of privilege where White men have rarely been excluded from anything. A similar reaction occurs when people in any traditionally oppressed population organize. It may be the first time that a White male has heard "no" or has not had complete access to others' ideas and plans. Society (inclusive of institutions of higher education) has become accustomed to operating on the White Male System's timeline and rules, where it is common for men to question why groups make decisions without them. The White Male System has been explored as a massive barrier towards integrating other systems into our realities (Schaef, 1992). Perhaps this is why women-specific programming is still viewed as an alternative and confusing means to adventure.



## History and Exploitation of Women in Outdoor Leadership

Existing structures of male outdoor leadership involve the nearly complete erasure of women in the outdoors. Often women were, and continue to be, left out of outdoor leadership literature. Henderson (1996) states that if they are mentioned at all, they are exploited by male colleagues or relegated to a helpmate role. Their accomplishments are often questioned, minimized, or trivialized. Past efforts to include women have involved the "add women and stir" method of research and practice, in which those who notice that women are missing believe several examples or exceptions to the universal male experience might be important to note. "Underlying the idea of 'adding women' is a notion that women ought to be acknowledged, but such acknowledgment generally means that women are judged in terms of their contributions based on typical male standards" (Henderson, 1996, p. 109). Warren, Henderson, and Pinch have since invalidated outdoor leadership theory and practices that refuse to acknowledge women's longstanding history and involvement in wilderness experiences.

## Feminism and Gender Analysis in Leadership

There are several popular feminist approaches to women in leadership. Among those are perspectives of liberal, cultural, and radical feminists. Yet all perspectives lead to one purpose: "Feminism is concerned with the correction of both the invisibility and distortion of female experience in ways relevant to social changes and the removal of all forms of inequality and oppression in society" (Henderson, Bialeschki, Shaw, & Freysinger, 1989, as cited in Henderson, 1996, p. 107). Liberal feminists suggest that women should have equal rights in outdoor participation and that their leadership opportunities should be similar to those of men. Cultural feminists are dedicated to seeing and focusing on the uniqueness of women's outdoor experiences and leadership styles. Finally, radical feminists suggest that women should choose their own style of outdoor leadership and these forms have the potential to look completely different from male models. Henderson (1996) advocates for combining these perspectives to give a broader understanding of outdoor experience.

A corrective method intended to avoid the undesirable and unattainable standards of male leadership is gender analysis (Henderson, 1996). Gender analyses explore the myriad social and cultural expectations that accompany a child's sex when born. The biological sex of the child leads to a series of life long gender expectations which have implications for outdoor participation and leadership. This analysis argues that "the meaning of gender is constructed by society and each of us is socialized into that construction" (Henderson, 1996, p. 111). Leadership styles based on gender stereotypes have recently been explored as more influential than the actual gender or sex of the leader.

In a study of young adults immersed in an outdoor program, it was determined that "prelearned gender beliefs and behaviors were brought to the outdoor education program and these influenced actions and supported a hierarchical power structure based on hegemonic masculinity" (Pinch, 2007, p. 422). The girls and boys sometimes experimented with different roles and challenged stereotypical gendered behaviors which reinforced that gender as a social construct is produced and reproduced through actions of individuals and social groups. Some diversity of gender expression was tolerated but harsh consequences, such as social isolation, were implemented for those that "stepped too far out of line" (Pinch, 2007, p. 423). According to Pinch, outdoor education has the potential to encourage the deconstruction of gender, but defining explicit steps necessary for it to become that change agent remains a challenge. This transformation may require tackling gender processes in a more direct fashion (2007).

## Challenging Traditional Theories and Metaphors

Metaphors are utilized in the form of activities in the field of adventure therapy and experiential education. They are recognized as an effective method for transferring participants' learning into purposeful change outside of the experiential learning environment. They can be utilized to assist with addressing behaviors associated with substance and illegal drug abuse, as well as eating disorders such as bulimia and anorexia. There are two basic forms of metaphors: imposed-metaphors and derived-metaphors. An imposed-metaphor involves the facilitator or adventure therapist instructing the participant to visualize different elements of an activity as specific things. For example, a river is the obstacle and walking to the other side of the river is success. A derived-metaphor involves the participant drawing their own metaphors which often look very different depending on the individuals' experiences; success is determined by the participant. Individual interpretations may involve drawing meaning out of sitting on the bank of the river observing wildlife, walking in the river but not across it, touching or smelling the river environment (Mack, 1996).

Heidi Mack explains these metaphors in relation to women's experiences. The belief that metaphors are an effective way to bring about change in individuals does not necessarily mean that existing metaphoric constructions address the specific needs and voices of women, how we learn, and how we experience. Carol Gilligan (1982) speaks of "theories in which men's experiences stand for all of human experience—theories which eclipse the lives of women and shut out women's voices" (Mack, 1996, p. xiii). It is vital that outdoor metaphors evolve to allow all participants to create their own definitions of meaning and success (i.e., using any or all senses to experience an environment).

Further, Joyce (1998) states that this difference may reflect how men and women create experience: "Men create through a mechanism or extension outside of their bodies and women create from within their bodies: external/internal, tangible/intangible" (Mack, 1996, p. 22). Therefore, outdoor instructors for women cannot assume that existing metaphoric theories consider and include women's experience and women's ways of learning. Existing strategies for the use of metaphors with women should be carefully evaluated and restructured and, at times, discarded all together" (p. 24). Mack also notes "that women have an incredible capacity to internalize information about their situation but lack the tools to transfer that knowledge to their lives" (p. 25). Appropriately framed settings where women have the space to create their own metaphors can assist with empowerment and the transfer of knowledge, in addition to aiding in healing (Mack, 1996). Altering existing metaphoric constructs involves shifting away from directed learning and striving towards systems that give women control in their learning, changing, and healing.

It has been argued that adventure therapy requires additional direction for certain populations. Mack counters that when outdoor instructors direct and impose metaphors, rather than encourage women to construct their own based on individual needs, they only "disenable women by modeling 'others know what is best'" for them (p. 27). This knowledge may require student affairs professionals and educators to re-evaluate teaching styles to appropriately enable students of any gender identity to thrive within their own critical thinking and experiential learning processes. These metaphors are commonly utilized in university adventure programming and adventure ropes courses. Being more conscious about altering metaphoric philosophies will allow trip and course facilitators to better serve their student clients in achieving personal goals.

## Myths that Prevent Full Participation from Women

One of the many challenges for women in outdoor leadership is the pressure of having to consistently prove their competency to male participants, partners, co-leaders, and employers in an attempt to defend their right to a presence in outdoor adventure/leadership. By addressing these myths and realities, both personally and professionally, student affairs practitioners will have a greater understanding of the myths that perpetuate through generations. For women, access to outdoor leadership, and the acknowledgment of the realities that women face in outdoor leadership, may serve as a form of liberation; their experience is not an isolated one and discrimination is not imagined. Just over four decades ago Outward Bound opened its doors to women, initiating the trend of providing access to institutionalized outdoor adventure for women. Twenty years ago Warren acknowledged this fact and declared, "It is now time to move on" (1985, p. 10). Warren states that ultimately adventure leaders must recognize that women's experiences are different and unique, and programming should correspond with this varied perspective. The concept that experiential education's methodology can apply to everyone regardless of gender, race, class, sexual orientation, and varying abilities has been passionately questioned. Warren believes that debunking myths surrounding women in the outdoors is necessary before adventure programs can respond to the specific needs of women in the wilderness (1985).

The most prominent myths facing women in the outdoors include the Myth of Accessibility (outdoor experiences and opportunities are widely available to women), the Myth of Egalitarianism (gender equity is not a reality in society but is in the woods), the Myth of Square One (all people start from the same place as beginners in outdoor education), the Myth of the Superwoman (women with outstanding technical skill and competency are the exception to the gender—this myth maintains stereotypes about women's abilities and place in society), and the Myth of the Heroic Quest (all people should explore outdoor adventure through a "conquer and defeat" lens). This series of myths not only prevents women, who are one of the largest groups of people experiencing the outdoors, from fully immersing themselves in the outdoors, but it limits all genders' perceptions of women (Warren, 1985). Student affairs professionals should be mindful of these myths when making decisions concerning the evaluation of dynamics in outdoor clubs, hiring of trip leaders, and recruitment of women in all forms of outdoor programming. Professionals greatly influence perceptions of women in the outdoors by continual self-education.

## Now What?

Is there a realistic means for women to assume leadership roles and still remain authentic to their value system and style? How does one "buy into leadership" without "selling out" to dominant forms of male leadership?

Understanding that leadership styles in outdoor adventure are not exclusive to other fields may give insight into possible directions for the future of leadership. In a recent edition of the *Harvard Business Review* (2007), it was reported that remaining true to one's own style is not just a trend but now a preference and standard for current leaders. A great leader is one that understands that the "incomplete leader" is more competent than one that does not acknowledge her, zir, or his weaknesses. A leader that can collaborate, delegate, and use consensus is much more powerful than someone who is afraid to lose power. It must be acknowledged that this style of leadership is consistent with the type of leadership that women have been advocating for and leading in for years, which has gone unnoticed only to be claimed by a majority male profession. From the emergence of this "new" preferred form of leadership can we deduce that men in business are finally listening? Does this mean that America will eventually buy into a more "feminine" form of leadership but only if it is labeled otherwise? All signs indicate if it is endorsed by the *Harvard Business Review*, then perhaps yes.



## Haunting Questions

Several haunting questions that have surfaced throughout this process involve Title IX's influence on women and sports. If outdoor adventure programming were included in Title IX regulations, would women have better access? Would there be increased funding for women-specific adventure trips or competitions (e.g. adventure racing)? Or would they face similar barriers as women's sports teams around the country as universities attempt to legally reinterpret Title IX to prevent the reallocation of funding to women's sports?

Another lingering question addresses infusing social justice and true diversity into the field of outdoor education. The ability to work with diverse populations through high adventure programming and trips is predicted to be a highly sought after skill (Warren, 2002). Why then are classes exploring the experiences of people of color, women, the queer community, and social justice still optional in university programs, if they are offered at all? And finally, if higher education institutions refuse to change their strategies to include more diverse populations in outdoor education and adventure how long will professionals sit idly while resources continue to primarily support White men?

## Conclusion

At this point, not a single generation of women has lived and functioned under a system that has completely recognized and applauded their various systems. Student affairs professionals have an opportunity and an obligation to listen to the needs and expectations of women currently in, and those striving to be in, outdoor leadership and adventure. Professionals can support women in outdoor leadership by advocating for all-women programming, trips, and leadership opportunities, by increasing awareness of the myths surrounding women in any type of physical activity, rethinking and redeveloping metaphors we use for experiential learning, and fostering a campus environment where gender roles are discouraged or no longer exist.

Addressing women's experiences in outdoor education is just the tip of the inclusivity iceberg. With increasing research and education surrounding the experiences of people of color, queer populations, those with differing abilities, and various socioeconomic classes it is only more evident that there is much work to be done. It has been stated that the field of outdoor leadership and adventure will only change when social justice elements are considered to be as important as technical outdoor skills (Warren, 2002). When a person does not get a job because she/ze/he has outstanding leadership and technical experiences, but can show no commitment to diversity and social justice, then substantial progress will have been made.

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# Healing the Brotherhood and Sisterhood: The Healing Process of Fraternity Brothers and Sorority Sisters of Gay Men and Lesbians

Stephanie "Mo" Moreira

*"Coming out" to a brother or a sister can be an emotional affair, but "coming out" to a fraternity brother or a sorority sister can be just as affecting. This is because of the heterosexist and homophobic environment that these organizations often create. This paper focuses on the importance of forming gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (GLBTQ) allies in fraternities and sororities for those Greek members who identify as GLBTQ. Since many Greek-letter organizations may be described as "families," coping strategies for fraternity and sorority members who have been confidants of their gay brother or lesbian sister are discussed by using counseling theories designed for parents and families of gay men and lesbians.*

As in previous years, college students continue to find homes in fraternities and sororities. Like their heterosexual colleagues, gay men and lesbians are also joining Greek-letter organizations. Despite the myth that gay men and lesbians may join in order to search for same-sex partners, their reasons for joining a fraternity or sorority are not very different from their heterosexual brothers and sisters. These reasons include "'friendship, camaraderie,' 'social life, parties, having fun' and 'support group, sense of belonging'" (Case, Hesp, & Eberly, 2005, p. 22). No matter the reasoning, the fact still remains that gay men and lesbians are members of fraternities and sororities. A study conducted by Case, Hesp, and Eberly (2005) noted that three to six percent of all membership in fraternities and sororities may identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (GLBTQ). The study also hypothesizes that the percentage of GLBTQ membership may be equal to the percentage of GLBTQ people in the population, which is said to be around 10% (p. 22). Each sexual orientation identity is unique and has its own identity developmental process, but those that are specifically defined for gay men, lesbians, and their families will be used to shed light on the process that fraternity brothers and sorority sisters may experience when developing as an ally.

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Because most identity development (racial, sexual orientation, etc.) continues throughout the college years, gay and lesbian identity development inevitably takes place while gay and lesbian members are currently involved in a fraternity or sorority. Some gay and lesbian students choose to "come out of the closet" or disclose their sexual orientation, to close friends or to the whole chapter. For others, the environment may feel unsafe due to heterosexist and homophobic language and/or actions. These members continue to "stay in the closet" and hide their sexual orientation throughout their collegiate fraternity and sorority experience.

For most members, if not all, fraternities and sororities are considered a "chosen family," a group of same sex individuals with whom one finds comfort and shares a common bond. Much like in a biological family, brothers and sisters share experiences that bring them closer together. The amount of time one shares with his brothers or her sisters during the collegiate years is much more than the amount of time that one spends with his or her actual family. Because of this, a member usually comes out to a fraternity brother or sorority sister before he or she comes out to his or her parents (Windmeyer and Freeman, 2000). For the purpose of understanding the developmental process for fraternity and sorority members who have been confidants of their gay brother or lesbian sister, counseling theories intended for parents and families of gay men and lesbians will be used.

## The Family Healing Process

The most widely cited theory to counsel parents and families of gay men and lesbians takes its root from the grieving process parents and families go through after the death of a child. The grieving process includes four stages: denial, anger, bargaining, and acceptance. Savin-Williams and Dube (1998) describe these four stages as they are used to counsel families of gay men or lesbians. Once the child has disclosed new information about his or her sexual orientation, the family is in shock. Although shock is not an actual stage in the grieving process, it is the most common reaction to the gay or lesbian child's news (p. 7).

Once the initial shock is over, families go through a period of denial. At this time, a separation between the family and child occurs. The gay or lesbian child may fear total rejection during this period, but it is important to note that the family must take this time to "regain their bearings and equilibrium" (p. 7). As denial begins to fade away, anger and rage ensue. These feelings are usually directed at the child. The next stage, bargaining, is the most damaging to the development of a healthy gay or lesbian identity. At this point, the family begins to bargain with the gay or lesbian child. The family tells the child not to act on his or her feelings, not to tell anyone else, and not to bring it up ever again. For some families, the acceptance stage is never reached. For others, the families are able to see their gay or lesbian child as the same child for whom they have always cared and loved. Eventually, these families are



more capable of supporting their child through the trials and tribulations of living in a heterosexist and homophobic environment (Savin-Williams & Dube, 1998).

Another widely accepted process for families is described in *Beyond Acceptance: Parents of Lesbians and Gays Talk about Their Experiences*. According to Griffin, Wirth, and Wirth (1986), families usually go through four stages after learning that their child identifies as gay or lesbian. These include "breaking contact, trying to change the child, ignoring the issue, and accepting reality" (p. 10). In the first stage, families go through a period of pushing the gay or lesbian child away. During this period, the child may not feel supported by the family and may run away. Like the denial stage in the previous process, the family uses the separation time to deal with their own personal feelings about the subject of homosexuality. The second stage occurs when the family tries to impose a heterosexual identity on the child. Some ways the family attempts to do this include: "taking the child to a psychotherapist, leading the child to religious conversion, and/or encouraging the child to have a sexual relationship with a person of the opposite sex" (p. 11).

The third stage is characterized by a deeper, harsher form of denial – ignoring the issue. During this stage, the family refuses to talk about the issue. If this stage is not overcome, the relationship between the family and the gay or lesbian child is broken. In order to rebuild the relationship, the issue needs to be addressed and resolved. The final stage is acceptance. In this stage, the family has accepted the fact that their child is gay or lesbian. The family realizes that their child is the same person for whom they cared and nurtured. Both parties are able to love and accept each other for who they are (Griffin, Wirth, & Wirth, 1986).

## Telling the Secret

"The only thing predictable about the coming out or disclosure experience itself is its unpredictability" (Clark, 2005). For a gay fraternity or lesbian sorority member, coming out is an integral part of all gay or lesbian identity development models (Cass, 1984; D'Augelli, 1994). According to Clark, the gay or lesbian member thinks and plans about the moment of disclosure for a long time. Thoughts of who to tell and how to tell are constantly on his or her mind.

The moment he or she comes out to another marks the beginning of the ally development process for those the gay or lesbian member chose to tell. Disclosure of one's sexual orientation affects not only the gay or lesbian member, but also those members with whom he or she shares the information. Savin-Williams and Dube (1998) describe this period of time as a "crisis" for those brothers and sisters in whom the gay or lesbian member has confided (p. 7). For many, this new information has damaged the relationship between the gay or lesbian member and his or her brother or sister. For all, the relationship dynamics have changed.

It is important to note that the gay or lesbian member is seeking support from his or her "chosen" family. As he or she continues to develop a gay or lesbian sexual identity, some of his or her brothers or sisters may begin to develop an ally identity that will allow them to give their gay or lesbian member the support that he or she will need. Conversely, other fraternity or sorority members may choose to forego developing as an ally and reject the gay or lesbian member entirely. For those brothers and sisters that are much more aware of gay and lesbian issues, the process of acquiring an ally identity will be quicker; but for those who have no knowledge about these issues and are deeply rooted in their prejudices, the process will be slower and may be more painful.

## The "Chosen" Family Healing Process

Like the families of gay or lesbian people, members of fraternities and sororities go through much of the same development when they learn that a brother or sister is gay or lesbian. In *Out on Fraternity Row* and *Secret Sisters*, fraternity and sorority members recall their thoughts and actions upon learning that another member was gay or lesbian (Windmeyer & Freeman, 1998, 2000). For both Thom Chesney and Selene Jones, the news that a brother or sister identified as gay or lesbian was given to them in person. Although the news was delivered in the same way, the responses were very different.

For Thom Chesney, his fraternity brother, Trevor, seemed like the "All-American Boy." Trevor was good-looking and attracted women easily. In fact, Trevor used some of the most common methods for gay fraternity men to hide their sexuality; he immersed himself in alcohol and women (Windmeyer & Freeman, 1998, p. 238). One night, after socializing with a group of sorority women, the two fraternity men walked back to their apartment. During this walk, Trevor decided to come out to his fraternity brother, Thom, who shared the following:

> "Thom, I'm gay. I thought I should tell you, thought I could tell you, am telling you." I squinted at him and shook my head. "…Get some rest, man. You're a mess. You'll sleep this off in no time."
>
> He stared back at me without flinching—seeing into me—and still no drama. I broke his gaze, slung my shoulder around him, and walked the final block to his place. My feet were cold again. I was cold. Trev spoke only once more, in the entryway to his building.
>
> "There's more to this, you know. You need to understand that and understand me. I need to know nothing has changed between us."
>
> "Sure," I said. "Nothing has changed. You're gay, I'm not, we're both drunk, and by tomorrow I won't remember being Mr. Pi Phi, and you won't even remember being gay for a night." (Windmeyer & Freeman, 1998, pp. 229 - 230)



Thom's behavior is like most family members when they learn that their child is gay or lesbian. He chose to completely dismiss his fraternity brother's disclosure, and began the stage of denial. The time Thom spent in the denial stage proved to be too long to save his relationship with Trevor. This, too, sometimes happens with families. If the family takes too long to move toward accepting their gay or lesbian child, a rift or break in the relationship will occur. Thom held too many prejudices against gay men to give Trevor the support he needed at the time. As a result, Trevor decided to not fully come out while he was active in the fraternity.

Another important aspect to note about the dialogue between Trevor and Thom is the need for Trevor to hear that Thom still sees him as the same Trevor he knew before the disclosure. As discussed earlier, the moment of disclosure can change a relationship. The relationship can either be broken or strengthened. At the moment of disclosure, it is virtually impossible for a close family member or friend to tell the gay or lesbian individual that their relationship has not changed. Some sort of grieving process has to take place. Eventually, Thom did find a way to work out his prejudices towards gay men and lesbians. The time that he took to go through the healing process cost him a dear friend, but will eventually benefit him in the future. Trevor's disclosure to Thom allowed Thom to rethink what society has told him about gay men and lesbians. Perhaps this experience will allow Thom to accept another gay friend or brother more quickly and keep that relationship intact.

As for Selene Jones, she had suspected that her sorority sister was a lesbian, but she actively ignored all the clues Amber gave her. When Amber did come out to her, she found herself taken by surprise. Like some family members who speculate about a child's sexuality, they report still feeling unprepared for the news (Saltzburg, 2004). After years of suspicion Selene's sorority sister finally did come out to her:

> We went to the living room of my mother's house to talk. As we sat across from each other, I felt the tension emanate from her, and I grew more anxious… I heard the clock ticking as I waited patiently. She began slowly and shakily, "Well…Selene… I don't like men in that way…" That was it. As the words poured out slowly, time seemed to slow down. In mid sentence, I knew things between us would always be slightly different… Even though I was in shock, I was ecstatic that Amber came out to me. (Windmeyer & Freeman, 2000, pp. 235-236)

Selene's story is another perfect example of the process that one goes through when a family member comes out of the closet. Selene describes the moment after disclosure when she is left alone to think about Amber's words as "mourning the loss of plain, straight Amber" (Windmeyer & Freeman, 2000, p. 236). Selene began to rethink their relationship. Was everything that she and Amber had experienced before this disclosure a lie? She started to question her own sexuality. More importantly, if people knew that Amber was a lesbian, would they think that Selene was a lesbian, too (p. 237)? These questions are all a part of the process that one takes to learn to accept a gay brother or lesbian sister. Unlike Thom's experience, Selene's previous experience with gay men or lesbians allowed her to go through the healing process faster and inevitably led her to accept her lesbian sister, Amber.

Common in fraternities and sororities, but not told in the two stories above, is the bargaining method that occurs between the fraternity and sorority and the gay or lesbian member. Similar to how a family bargains with the gay or lesbian child to not tell other family members or to hide his or her sexual orientation, fraternities and sororities do the same with their gay or lesbian member. Fraternities and sororities are afraid of what other Greek organizations or college students will think when they hear that one of the fraternity and sorority members is gay or lesbian. Sororities, much more than fraternities, "control the discovery of any information that their leaders fear may damage their desired image" (Windmeyer & Freeman, 2000, p. 243). Fraternities and sororities may go so far as to prohibit same sex dates to formals, or ask a gay or lesbian member to leave the organization.

Even though these negative events may occur throughout fraternities and sororities, some organizations do successfully navigate the healing process. These are the fraternities and sororities with a strong bond of brotherhood and sisterhood that were able to accept and continue to actively support a member who identifies as gay or lesbian.

## Coming to Terms with Homophobia and Heterosexism

Before being able to accept a gay brother or lesbian sister, one must go through an intense introspective stage where one questions what one has learned from society's teachings about gay and lesbian individuals. For the most part, society holds very strong homophobic and heterosexist beliefs. Homophobia is the irrational fear of gay or lesbian individuals. "Heterosexism is the belief that 'normal' development is heterosexual and that deviations from this identity are 'unnatural,' 'disordered,' or 'dysfunctional'" (D'Augelli, 1994, p. 314). It is important for members of fraternities and sororities to be honest with their feelings towards gay men and lesbians. The only way prejudices can change is "if they are brought out into the surface" (Clark, 2005, p. 223). Discussing these prejudices and actively getting to know a gay brother or lesbian sister will allow the member to work towards more positive feelings about gay men or lesbians. While doing so, the fraternity or sorority member will move more fluidly to an acceptance of his gay brother or her lesbian sister.

It is extremely important for a fraternity or sorority member to educate himself or herself. "Much oppression is perpetuated by otherwise decent people who do it, not out of malice, but from ignorance and insensitive unconscious habit" (Clark, 2005, p. 45). If the member had no reason to educate himself or herself about gay and lesbian issues before, he or she certainly has a reason to do so now. For the preservation of a close brotherhood or sisterhood, one cannot allow for prejudicial harm to invade the fraternity or sorority.



## Conclusion

The process of accepting a close fraternity or sorority member as gay or lesbian can be long and painful for everyone involved. It is necessary to bring long held prejudices to the surface. For fraternities and sororities, these prejudices may be harder to break due to the ever present homophobic and heterosexist environment. Yet without changing this environment, fraternity and sorority members risk superficially accepting their gay brother or lesbian sister. Still residing in fraternity and sorority members' minds, the prejudices they hold may come out, usually to the harm of the gay or lesbian member.

In order to heal relationships that appear to be in crisis, fraternity and sorority members go through the same healing process as families of gay or lesbian individuals. During this process, members follow several stages of grieving the "loss" of the brother or sister they once thought to be heterosexual. Upon disclosure, some fraternity and sorority members find themselves finally able to accept a gay brother or lesbian sister. For other fraternity and sorority members who begin the process, they may stay in one stage for a much longer period of time. By doing so, they may not be able to support their gay brother or lesbian sister; eventually, they end up losing or severely damaging their relationship.

Fraternities and sororities need to be educated about gay and lesbian issues in order to change the heterosexist and homophobic environment of those organizations. Greek-letter organizations can look to various campus resources to help in this effort. Offices that support the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning students on campus offer a wealth of information and training for all students. In addition, Greek advisors can support this process by engaging fraternity and sorority members in conversations centered on diversity. Also, Greek advisors should be conscientious and supportive of the struggle that fraternity brothers and sorority sisters go through in order to accept a gay or lesbian member. By taking these simple steps to educate members, prejudices against gay and lesbian people can be changed and relationships between heterosexual and gay and lesbian members maintained.

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# A College Education in Exchange for Student Debt: Tuition Costs and Low-Income Students

Audrey B. Place

*In today's higher education institutions, tuition is climbing and aid for low-income students is falling. Education has always been touted as the way for low-income students to move up in social status, yet these students will face increasing debt and will pay more for their education than their wealthier classmates. As student affairs professionals working with low-income students, there is a need to understand the challenges they are facing and advocate for these students to ensure their success. By exploring these challenges and the implications for practice, student affairs professionals will be better equipped to work with the low-income students.*

The data are clear: The cost of a college education is rising well above the average increase in household income, and financial aid is not keeping up with the pace (Horn, Chapman, & Chen, 2003). Students and families face an increased financial burden and rising debt, with a 38% average increase in tuition. The majority of financial aid is allocated in the form of loans, leaving families with few options of resolving their unmet financial needs (Horn et al., 2003). Student affairs administrators must be aware of the increasing barriers to college access for low-income students and advocate for change. Low-income students are disadvantaged by society due to the increased pressure to supplement tuition costs and the large amount of debt these students must repay after college. By exploring the historical context of tuition increases, the financial aid challenges of low-income students, and the impact these obstacles have on students, student affairs administrators can gain a clearer understanding of how to support low-income students.

## Historical Context

The past 30-40 years have seen myriad tuition increases. In the 1970s, tuition lagged behind the rate of inflation, yet in the 1980s tuition rose twice as much as the inflation rate and surged in comparison to the increase in household income (Haupt-

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man, 1990). By 1990, the average tuition rates were increasing at a rate 5% higher than the national inflation rate (Vedder, 2004). Family income was not growing, yet tuition was, which meant families' ability to pay tuition decreased (Hauptman, 1990).

One of the main reasons for the tuition increase is revealed through the philosophy of higher education. Between the start of the 1980s and the end of the 1990s there was a shift in direction of higher education funding. Federal and state policies for funding higher education moved away from the practice of taxpayers contributing to the financial aid pool and towards policies and philosophies that students should pay their own tuition. These policies led to a drop in state and federal funding and an increase in student loans. Additionally, colleges and universities were increasing faculty and staff salaries and attempting to improve and upgrade facilities, leading to further increases in tuition. These practices increased the financial strains on students, which resulted in a decline in enrollment. The combination of these factors, the decline of the United States (U.S.) economy in the 1980s, and the reduction of state and federal funding all contributed to the increases in tuition (Hauptman, 1990).

## Financial Aid

"The last two decades of the twentieth century can appropriately be characterized as a period of high tuition, high aid, but with an emphasis on loans rather than grants" (Paulsen & St. John, 2002, p. 189). This combination limits financial access to college. "Each year increasing numbers of low-income students graduate from high school academically prepared to enter college but confront significant financial barriers that limit their ability to enter and stay in college" (The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, 2001, p. 12). At four-year institutions across the country, the enrollment rate for low-income students is half that of students from families with incomes above $75,000 a year. Low-income students are facing costs in excess of 62% of their family's yearly income; a 20% cost increase from the 1970s. Compounding the problem is the fact that Pell Grants, the largest federal financial aid for these students, only cover approximately 39% of today's college costs (The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, 2001).

The responsibility of funding college has switched from grants and federal aid to the shoulders of students. While financial aid helps reduce the cost of college, low-income students and their families must account for any unmet need. Although there is currently a 60 billion dollar investment in student aid, much of this is tied up in student loans. In 2003-04, the average student debt upon graduation was $15,500 for a four-year public institution and $19,500 for a four-year private institution (College Board, 2006b). Following graduation, students with loans are often forced to find employment to handle the high amount of accumulated debt. This can mean accepting employment as a means to an end, not as an ideal fit for the person or the place of employment (Price, 2004).



The major consequence of increasing student loans and decreasing federal funding is the cost to the community and society. "The consequences of a public policy that emphasizes the use of student loans to finance higher education is to alter the balance between the social and the individual purposes of higher education" (Price, 2004, p. 7). By keeping cost as an individual obstacle, we allow some (usually those who already have the means) to move upwards in society while preventing others from doing so because they either do not have the means to attend college or graduate with high levels of debt. Student loans shift the focus away from education as a means to better society, which in turn devalues education as a means for social transformation. The initial concept of using loans to increase access for low-income students has failed (Fossey, 1998).

The economy is calling for educated workers, and a college degree has become integral to future success, but the cost of obtaining that education is out of reach for many (Price, 2004). In the first ten years of this century, 42% of new jobs will require a college education (Price, 2004). It is clear that students facing the job market will require a college degree, yet the government continues to decrease financial support. Between 1979 and 1999, the average income for college educated workers increased by 16%, while the average income for high school educated workers decreased by 8%. As of 2006, women with college degrees were earning 70% more than women with high school diplomas and men were earning 63% more (The College Board, 2006a).

## Impact on Students

One of the first things many high school students consider when thinking about college is cost. For example, in the Paulsen and St. John research (2002), 64% of low-income students based their college decisions on low tuition costs, student assistance, and aid. Studies have shown that low-income students who receive larger amounts of loans and grants still tend to choose a lower costing college. Grants and loans are "well below the total of tuition and living costs, indicating a substantial unmet need for low-income students" (Paulsen & St. John, 2002, p. 207). When compared to their lower-income counterparts, higher-income students expressed a lack of concern towards the costs of the college with more than 56% choosing a private college, 92% attending a four-year institution, and 86% having the ability to attend full time. Higher income students are not choosing their institutions based on the cost (Paulsen & St. John, 2002).

This focus on college costs combined with the realities of high tuition and high debt lead low-income students into more affordable, less prestigious colleges. According to the Cooperative Institutional Research Program at the University of Los Angeles (1999), 39% of students in families earning a yearly income under $20,000 attend two-year public colleges. Only 5.8% of students in the same income bracket attend highly selective, private four-year colleges. In contrast, 10.1% of students from families earning above $200,000 attend two-year public colleges, while 25.5% of students in this high income bracket attend highly selective, private four-year colleges (as cited in McPherson & Schapiro, 2006, p. 5).

The staggering difference in college selection can also be attributed to different levels of cultural capital that students possess as they enter college. Low-income students tend to have less cultural capital and are more likely to be first generation college students. Low-income, first generation students do not have the guidance that higher income students do as they often cannot afford extra help such as test preparation sessions, tutors, or private academic counselors. The lack of family knowledge about the application process can make selecting a college, navigating the admissions process, and interpreting financial aid even more daunting.

Low-income students continue to be disadvantaged in our current educational system. Low-income students are more likely to achieve A's, yet are still much less likely to pursue a graduate education. Additionally, they are less likely to live on-campus during college or attend a private institution (Paulsen & St. John, 2002). Almost 30% of low-income students work more than 35 hours a week. These students must divide their time between school and work, opt to attend college part-time, and/or attend two-year community colleges (The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, 2001). These obstacles often result in more years spent in school, and therefore greater total debt.

The situation does not look brighter for the future. Projections estimate that by 2015 college enrollments will increase by over 1.5 million students. Most of these will be low-income students, and 700,000 of that 1.5 million will be African American (The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, 2001). While increasing the numbers of these students on our campus is positive, the overall increase in low-income students will cause a strain on the already miniscule funding. These students will have an even bigger financial burden on their shoulders. Colleges must begin to contain costs and identify ways to increase access and financial assistance before 2015 in order to support the needs of our future students.

## Ideas for Change

As mentioned above, cost containment is a large area where colleges can free up funds. At the university level, financial officers and budget managers can discuss the best ways to decrease costs and increase accountability for how funds are used. At the divisional or departmental level, student affairs practitioners can contain costs within their budget lines. Using assessment tools to point out ineffective programs can help reduce costs. If a department has an ineffective program or initiative, bringing those to light can free up the resources that



are associated with that program. Those resources can then be reallocated to other new programs instead of requesting new money to fund new initiatives.

Job effectiveness is another area for improvement at the departmental level. It is widely known that student affairs practitioners have considerable amounts of responsibility in their positions. If possible, departments should consider delegating tasks to student employees to both increase efficiency and create more student jobs. Departments should also consider evaluating job effectiveness by asking strategic questions: Is the department running as effectively as it can? Are there technologies available that would free up people or resources? Does the structure of the department flow easily and in the most effective way? Could restructuring allow for more effectiveness? These questions can all lead to more effective work and a reduction in departmental spending. To redirect departmental funds to low-income students, all aspects of the institution's governance structure would need to be committed to accessibility for low-income students.

Furthermore, it is essential for student affairs practitioners to know the stresses that low-income students are facing. By understanding what these students are experiencing in high school and in their struggle to come to college, we can assist those who do attend our institutions. Programs for low-income students on our campuses can help their orientation to school and ultimately their retention. Low-income students who graduate and are now working and living in different communities are the best recruitment and resources available. By increasing access to higher education and by ensuring these students graduate, we ensure that more low-income students have positive role models. Educating ourselves and our colleagues is the first step in the advocacy process.

Finally, different departments and operating units should consider what type of advocacy for low-income students is most important for their functional area. An example of good practice can include the admissions office running and hosting programs for high schools that discuss the financial aspect of college and the different opportunities for students to receive funding. Outreach to low-income students while they are still young may give those students the knowledge that higher education is accessible to them. Informing these students at a young age can help them realize they too can attend college, and it will give them knowledge about the process.

Student affairs practitioners can also affect change on a larger scale. One of the major ways that student affairs professionals can oppose the growing rise in student debt and inaccessibility is through the political system. "The focus of most state education reforms has been limited to K-12 school systems" (Callan, Finney, Kirst, Usdan, & Venezia, A. 2006, p. 143). Student affairs professionals can lobby for increasing federal and state aid for our colleges and universities. One step that could be taken would be to support candidates who favor tax legislation on initiatives that increase tuition. Schools that increase tuition rates would be taxed at a higher level, reducing the government funding that schools receive. This could be an incentive for schools not to raise tuition rates. While not a solution to the problem, it is one possible way to control rising tuition costs (Vedder, 2004). Student affairs professionals need to send a clear message to campus leadership that the burden of education should not be placed on the shoulders of the students. Rather, the burden should be on the campus to reduce unnecessary costs, and on the government to value education and support it in a fashion that allows access for all potential students.

## Conclusion

Unfortunately, many schools are not in a position to increase access to their institution for low-income students because of the lack of funding. Yet, there are a number of selective institutions that do have the financial capability to support low-income students (McPherson & Schapiro, 2006). There are many low-income students that are academically prepared for these select institutions, and institutions that are able to answer the call, and are financially able to assist more students, should do so.

"We must never forget that every dollar a student borrows to finance post-secondary education has the potential for jeopardizing rather than enhancing the student's future" (Fossey, 1998, p. 186). As student affairs professionals, we have the obligation to increase awareness of tuition costs and to assist students who are struggling to afford tuition with the hopes that one day, our colleges and universities will be accessible to all students.



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# Creating a Welcoming Community for International Students

Laura Brina Semenow

*With large numbers of international students enrolled on our campuses, it is important for student affairs practitioners to be prepared to work with this student population and address their needs. Programs should be put in place to tackle their transition issues as well as help students deal with culture shock and culture learning. In this paper, I will conduct an analysis of the literature on intercultural adaptation and counseling to identify the issues faced by this group and inform suggestions for practice.*

International education exchange is the most significant current project designed to continue the process of humanizing mankind to the point, we would hope, that nations can learn to live in peace - J. William Fulbright (www.cies.org)

Between 2 and 3 million students each year travel to another country to study. The United States and the United Kingdom together host over a third of all international students in the world, followed by Germany, France and Australia (Graddol, 2006). During the 2006-2007 school year, there were 582,984 international students enrolled in U.S. higher education institutions, marking the eighth year in a row that the U.S. hosted more than half a million international students (Institute of International Education, IIE, 2007). With so many international students enrolled at our campuses, it is important for student affairs practitioners to be prepared to work with this student population, and to be able to address their needs. But what are the issues facing international students? How can we make them feel welcome in our institutions? Why should we be invested in their success?

## Making the Case for International Students

International students contribute to the diversity of their campus by sharing their cultures, perspectives, language abilities, and life experiences. They help students in the home institution learn about different parts of the world while absorbing a new culture and building bridges between countries. In addition to intellectual and cultural contributions, international students make a significant economic impact on their host countries' economy. Ward, Bochner, and Furnham (2001) estimated that international students contribute approximately AU$2 billion annually to the Australian economy, over CAD$2 billion to the Canadian economy, and NZ$530 million to the New Zealand economy. In the 2006-2007 academic year, international students contributed approximately US$14.5 billion dollars to the U.S. economy through their expenditure on tuition and living expenses. Department of Commerce data describes U.S. higher education as the country's fifth largest service sector export (IIE, 2007).

International students often occupy otherwise lowly attended programs and keep them functioning. Also, they can become low-cost teaching assistants and permit high-demand undergraduate programs to function (Albach, 1998, Dalton, 1999). As the American Council on Education (ACE) explains, educating international students can infuse U.S. campuses with a variety of cultures to impart cross-cultural understanding, spread U.S. values and influence, and create goodwill for the United States throughout the world (2002). The presence of more than 500,000 international students on U.S. campuses also provides us with the opportunity to educate the next generation of world leaders – an incalculable foreign policy asset. The same can be said for other countries that recruit international students as a way to spread their culture, language, and interests (EduFrance and DAAD, 2007).

## Cultural Shock and the Adaptation Process

International students are a heterogeneous group, and individual factors can influence the adaptation process. These factors include age, gender, nationality, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, cognitive and communication style, personality characteristics, coping style, and past intercultural experiences (Cushner & Karim, 2004). Counseling literature also lists some of the major problems and issues of adjustment unique to international students: culture shock; academic difficulty arising from being in a different academic system; political, religious, and social conflicts; impacts of development in their home countries; cross-cultural male-female relationships; social isolation; depression; financial difficulties; anxiety brought on by fear of immigration authorities; stressful relationships with Americans; dealing with new-found freedom; dealing with disappointed expectations; and anxieties about returning home (Leong & Chou, 1996).

Leong et al. (1996) identified three areas of personal adjustment that are applicable to international students: those common to all students, those common to all sojourners, and those that are unique to international students. Unique stresses faced by international students include the demands placed on them in their roles as cultural ambassadors and differences in academic culture between their home country and their host country. Thus, "interna-

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tional students face additional stresses to those of native students, but not all their difficulties can be attributed to their foreignness" (Leong et al., 1996, p. 212). Without generalizing international students, student affairs practitioners should make an effort to better understand the adaptation stages of this population to better meet their needs and alleviate the symptoms of culture shock.

Culture shock is the term used for the adjustment period in the transition between home and the host country. Leong et al. (1996) state that "the term culture shock was introduced to the literature after World War II and implied that entering a new culture was a potentially confusing and disorienting experience" (p. 212). Adler defines culture shock as "a set of emotional reactions to the loss of perceptual reinforcements from one's own culture, to new culture stimuli which have little or no meaning, and to the misunderstanding of new and diverse experiences" (as cited in Bennett, 1998, p. 215). P. K. Bock (1974) explains that there are three kinds of adjustments people must make when going through culture shock: Physical adjustment (involves getting used to the more obvious differences), social adjustments (involves deeper acknowledgments and acceptance of the host country's values, beliefs, and way of doing things) and internal adjustments (where the person comes to terms with his, her or hir own intercultural identity and is able to incorporate and integrate both cultures with minimum discord) (as cited in Paige, Cohen, Kappler, Chi, & Lessegard, 2002, p. 84). Paige et al. (2002) say there are only two kinds of students that do not go through culture shock: those who are extremely flexible and experienced in intercultural learning, and those who "recreate home while abroad," surrounding themselves with their native language, people, and foods. Culture shock can be seen as a normal and desired experience since one of the main goals of studying in a different country is learning from the differences. Ting-Toomey also asserts that culture shock, although inevitably stressful and disorienting, can have positive results if managed effectively. These positive outcomes include: a sense of well-being, heightened self esteem, cognitive openness and flexibility, increased tolerance for ambiguity, enhanced confidence in self and others, and competence in social interactions (as cited in Cushner et al., 2004).

The current literature points out four phases of cultural shock, which are sequential and cyclical (Arthur, 2004). The first stage is the "honeymoon" or "tourist" phase (Pedersen, 1995). It is assumed that people who enter other cultures have positive expectations and look forward to their experiences. In this initial stage, there is usually a fascination with cultural differences and contrasts are appraised as exciting and interesting (Arthur, 2004).

The second stage is the "crisis" or "disintegration phase." In this phase, aspects of the culture that were interesting at first are later perceived as sources of irritation and disappointment. "In extreme cases, individuals reject the local culture and cope



by erecting barriers to viewing any aspect of the local culture as rewarding… This shift in thinking…is accompanied by strong feelings such as lack of control, depression, anxiety or psychological reactions of stress" (Arthur, 2004, p. 22). Student affairs practitioners should be especially aware of this phase, since they can help students by providing support, guidance, resources, and positive reinforcement.

Most students learn how to cope and move from crisis and enter the "reorientation" or "re-integration" phase. Pedersen (1995) says this may occur through trial and error practices or through interventions designed to address transition demands. Arthur (2004) explains that some international students cope by limiting their interaction with the host culture and associating with other students from similar backgrounds. "This reorientation does not mean that all problems with culture shock end, rather, international students develop the attitudes and the skills needed for effective problem solving" (Arthur, 2004, p. 24). Once again, student affairs practitioners are vital to helping students develop these coping mechanisms, through campus programming, community building, counseling services, and academic support.

The fourth stage of culture shock is the "adaptation" or "resolution" phase. At this point, students have acquired considerable cultural knowledge and are confident in their abilities to communicate, but recognize there is much more to learn and to understand (Paige et al., 2002). Berry (1985, 1997) asserts that students adapt in four different styles, "based in the extent they maintain their original cultural identity and the extent they engage in participation with other cultural groups" (as cited in Arthur, 2004, p. 24). Those styles were explored by Arthur (2004): Some international students do not want to or are unable to hold on to their original cultural identity and they typically assimilate to the new culture. In contrast, international students who strive to maintain their original cultural identity and who do not actively engage in new cultural contexts adopt a position of separation. Alternatively, if avenues for maintaining traditional cultural identity are blocked and there are barriers that prevent international students from joining groups in the new culture, a sense of exclusion or marginalization is experienced. A fourth acculturation strategy of integration refers to an interest in maintaining some degree of one's original culture while participating as an active member of the new culture (p. 21).

If we want to foster an environment of respect and culture sharing in our institutions, it is imperative that student affairs practitioners provide forums for culture exchange to occur, so that international students are not pressured to assimilate or feel marginalized. Students from the host institutions should be encouraged to learn from international students, in a bi-directional process. International students should be encouraged to integrate with the host culture and develop a bi-cultural identity. "It is unfortunate that many members of the host culture do not view the opportunity to interact with international students as posing the same opportunities for cultural learning and personal growth" (Arthur, 2004, p. 25).

The literature on the development of intercultural skills also helps us to understand the stages one goes through when learning a new culture. Bennett's Model of Intercultural Sensitivity shows us that when we learn a new culture, we start from "ethnocentric stages" and progress to what he called "ethno-relative stages" (as cited in Paige et al., 2002). The ethnocentric stages are "denial, defense, and minimization." In the denial stage, people are not aware that cultural differences exist. In the defense stage, people see the differences, but see them as wrong or inferior. In the minimization stage, people see the differences, but don't see them as important. They concentrate on their own culture, and emphasize the similarities between them.

In the ethno-relative stages, which are acceptance, adaptation, and integration, "people no longer view their culture as a center from which others should be judged" (Paige, 2002, p. 103). In the acceptance stage, "people cease to look at cultural difference as negative, but simply as existing. There is a great deal of awareness of the differences, but respect is given to groups who are culturally different" (Paige, 2002, p. 103). At the end of the intercultural sensitivity continuum are the adaptation and integration stages when people "maintain many of the cultural values of their original culture, but they have integrated others and are able to use at least two different cultural frames of reference for perceiving the world" (Paige, 2002, p. 104). If student affairs professionals understand the stages of cultural learning, they can help the students who are going through the process.

## Transition Issues Faced by International Students

Schlossberg, Waters, and Goodman define a transition as "any event, or non-event that results in changed relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles" (1995, p. 27). They also state that "[there are] four major sets of factors that influence a person's ability to cope with a transition: situation, self, support and strategies" (1995, p. 49). International students face several transitions, and if supported by student affairs practitioners, strategies can be identified to achieve a successful adaptation. Arthur (2004) identified a series of common transition issues faced by international students: academic performance, communication, social support, cost of living, discrimination, gender role expectation, and family matters. These issues are explained below:

### *Academic Performance*

Success in education abroad depends on the ability of the international students to manage their programs of study, since a large financial investment was made by the student, family, home government, or a sponsor. There is intense pressure for a great academic performance that can be exacerbated if the level of difficulty of the academic material is much greater at the host institution than the student is used to. Also, teaching and learning styles at the host institution can be different from the home institution, so students may need guidance on how to meet faculty expectations and be effective in class



participation. Lastly, when examples used in classroom discussions are solely centered in the host environment, international students may have a difficult time relating to the material and feel excluded from the discussion (Arthur, 2004).

### *Communication*

Not only is fluency in a foreign language required, but an understanding of non-verbal communication is essential for the international student to succeed. To communicate effectively in a foreign culture is a process that takes time, so both the student and members of the host community should be patient and put in effort to improve communication. Also, students and the host community should be aware that communication is more than language proficiency and also involves culture and contextual understanding (Arthur, 2004).

### *Social Support*

When moving to a different country, international students will most likely lose all previous forms of social support and traditional sources of self-validation. Many times the friendship patterns in the home culture can be very different than in the host culture, creating frustration or a feeling of disconnectedness for the international student. Fostering the creation of a community of international students can be a great form of support, but this should not be the only focus, since even students from the same country can have profound religious, ethnic, and cultural differences (Arthur, 2004).

### *Cost of Living*

Going abroad can put a great financial burden on the international student and/or their family. Just because a student takes the opportunity to study abroad does not mean the student comes from a wealthy family. Restrictions on employment and possibility of loans can put international students into an even lower economic standing than local students. Also, due to higher costs of living and high currency exchange rates, students that enjoyed certain levels of comfort at home, may have to adjust to a lower standard of living, or losing status in society, creating one more adjustment problem (Arthur, 2004).

### *Discrimination*

Depending on their nationality and race, international students may face discrimination and racism from members of the local community who view them in stereotypical ways. Institutionalized forms of discrimination are also common, where students are denied access to certain types of services or resources because they are international, have an accent, or are not seen as fitting into the domestic "norm." Students also may feel discriminated against by "cultural encapsulation in curriculum," when materials studied in class show their country as primitive and wrong and the host culture as correct and positive (Arthur, 2004, p. 45).

*Gender Role Expectations*
Students may come from a country where gender roles are very different from the local community and the local social norms of interacting can be viewed as "strange," especially if views of male-female relationships are much more "liberal" or "male-dominated" (Arthur, 2004).

*Family Matters*
Being away from family support can be very difficult for international students, especially when they are missing important family events or in time of a family crisis. In other circumstances, international students may bring their spouse and children along to their host community, adding a new set of responsibilities such as financial or family member's adjustment (Arthur, 2004).

Student affairs practitioners address transition issues faced by domestic college students by designing a comprehensive orientation program, implementing first-year seminars, or providing job search workshops for seniors. Attention should also be given to developing programs specific to the international students' needs: helping them to adjust to the new culture; learn about the academic culture and norms; create a new social support; contend with different gender role expectations; and deal with discrimination. When student affairs practitioners understand the adaptation process of international students and the transition issues they face, they are more equipped to create a welcoming environment for this community. "Providing quality programs and services for international students is the cornerstone of any initiative to increase their numbers and to retain those presently enrolled;…satisfied international students and alumni recruit relatives, friends, co-workers, and others to U.S. schools" (Dalton, 1999). The responsibility to best serve and to advocate for international students should not fall only to the office designed for international education, but to all faculty and staff on campus.

## Recommendations for Practice

Student affairs practitioners should think of ways their departments or offices are addressing the needs of this population and if any changes can be made to improve services. Below are some questions that can be raised to identify if good practices are in place:

*Career Services*
Are staff informed about visa and working regulations for international students? Can they refer students to on-campus employment? Can they identify employers that hire foreign personnel? Are programs about job hunting and resume writing available for international students who are not familiar with the host country's job market?

*Residential Life*
Is housing during school breaks available? Are international students allowed to move in early or move out late due to international flight arrangements? Is there staff training to address roommate conflicts due to poor language or cultural communication? Is programming being offered that stimulates cross-cultural learning? Are international students being educated on the rules, regulations, and behavioral standards in residential halls? Are international students hired as staff members?



*Student Life*
Are international students aware of all the groups and organizations they can join, especially since so many higher education systems do not have a department of student life and activities? Are international students welcomed in the new student orientation program? Does first-year experience programming address the needs of international students? Are students encouraged to participate in leadership roles or encouraged to join outdoor programs? Are events such as International Student Day and International Education Week supported? Are students encouraged to participate in community service programs?

*Academic Support Programs*
Are tutors trained to help students that are having difficulty writing academic work in the host language?

*Counseling Services*
Are there counselors experienced in cultural shock issues? Are there any counseling groups that international students can join to share experiences with adjustment problems?

These are only a few questions that can be answered in an effort to help international students feel welcomed and successful at the host institution. It is also important to keep in mind the size and type of the institutions as well as the demographics of the international student population when designing programs to serve this group. For example, if most of the international students on campus are older, they may be looking for a different type of support than younger students, or if there is a large group of students from a particular cultural background, they may require a different kind of attention than students from another background. Small schools may be able to give international students a more personalized service, while large institutions should create mechanisms to ensure this population does not become invisible. With the worldwide increase in the number of students going abroad to pursue higher education, more research and publications in the student affairs field are needed to further the discussion in addressing the evolving needs of international students on our campuses. Student affairs practitioners have the responsibility of serving all students, and, by learning about culture shock and about the unique issues faced by this group, they can certainly contribute to a much richer educational experience.

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# Trends of Population Growth and Student Demographic Change in the State of California

Andrew M. Wells

*The past two decades have seen considerable change in the demographics of the state of California. The changes in the state's various racial and ethnic communities, however, have not been mirrored by the population of students that are enrolled in the state's public institutions of post-secondary education. This article will clarify the differences between the state's entire population and its efficacy in serving all the constituent communities within that population. The author will challenge the effectiveness with which the state's educational system serves the people of California, using state census data and enrollment information to clarify the past fifteen years' trends. The consistency of the trends indicates that the problems that exist now, and the policies that cause them, will continue to be issues for the state in the future. Therefore, I make proposals for how to improve the state institutions' capacity to serve the populations that are currently not adequately represented in higher education.*

Over the past 14 years, the state of California has undergone considerable demographic change. The percentage of people of color in the state has increased as the numerical overrepresentation of White people, relative to other ethnic and racial communities in the state, has diminished. This change in the racial composition of California will continue in the coming years, and it is important to understand how the system of public higher education–the Community College, California State University (CSU), and University of California (UC) systems–will be impacted. The California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC), which is charged with monitoring the state's public post-secondary institutions and advising educational policy-makers, has collected almost 15 years worth of data about the state's population of students. This information, available via the commission's website, is sufficient to conduct an analysis of the trends in growth and demographic change in the state's overall population, as well as within the population of students enrolled in the three aforementioned systems of public higher education. "Although record college enrollments were reported for racial/ethnic minorities at the beginning of the 1990s, the gaps in the college participation rate and attainment levels among white, African-American, and Latino students have widened over the past decade" (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen, 1999, p. 1).

*Andrew Wells is a second-year student in the HESA program. He is looking forward to returning to the "real world" after graduation, but knows he will miss his cohort's daily presence*



To increase access to education for diverse populations and improve campus climates for the many underrepresented campus communities, administrators and legislators must understand the composition of the state's campuses. To understand how these demographic issues impact the current state of education in California, and the implications for the future of higher education in the state, administrators and policy-makers must gain an understanding of how representative or unrepresentative public education is in California. How are the state's myriad racial and ethnic communities represented in the university and college systems? Are some populations overrepresented or underrepresented? How does population change and growth affect campuses in the state? Are new campuses being developed in geographic regions such that they will serve diverse communities and increase access to education for underrepresented groups? This is exemplified by the opening of new campuses by both the UC and CSU systems within the past five years.

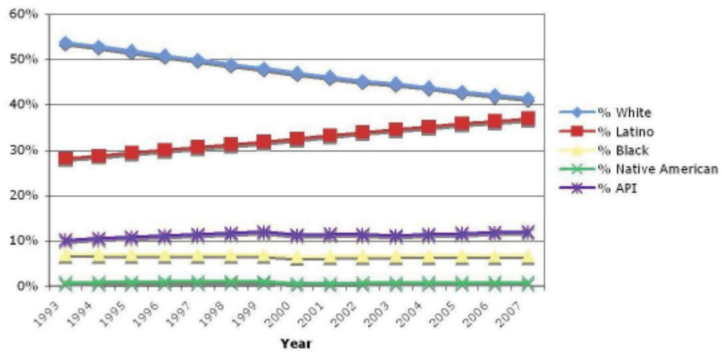
To address these questions I collected statistics on population growth and enrollment rates in the state by accessing two distinct sets of CPEC records. The first set describes the enrollment rates of Black, Latino, Asian and Pacific-Islander (API), and White students in the state's public higher education system from 1992 through 2006. These data describe the enrollment rates of these populations as a percentage of overall enrollment, but do not delineate how those enrollment rates are distributed amongst the three separate systems that exist in the state: the UC system, the CSU system, and California Community Colleges. Additionally, they do not reflect matriculation rates. The second data set used is the demographic and census records of California's population from 1993 through 2007, breaking the state's population down by race: Latino, Black, API, Native American, Filipino, Unknown, and White.

## Analysis

According to the Commission data, the past 14 years have seen a steady shift in the demographic composition of the state of California. During this period, the state population has grown with various racial groups growing at faster rates than others. After comparing the racial composition of the state from each year and analyzing the changes, a very clear trend emerges. The percentage of the state population that identifies as "White" has decreased steadily from 53.8% in 1993 to 41.5% in 2007. Conversely, the state's Latino population has increased from below 30% in the early 1990s to nearly 40% in 2007. Black, Native American, and Asian Pacific-Islander populations did not grow substantially as a percentage of the state's population, however their communities did grow in terms of sheer numbers. Figure 1.1 illustrates the increasingly diverse nature of California's population.

Figure 1.1

State Population by Race/Ethnicity




As Figure 1.1 demonstrates, the shifting distribution of racial identities in the state has been gradual and steady. Barring any substantial changes to state and federal laws that govern immigration, it is highly unlikely that these patterns will change within the near future. States in the southwest would clearly be most affected by tightened restrictions on immigration from South and Central America, although the impact of such legislation on the population of Latino students in California's public higher education system is unclear. The census data indicate an eventual change from Whites being the ethnic majority in California to being an ethnic minority. While this does not necessarily mean that Whites will experience the underrepresentation and marginalization that many people of color experience in the state, it does have an impact on the identity and attitudes of the White population in the state, especially within the portion of that population that embraces their majority status and rejects the value and benefits of promoting a diverse population.

## Student Demographics and Racial Affiliations

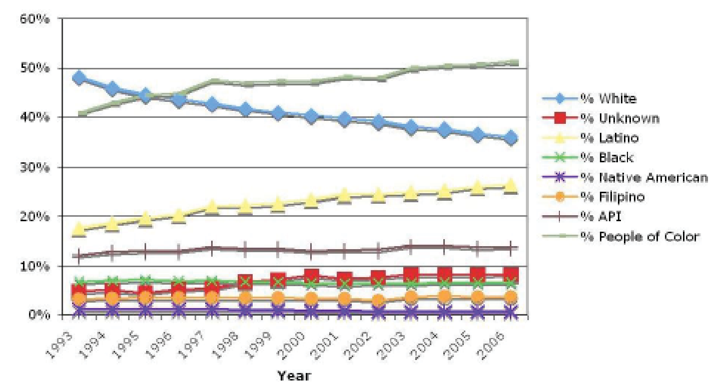
Despite increases in the overall Latino population in California, there has been a slower increase in the proportion of students of color enrolling in the state's three higher education systems. These data reflect the percentages of students, identified by race, who were enrolled at the time the data were collected. This information does not account for retention rates, nor does it delineate between the three tiers of the educational system. Instead of examining only one aspect of the public higher education system in the state, the author chose to analyze the representation of various racial communities in higher education throughout the state's three aforementioned systems. The UC, CSU, and California Community College institutions all serve different purposes, but these purposes are not intrinsically linked to the racial identities of their students, so it is unnecessary to differentiate between the various bodies for the sake of this study.



As Figure 1.2 indicates, the proportion of the student body in California comprised of White people is gradually declining. In fact, a comparison of the two sets of data shows that White students' representation in the state's educational system is declining at roughly the same rate as their percentage of the state's population. At the same time, the percentage of Latino students enrolled in the state is increasing at roughly the same rate as their representation within the state at large. As the Latino community's share in higher education grows, however, other historically marginalized communities are not experiencing growth in their participation relative to Whites and Latinos.

Figure 1.2

Student Population by Race/Ethnicity




Does this information mean that Latino students, and students of color in general, are being represented in the state's educational system at an increasing rate? Unfortunately, the data do not support this conclusion. By examining the growth rate of the community in general versus the growth rate of that community's representation in higher education, that information can be interpreted to reflect that students of color are not gaining access to higher education. If Black students were experiencing growth in their access to, and presence within, the state's postsecondary education systems, their growth rate as indicated in Figure 1.2 would reflect a higher rate of increase than that of Figure 1.1. Examining the Latino population, which has experienced the most growth within the state at large, indicates that their representation in education has not exceeded that of their population in the state. In fact, Latinos are still present in California's educational system at a rate 10% lower than their share of the state's population. Researcher Paul Hoogaveen (2007) compared these statistics to national trends:

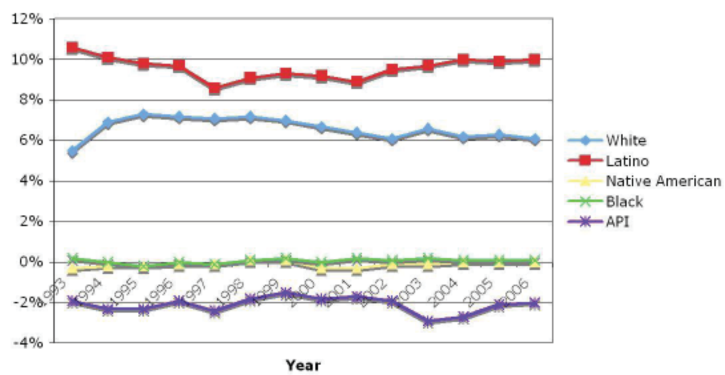
> Nationwide, Latino [college] enrollment alone grew from 353,000 in 1974 to 1.7 million in 2004. But…those numbers warrant closer consideration - because while they might appear to dem-

> onstrate significant growth, they do not reflect the major demographic shift occurring during that period of time. (p. 1)

Figure 1.3 represents the disparity between the various racial identities' representation in the state's public universities and colleges versus the race group's presence within the state's total population. On this chart, the "disparity value" is best explained as the difference between the racial/ethnic identity's representation within the state and their representation within the state's higher education system. A positive percentage indicates that the community's proportion of the state population is less than their proportion of the college population. In essence, they are being underrepresented in the college system. A negative percentage indicates that a higher proportion of the post-secondary system is comprised of that race.

Figure 1.3

Disparity between "% of State Population" and "% Enrolled Students" by Race/Ethnicity

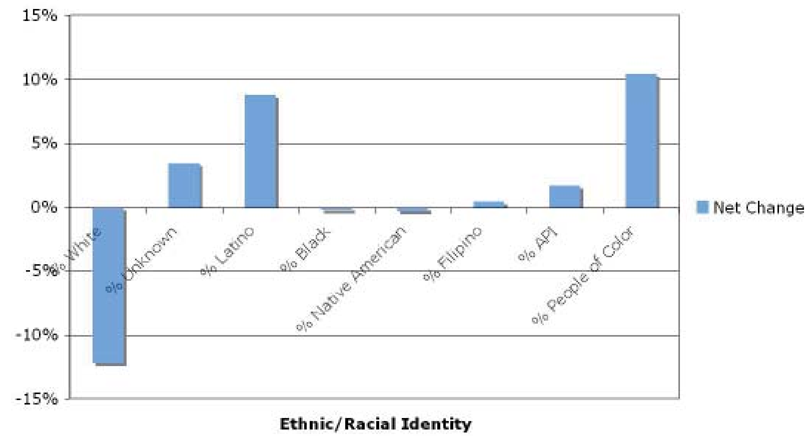



As Figure 1.3 depicts, the Latino community in California is still consistently underrepresented in the higher education system, despite this population's steady increase in size within the state's overall population. The API, Black, and Native American communities have not experienced enough substantial growth for any conclusions to be made about their relative representation in higher education in California. Figure 1.4, however, reflects an overall increase in the representation of people of color by 10% in the past thirteen years.



Figure 1.4

Change in Race Representation in Higher Ed




## Recommendations

There is considerable room for growth in access to state systems for students of color. Studies show that a racially diverse campus is more likely to result in greater learning for all students involved. Additionally, students of color will be more successful on a campus in which they do not feel isolated from other members of their community. It is not enough for the state system to proportionally reflect the state's various racial communities. Greater efforts must be made to increase the enrollment rates as well as retention rates of students of color. This is a social responsibility as well as good legislative sense. According to Hoogeveen (2007),

> The [American Council on Education] annual status report similarly states that, in fact, Hispanics in general have seen an increase in the percentage of students who left college without earning a degree, rising from 39.6% to 54.9%, when comparing students who enrolled in 1989 to those who enrolled in 1995. (p. 1)

Numerous strategies can be employed by colleges and universities in California to increase representation of students of color. Campus administrators can work to improve campus climate by supporting diversification initiatives. Programs and student services that support students of color, which already exist on many campuses, can collaborate with campus admissions and recruitment offices to promote diversity. At the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB), for example, high school students from underserved and economically depressed areas of the state are brought to campus for outreach and recruitment. The author has given informational presentations at these events in order to promote interest in the UCSB experience for these students. As successful as these outreach efforts can be, the sheer size of the state precludes satisfactory diversity-enhancing recruitment strategies.

The onus to improve support for recruiters in admissions offices is on administrators. Only by hiring dedicated recruiters and allocating the resources to conduct outreach to ethnically diverse high school and community college students can the university establish and foster relationships with prospective students of color. An additional component of this factor of recruitment lies in the issue of the "face" of the university; simply put, increasing diversity of staff and faculty will affect the diversity of the student population (Hurtado et al., 1999). A more representative staff will not only be better equipped to support students of color, it will improve recruitment efforts and enhance retention of students of color.

There is a historical precedent for state involvement in admissions and enrollment rates, aside from Affirmative Action. In 2001, six years after Affirmative Action was rescinded, the University of California Board of Regents approved a new admissions policy that guaranteed admission to a UC campus to the top 12.5% of every graduating high school class in the state. According to the Journal of Black Issues in Higher Education, "University officials estimate that up to 36 percent of students eligible under the new policy would be Black, Hispanic or American Indian" (2001, p.1). If the governing bodies of the UC and CSU systems choose to recognize the importance of racial diversity on their campuses and the need for the public institutions to be representative of the state's population, then they can continue to enact policies and practices that encourage post-secondary educational pursuits among the high school students that live in diverse cities and counties.

The experience of students of color in high school is also an issue. Programs and grants to create new (or improve existing) college preparatory opportunities, to stress the value and importance of education, and to educate first-generation students about educational access and opportunities will have long-term positive effects and should be strongly considered. Counseling around financial aid for higher education should be standard for all high school juniors and seniors. School counselors, teachers, and administrators have the capacity to exercise their own knowledge of higher education to encourage their students to pursue post-secondary education. Factors such as immigration, state economic climate, and public policy are major factors that impact the culture of campuses in the state. Regardless of the developments in the state and federal legislatures, campus administrators and student affairs personnel can, and should,- continue to reach out to underrepresented populations within the state. Doing so ensures healthier campus communities, richer learning, and greater student success.



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V

THE MORAL CONVERSATION

The Moral Conversation, a concept developed by Dr. Robert J. Nash, is a scholarly genre of writing and discussion dedicated to argumentative thought and critical dialogue. A significant component of the Moral Conversation is the analytical examination of a specific issue within higher education, reflecting on the complexities of the truths within the many arguments about the issue. Our goal in dedicating a section of *The Vermont Connection* to the Moral Conversation is to present articles that examine the multiple perspectives of a given theme.

The theme for this year's Moral Conversation is *Identity: From Awareness to Action.*



# The New Raja Yoga: What Hinduism Has Taught Me About Life, Student Affairs, and Myself

Raja G. Bhattar

*What is the relationship of Hinduism to student affairs? In this article, I reflect on my Hindu spiritual and religious beliefs and how they have directed me to this line of work. Specifically, I look at the Hindu concept of Yoga (Jñana, Karma, Bhakthi and Raja) and how it provides an innovative framework from which to look at the field and one's personal values. Written in the Scholarly Personal Narrative (SPN) style, I reflect on significant ideas and scriptures that have helped me create my identity, and explore implications for student affairs. Critical to this reflection are the concepts of pluralism and inclusion and the development of Raja Yoga as a unique philosophy for the field.*

## Delving Into My Spiritual Basement

"What the heck is student affairs and what does it have to do with your life?" was my mom's initial reaction when I announced my intention to attend graduate school for a degree in Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration. I thought about this question all throughout my graduate school experience and finally decided to explore it for my Comprehensive Exam. Rather than searching for Western philosophies that I had been exposed to since grade school, I looked to my roots - 6,000 year-old Hindu roots - for the perfect tool that would help me filter my experience. Yoga. It is a word known across the world but rarely understood in its true form. I was intrigued by the concept of Yoga ("to join") because it is intrinsically an action, one that calls for constant practice. When I realized there was a Yoga with my name in it, I had to see what it was about. The more I learned about Raja Yoga, the more I related to it. This article is my attempt to chart my new-found understanding as it applies to my life. "Student Affairs Yoga" simply provides a different perspective on our approach to student affairs. Before examining these ideas, I must describe my upbringing which has influenced my ideologies and development

### *Ancient Roots, New Branches*

My parents moved to the United States to provide me with the best education

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in the world. They wanted me to become a doctor and start a practice back in India. So my announcement was anything but a joy, though I was excited about my choice. In the following months, my mother would ask me everyday if I had changed my mind. Unfortunately for her, my answer was always "no." As I was finishing my graduate program, my mom's question re-entered my life. What *does* student affairs have to do with my life? When I was a kid, didn't I always say that I would be a pediatrician and go around the world saving children's lives? Didn't my parents always teach me that *Jana seva* is *Janardhana seva* (serving the people is serving God)? So how the heck am I going to explain to my parents, family, and more importantly to myself that this is my calling? How did I, coming from a conservative Hindu priest family, decide on a career working with college students? Am I not supposed to become something "more respectable" like a doctor or an engineer or even a computer programmer? NO!

Somewhere along the way, I realized fulfilling these stereotypically prescribed roles in society was not how I wanted to create and live my life. Whatever I do, I want to do it in a way that is true to my heart and beliefs. So, what are these beliefs of mine? I am not entirely certain, but I know that having been raised in a temple and surrounded by Hindu *archakas* (priests), my religious and spiritual beliefs have played, and continue to play, a key role in how I live my life. From course selections to extra-curricular activities, I believe my decisions were influenced by these familial and cultural values. As I further my education and career, I seek opportunities to connect my work to my "basement values" founded in my Hindu upbringing (R. Nash, personal communication, February 7, 2007).

I grew up helping my dad in the temple from an early age by performing *pujas* (services), reciting *mantras* (Sanskrit chants), and decorating the deities. Through the years, the temple became more than a place of worship for me. When I had a bad day or would just need someone to talk to, I would go hang out in the temple, decorating gods and goddesses in traditional Indian clothing and jewelry while telling them my troubles. That is how I got through my teenage years. It was my healing mechanism when I was constantly being pulled in two directions. My parents wanted me to be the quintessential Indian son, while my "Western" environment and culture wanted me to assimilate into the "American melting-pot." Even when I went to college, I maintained my spiritual practices and sought avenues to further understand my religious and cultural backgrounds and beliefs.

As an undergraduate, I enrolled in courses that specifically focused on Hinduism and Hindu philosophy. I developed an independent study course under the tutelage of a well-known Asian Studies scholar analyzing two major streams of Hindu philosophy and how they interpreted the *Bhagavad Gita*, one of the major Hindu scriptures. I even started a joint venture with two of my cousins to visit all the major temples in the United States. We sought to analyze



the communities that built them and how they balanced the preservation and Westernization of Hinduism. Needless to say, my religious and spiritual beliefs continue to play a major role in my identity development and academic pursuits.

As I prepared to enter the "real world," I felt the need to delve deeper into my spiritual beliefs and explore how they have influenced my worldview. Growing up immersed in Hindu culture, my graduate experience was difficult as there were few opportunities available for me to probe further into understanding the complexity of my spirituality, identity, and belief system. Before graduate school, I was always surrounded by people who had enough familiarity with Hinduism and Hindu culture to engage in conversations about these topics. In contrast, graduate school provided only a handful of opportunities to converse over my Hindu beliefs and how they continue to influence my work in student affairs. When selecting a topic for my comprehensive exam, my spirituality was an easy winner. Like most people at the brink of a new beginning and transition in life, I wanted to reflect on not only my graduate education but how the events, people, and places involved have helped me in delving deeper into my pedagogical foundations for a career in student affairs. The concept of Yoga is one that has helped me in reflecting and understanding my decision to enter this profession.

## Being a Yogi

Yoga, one of the major Hindu imports in the West, is misconstrued merely as a popular form of physical exercise. Contrary to this Western definition, the Yoga I examine is something more essential to the core of who we are as human beings. "The word 'yoga' comes from the Sanskrit root *yuj*, which means 'to join' or 'to yoke.' Yoga is a practical aid, not a religion. Yoga is an ancient art based on a harmonizing system of development for the body, mind, and spirit" (Yoga Online, n.d.). Though overly simplified for this article, the essence of Yoga is learning the relationship between our minds, bodies, and spirits and utilizing this awareness to live a more balanced life. In fact there are three major Yogas designed to focus on these three aspects as defined in the *Bhagavad Gita* by *Krishna*: Jñana, Karma and Bhakthi. One who follows Yoga is known as a Yogi. In order to understand which path is best for my career in student affairs, I will reflect on each and how it relates to my life.

### *Jñana Yoga - The Art of the Philosopher*

This Yoga is a purely intellectual pursuit to understanding the Supreme Being and one's relationship with that force. Through logic and scholarly analysis, the *Parabrahma* (supreme being) and the *Atman* (soul) are seen as one and the same. The Vedanta Society defines Jñana Yoga as, "…the approach to God through discrimination and reason" (1978). By stripping away all human-constructed difference, the illusion of difference is shattered and we realize that Brahman and Atman are indistinguishable. In my life, I see Jñana Yoga as my formal education and graduate preparation. Analyzing identity development through theories and critiques, we strive to better understand how each person's experience is connected to the development of others. The study of literature and intellectual meditations are critical for this Yoga. This is best for those who have the time to ponder universal questions, describe observations, and formulate theory.

*Karma Yoga - The Pure Practitioner*

"Actions speak more than words" is the philosophy behind Karma Yoga. Karma is a tally list of one's good and bad actions from this and previous lives. Hindus believe that our current lives are results of our previous actions and by performing helpful actions we progress on our spiritual journey. "The path to God through selfless service to others is Karma Yoga. By working in this spirit, the God within each person is worshipped" (Vedanta Society, 1978). By performing our prescribed activities and dedicating our actions to God or to a social cause, our daily life becomes like a religious ritual and furthers our understanding of the Supreme Being.

As stated earlier, a common Sanskrit phrase states, *Jana Seva*, *Janardhana Seva* (To serve the people is to serve God). Such a connection of social service and religious ritual is crucial for me; in addition to helping others, service work furthers my spiritual journey. Coming from a religious background and finding such a well-founded basis for my social justice work has been my source of hope when I'm discouraged in this field. I believe that Gandhi's quote, "Be the change you wish to see in the world," is also rooted in this Yoga. From an early age, I knew I liked helping people, and it was something I wanted to do in my life. I wasn't sure how or who to help, but I wanted to make a difference. Being exposed to such a philosophy provided me an outlet to discover the social justice activist in me. Inherent in this quote is a belief that any person can be all they dream of being by simply believing in a cause and working for it. Furthermore, the beauty of this Yoga is the ability not to be focused solely on *Moksha* (salvation). Rather it allows for people to work collaboratively, improving the community as a whole and sharing in the community's overall success.

*Bhakthi Yoga - The Practice of Devotion*

My family follows the Vaishnavite tradition, based in fully engaging oneself in the thought of a higher purpose. "This is the cultivation of a devotional relationship with God through prayer, ritual, and worship. In this practice, the human emotions are given a 'Godward turn.' Their energy is used in search for God within" (Vedanta Society, 1978). For me, this Yoga is the embodiment of passion for a cause.

I see some extremely passionate social justice activists fitting into this model of practice. Their zeal for the work is characterized by total immersion to their cause. There are several people in my life that I would place under this category. I admire their ability to devote their lives and work towards embodying their beliefs. A great example for me is Stephan Dudenhoefer whom I met in Guatemala. After running a successful company in the U.S. he moved to Guatemala where he has spent the past fifteen years fundraising for and building a school based on traditional Mayan teachings and healing practices. His commitment to the school and willingness to devote his life to the work is, for me, the true embodiment of Bhakthi Yoga.

*Raja Yoga - Finding the Middle Ground*

I am a person who seeks balance. Whether in my life, work, diet, or any other aspect of life, I strive for a balance of work and play and desserts and veggies. In terms of Hindu philosophy, I found that I identified somewhat with each of the previously mentioned Yogas but do not identify with any one as the singular philosophy for my life. Hence I began my journey to find a philosophy with which I can fully identify. I had always heard of Raja Yoga but never knew exactly what it was all about. Raja Yoga is defined as "a true system of developing psychic, intellectual, and spiritual powers and union with one's higher self…" (de Puruker, 1999). To me, this Yoga seems to be the best fit because it is a philosophy based on balanced development of all aspects of ourselves and the previous three forms of Yoga. It promotes an understanding of the intricacies of ourselves and our relationship with a Supreme Being.

One of my favorite images in Hindu mythology is Ardhanaareeshwara, a form of God *Shiva* and *Goddess* Parvathi embodying the balance of male and female qualities. As a gay man, I have always appreciated this lack of a concrete gender binary in my religious roots. Even by himself, Shiva is often presented as a gender-ambiguous personality. I find it easier to be me and accept my masculine and feminine traits because of such images in my religious tradition. Similarly, the flexibility to practice Raja Yoga, incorporating aspects of Jñana, Karma, and Bhakthi into my life, provides an appropriate balance for my life.

This personal philosophy also flows into my student affairs work. I cannot see myself dedicating myself to the purely academic and intellectual study of student affairs. On the other hand, I cannot imagine being a pure practitioner, not engaging in larger conversations around theory and student affairs philosophy. Issues of social justice are important to me but I cannot devote my whole-self to that work. It is a part of my work and identity, but there are other components, such as family and need for financial stability, which prevent me from simply immersing myself in the advocacy work. Raja Yoga provides a balance of each Yoga and allows me to do the work I am passionate about while maintaining balance with other aspects of my life.

## The Yoga of Student Affairs

Throughout this work, I have made connections between Hindu philosophy, student affairs, and their intersections in my life. Most people in the social services are driven by deep spiritual (and even religious) beliefs and hopes for bettering our world. Individuals such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Gandhi, Dr. Howard Thurman, Mother Teresa, and others are great examples of such faith-based philosophies. These leaders have written extensively on how their upbringing and experiences have shaped their views and their work.

In our field, we do not take sufficient time to reflect on our own backgrounds and how they have formed our beliefs, work styles, and pedagogies, especially our spiritual and religious upbringings. Having been in a student affairs program that did not specifically focus on spirituality and self-reflection, I have had minimal discussion on these topics. I would like to see more done to infuse such ideas into graduate programs and the profession. If we want to be most effective as educators, we must be role models for our students. By delving deeper into our own beliefs and acknowledging these values and their importance in our daily lives, we will create space for our students to do so as well.

*Hindu Ideas, Universal Values*

Some may wonder why I am focusing on Hindu philosophy when there are only a handful of practicing Hindus in our profession. My reason simply is that I do not believe this philosophy is only applicable to those who identify as Hindus. As I have stated earlier, Yoga can be translated as "to join." In other words, Yogas are meant to help people make and understand the intersections in our lives, work, and beliefs. These Yogas have universal applicability, especially when used as filters to examine concepts such as social justice or education. For example, in Karma Yoga one's actions are centered on raising awareness of social justice issues through direct deeds. Regardless of one's spiritual or religious beliefs, the action creates results. Without passion or any theoretical basis for the activity, however, such action is just pure action. When there is input of theory, passion, and action, there is a well-founded base for the concept. I like to think of it as a tripod; only with all three legs can the tripod be fully stable. Similarly, by learning to identify the three aspects (theory, passion, and action) of social justice, we can become better educators.

In fact I would even go as far as saying that each of us struggles at some point to determine which of the three we want as the major channel for our work in student affairs. Similar to the Raja Yoga, I believe our success only lies in understanding the need to seek balance among the three ideas and not the singular option that works. The Yogas present a framework from which to re-envision our idea of student affairs. The ingenuity of this philosophy goes beyond the current binary vision of our field (theory vs. practice) to include passion (for the profession and its values) as an equally important determinant in shaping the future of the profession.

*The Mother of Pluralism*

Student affairs holds inclusion as one of its values, but I feel we are still struggling to find a framework that successfully incorporates these values into practice. Having been credited with developing one of the first concepts of pluralism, Hinduism provides a suitable framework for discussion on how pluralism and inclusion can be imbedded into all aspects of our field. If we as a field examine our own approaches to education and community building through the lens of the Yogas presented here, it would create a dialogue that I believe has the power to redefine student affairs for the next century. Creating an environment, similar to what the temple was for me, where students and practitioners can be fully comfortable with all of their identities, is critical for this process. In fact, student affairs' commitment to fostering a pluralistic and inclusive environment was a major factor in my decision to enter the field.

*Being a Student Affairs Yogi*

I feel that thoughts, actions, and beliefs are crucial for any effort, especially social change. As a group of people playing a critical role in developing the future generations of leaders, we must devote more energy to strategic planning and pondering the following statement: You are what you think, you are what you do, and you are what you believe. This philosophy is the essence of the three Yogas condensed into one: the Raja Yoga. For me, this process of self-discovery began in the temple as a child and continues today in the spiritually-rich environment I have created for myself. Even in the midst of my hectic life, just reflecting for a few moments on those experiences rejuvenates me and my connection to something beyond my comprehension. An easy way for all professionals to incorporate this idea into their work is to set aside a few moments each day to simply reflect on the tasks at hand and how they help you become a Student Affairs Yogi. Additional research on this idea of reflective and holistic professional development would be beneficial to the future of the profession. Furthermore, comparative evaluations of the philosophy presented here and other religious/spiritual philosophies would add to this growing body of knowledge. Understanding our spirituality or reflective journey is essential because it is "a search for self-knowledge, a search for the divine within ourselves…We are never lost. At worst, we are living in ignorance of our true nature" (Vedanta Society, 1978). Since Yoga can be seen as a practice, it is logical to see the Yogi as a practitioner and furthermore a seeker. By learning to look within ourselves and taking time to reflect on our experiences, we can envision a holistic future, personally and professionally. Once we understand the great strengths we carry and our abilities to embody the change we wish to see, we will truly be the social change agents we claim to be.

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# What's Vietnamese for "Conflict?" An Exploration of Asian Identity Development Through a Vietnamese American/Canadian Perspective on Self-Given Names

Mai Quang Hưng (Henry) &
Nguyen Hoai Linh Châu Patricia

*The Fall of Saigon in 1975 ended the Vietnam War and prompted the first large-scale wave of immigration from Vietnam to North America. This is where a new generation was born—a generation that would attempt to combine a deep history of Vietnamese culture and tradition with a new national identity.*

*Thirty years later, many Vietnamese families still face conflict on a daily basis in trying to reconcile two different cultures when asked a question as simple as, "What's your name?" This moral conversation will explore Kim's 1981 model of Asian American Identity Development through the personal narratives of a Vietnamese American and a Vietnamese Canadian as they dissect the constant struggle between the dual identities present in their names.*

In Vietnamese tradition, the greater the number of syllables in your given name, the more complexity is invited into your life. Thus, to encourage simplicity, most Vietnamese names are gender neutral and monosyllabic. A simple name means a simple life, but for the two of us, a Vietnamese American and a Vietnamese Canadian, complexity has been invited into our lives not just by the names our parents chose, but through the names we have chosen for ourselves. These multiple self-given names il-

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lustrate our complex journey in developing our sense of ethnicity, race, and nationality. What exactly is in a name? One of the greatest writers in English history wrote: "What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet" (Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet, II, ii, 46-47). If somebody calls us by a different name, does that change who we are inside? Names can evoke feelings of pride, strength, joy, sorrow, and history, but they can also be a source of ridicule, exclusion, and discrimination. More importantly, names are the gateway that exposes one's identity to the world.

## What Does a Name Have to do with Identity Development?

A simple demonstration of this conflict is in name structure. In the Western world, one's first name takes primacy. Hưng or Châu, Henry or Patricia; whether we use our Vietnamese or English names, our given names come first. In Vietnamese culture, however, the sur name comes first, emphasizing that "filial piety is one of the most important ethics in the Vietnamese culture" (Nguyen, Messe, & Stollak, 1999, p. 10). Duty to the family lineage often takes precedence over personal concerns, and thus, we would be Mai Quang Hưng Henry and Nguyen Hoai Linh Châu Patricia. This simple observation in name structure illustrates the struggle between value systems and the conflict between the Western sense of individualism and the Eastern sense of family. Every time we are asked what our names are, we are forced to make a decision about who we place first.

## The Meeting of the Moral Conversationalists

*Hopeful for Family in Burlington (Châu/Patricia)*

I met Hưng at an interview weekend for my graduate program. Before his arrival, I took a peek at the interview schedule and was intrigued by a name: "Mai, Hưng." Being the only Vietnamese person in the cohort, I was ecstatic to see another person I could possibly relate to on a level beyond racial identity, but also on an ethnic and nationality level. I remember thinking, "Family is coming to town!" There was a slight possibility for someone to join the program that would whole-heartedly understand me, and possibly share a chuckle with me if I said, *"Muon di an pho khong?"* on a rainy day. I was so excited for the possibility of an *anh* or *chi* or *em* (names are gender neutral so I could not tell), a possible relative by shared heritage, coming to Burlington.

The interview weekend came, and I was standing in Ben & Jerry's ice cream shop with a scoop of Cherry Garcia. I looked around the room, honing in on nametags, and caught the name "Mai" out of the corner of my eye. I ran up to the candidate and said, "You must be Hưng! My name is Trish! I'm so excited to see you!" I nearly dropped my scoop of ice cream trying to beam internal thoughts telepathically of "Omigosh! You're Vietnamese! I'm Vietnamese! There will be more than one Vietnamese person in the program! It's going to be so great!" and shaking his hand with the utmost appreciation of his presence. I was received with a firm handshake and a stern reply, "Hi. My name is Henry." My heart sunk. I had such hopes, and assumptions, of finding a peer that shared my same passion for Vietnamese identity. His reply, his English name, indicated to me that he wanted no part in his heritage.

Henry. With a one word reply, my heart sunk. I felt a yearning for some sort of external tie to my Vietnamese ethnicity and nationality. I wanted to have someone to share and possibly validate the ideas in my head about myself as a Vietnamese woman.

> Historically, the Vietnamese shared a strong national identity that enabled them to oust the Chinese after a thousand years of occupation...The fierce independence as a people that has characterized Vietnam's history is to some extent a cultural norm of behaviour. (Walker-Moffatt, 1995, p.44)

Where was this strong national identity in the name Henry? This "fierce independence" of the Vietnamese culture and people is a value I own with pride. The royal English name demonstrated the opposite for me: shame. I know I had no grounds in judging Henry in this way, but I could not help but feel angry and wonder, "Why did you, Henry, change your name?"

*Just Another Name (Hưng/Henry)*

I remember the anxiety of wondering if I would get called for an interview. I remember riding on the Greyhound through the dark and the cold wind that howled outside of the bus terminal at 2 A.M. as I waited for my interview host to pick me up. I remember seeing a certain name in the reams of informational material that were handed to me during the interview weekend and not giving it much consideration at the time, but little did I know how much that name would come to mean to me in months ahead.

My reaction towards seeing a Vietnamese name among the list of current students in this graduate program was not very enthusiastic. Not to say that I saw it as a negative thing, but I certainly was not jumping up and down about the prospect of meeting another Vietnamese student. It just did not really register; it was just another name. Perhaps it was because I was too focused on staying calm and impressing the faculty members and assistantship providers, or because I was functioning on a bare minimum of sleep from my travels. I remember the piece of advice that everybody gave me that weekend: "be yourself." But in introducing myself as Henry, something that I had been doing for ten years by this point, was I really following that advice and being true to myself?

## An Introduction to Asian American Identity Development

The identity model developed by Kim (1981) is based on a study of Japanese women and is often cited as a general theory applicable to all groups of Asian Americans (as cited in Torres & Hamilton, 2003, p. 60). Although not directly applicable to our nationalities, it is the most frequently utilized identity model, in research and in application, by student affairs practitioners today. We will explain the stages of Kim's model and follow with our individual narrative reflections, illustrating our often diverging and converging progress through the constant evolution of our names.

*"Em ten gi?": The Ethnic Awareness Stage*
According to Kim (1981), individuals in this stage of the model develop neutral or positive attitudes towards one's own ethnic origin. The development depends on the ethnic exposure, and for most individuals, the exposure is due to one's family members and caretakers.

*To be something more (Hưng).* My name is Hưng Mai, or rather, it was. It was the name my parents gave me when I was born, and it is the name with which I grew up. It appears on my driver's license, my health card, my insurance forms, my student ID, and every piece of official identification I possess. I went to a public elementary school and had friends that ran the gamut of racial and ethnic backgrounds. It was a place where I was comfortable being Hưng and where I could count the number of Caucasian students on both hands and have fingers left over. I came home to a house that was bustling with family life, where everyone with my mother's maiden name lived under the same roof, and where the air always smelled like incense and lemongrass.

My parents tell me my name was meant to convey the meaning of endless potential and opportunity, but to make sure that I lived up to my name they felt like we had to leave Chinatown, leaving everything I just described. They wanted me to escape the gritty urban environment with its pollution, gangs, drugs, and violence, along with the routine of helping out in the family grocery store and making something more of myself. They wanted me to pursue a higher education, to be able to wear a suit to work, and to have opportunities that they did not.

*"Home" name Versus "School" name (Châu/Patricia).* My "school" name, Patricia Nguyen, in its Western form, is the name on my legal birth certificate. In aiming to comply with the image of the American "melting pot," my refugee parents chose a name that would lend itself to upward social mobility. Career research by Bertrand & Mullainathan (2004) has shown that applicants with ethnic names receive fewer call-backs than those with White-sounding names, a point personally relevant, especially since social mobility is so inextricably tied to economic wealth. To drive home the point even more, the meaning of Patricia is "of nobility." Coming from a life where they lost everything to get here, their dearest wish for their first daughter was to achieve the American dream in a country that was not, and still is not, theirs. The name seems to fit in with American society. It is common enough to avoid butchered pronunciations during attendance calls and proper enough to pass the first round of résumé cuts.



Following the first stage of the model, my parents gave me a name that would help me feel comfortable and positive in the dominant culture. I am American. My name, Patricia, is American, and anyone in the Western world can say it.

In contrast, my Vietnamese name would not lend itself to the same effects as Patricia. Châu looks like "chow" but is pronounced "chgoaw." There is a consonant tone that many Americans cannot grasp, and if pronounced incorrectly with the slightest change in tone or inflection, my name's meaning can change to "dandruff" or "ox." Neither is pleasant to be associated with, especially when its actual meaning is "precious gem." When reflecting upon my parents' usage of these two names, Châu, my Vietnamese name, was more frequently used. My siblings followed the same suit. I rarely heard Patricia at home, and felt awkward when I heard my parents use it in public with non-Vietnamese individuals. When I'm at home, when all my guards are down, and where I'm most vulnerable, I am Châu. I am Vietnamese. When I'm out in public, encountering strangers, scared of my surroundings, I am Patricia. I am American. I do not think this was by choice, but rather demonstrated and exercised by my parents. They instilled in me that I was either one, or the other. It was just a matter of circumstance as to which identity, Châu or Patricia, Vietnamese or American, I would go by. When it came down to which name would win over my self-concept of identity, my parents would emphasize my "home" name. I heard it more frequently in times I was most exposed. On the outside I was Patricia, and deep down inside I was Châu.

*"Your name sounds weird!": The White Identification Stage*
An individual's self-esteem and identity are negatively impacted by racial prejudice from the dominant racial group in this stage. Realization of how one is different comes from the dominant White culture, and can lead to self-blame and abandonment of one's own ethnic heritage. Furthermore, individuals in this stage may begin identifying with the dominant White culture (Kim, 1981).

*My last name sucks (Patricia).* I remember many times in elementary school when someone caught wind of my middle name, Châu, which is my "home" name. It devastated me. Classmates would ask me what the name meant, and when I explained, "It's what they called me at home," they viewed it as a chance to explore "the Asian peoples" and said things like, "That name sounds right for you! It sounds Asian-y!" I would shudder, feel ashamed, and grow angry with my parents for giving me a Vietnamese name; a name no one could pronounce. As Pyke and Dang (2003) note, I too felt the immense pressure to assimilate in order to distance myself from the stigma associated with my racial group, and so I would reply, "No, my name is Patricia Nguyen." Looking back, even the pronunciation of my last name suffered from what my parents refer to as "Americanization." Even though it is one of the six most common Asian surnames in the country (Lauderdale & Kestenbaum, 2000, p. 283), the majority of people have a hard time pronouncing it due to the consonant on a soft tone. To pronounce a "NG" sound seemed impossible for my peers. In order to avoid negative Asian stereotypes, a pattern observed by Osajima (1993), I made special efforts at my predominately White institution (as cited in Pyke & Trang, 2003, p. 151). Instead of making sure individuals pronounced my name correctly, I would "Americanize" it, and it would sound like "New-win." Clearly, no "G" sound is in that phonetic spelling, but it is obvious in the Vietnamese pronunciation. Why was I angry when people learned of my Vietnamese name? Why was I not bothered with this incorrect pronunciation of my last name? I wanted to be "normal." I wanted at all costs to pass as American and be like everyone else.

*Movin' up in the world (Henry).* Everything changed when I moved. All of the sudden, I was taken out of the environment I was used to and deposited somewhere foreign to me. The move from downtown Toronto to Kitchener was clearly a turning point in my life. Not only was it a geographical shift, but a cultural one as well. In his book about the struggles faced by children born to blue-collar parents who grow up to become white-collar citizens, Alfred Lubrano (2004) states, "When people talk about class, they're referring to nothing less than a culture" (p. 4). My name is not just a factor in my racial and ethnic identity, but is inextricably tied to my social class identity as well.

Nobody forced me to change my name, but even when I lived in Toronto, all of my Asian friends had English names too. I remember Philip, Jonathan, Raymond, two Kenneths, Amy, Angela, and Helen. I felt that they had a piece of cultural capital that I did not and that in order to succeed in this new world, I needed an English name as well. I had moved up into the middle class suburbs and "Henry," with its historical roots in the European monarchies, seemed to be a better fit for this new environment. I could picture Henry, Phillip, Jonathan, Raymond, Kenneth, Amy, Angela, or Helen wearing a suit to work, but not Hưng.

*"I don't have an English name!": The Awakening to Social Political Consciousness Stage*

Individuals enter this stage when their old perspective of conforming to White culture is interrupted with a new perspective that is often times paralleled with political awareness of the racial injustices in society. It results in a negative attitude towards the dominant White group and a passionate re-adoption of one's ethnic culture and heritage (Kim, 1981).

*"No Trish lives here" (Trish).* Most people that are close to me know me as Trish. This is a personal invention; Patricia did not feel right after a history lesson in elementary school. I remember learning about the feudal system during my elementary school education. As the concepts of hierarchy and caste systems were introduced, I learned about the meaning behind Patricia. The messages conveying "nobility" were messages with which I neither identified, nor wanted to be associated. It wasn't fair how people became kings just by birth and treated the poor people of the kingdom badly. As an early interruption of old perspective (Kim, 1981) I did not want a name that symbolized this injustice, so I changed it to Trish.

My name change could also be a function of my new peer group in high school. My community up to this point was predominantly White. I was a token Asian. There are two sides to being the token individual: On one hand, it means you are unique, but more often than not, the people around you see you as an outsider (Jones, 1993, p. 3). All the elementary schools in my area fed into the same high school, so all the token Asian kids were finally able to meet each other. Not only did we meet, but we also became the best of friends and developed a rudimentary sense of Asian identity. We collectively realized that we had been deprived of each other's presence and the sense of community we now had.

My parents didn't respond well to my new name. When friends would call my house and ask for Trish, my father would reply, "Who? You must have the wrong number. No Trish lives here," and would then hang up the phone. Shortly after, I would be interrogated on why I had changed my name. When I would say it was a product of having new Vietnamese and Asian friends (thinking they would be happy I was connecting with people that shared my same identity), my father would ask, "Why don't they call you Châu then?" I realized I was attempting to balance an identity conflict, and Trish seemed to be a good solution.

*Adrift (Hưng/Henry).* I am a grain of yellow sand in a sea of white. Nothing has made this clearer to me than Vermont's demographic profile: nearly 98% of the state's population is White (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). I notice it every time I walk around campus or downtown. I had been told during the interview for the graduate program here that it would be an adjustment, but I had no idea. There are days when I am content to float along with the current, believing that at some point, I will be carried back to a beach where I can just be. There are also days where I'm battered by the waves, constantly fighting just to stay afloat.

I cannot say that I have passionately re-adopted my ethnic culture and heritage here, but even against the tide, I am making slow progress. One of the greatest breakthroughs for me came earlier this year when I was ordering business cards. I must have spent an hour debating with my best friend from home whether my cards should read "Hưng Mai," "Henry Mai," "Hưng (Henry) Mai," or "Henry (Hưng) Mai." In the end, I chose to put my given name first out of a desire to start reconnecting with my ethnic identity, but also as a practical matter since that is the name that will be seen on all of my official documentation.

*"VieT PRyDe!": The Redirection Stage*

In this stage, an individual begins to reconnect with one's ethnic identity, while mistrusting and blaming the dominant White group for the previous negative experiences around identity. Anger against White racism is demonstrated through an increased sense of racial and ethnic self, and group pride (Kim, 1981).

*100% Viet (Châu).* The redirection of my identity was as plain as the décor on my school binders. I remember writing "AZN PRYDE in the 619" all over and plastering them with sticker photos you could purchase for three dollars at the local Asian supermarket. We hung out together, dated each other, and were a very exclusive group. In fact we made t-shirts that said things like "Nothing but Viet Luv," and "Got Rice?," and proudly wore the Southern Vietnamese flag on our chests. We would only eat Asian food when we went out, made fun of anyone who could not use chopsticks, and used our "home" names. I could be Châu.

I was an avid subscriber to a popular online community for Asian Americans, AsianAvenue.com. In browsing the site, I came across the Asian American movement. I developed a passionate interest in issues such as sex trafficking and sweatshop labour. I became furious and angry at the White corporate monsters that were often involved in these acts of injustice. I no longer wanted to be American. I wanted to be Châu everywhere. I was going to be loud about my Vietnamese identity, and if a White person could not pronounce it, I went to extremes to make her/him/hir feel bad about it. It was not my fault their tongues were not as talented as mine.

*Nowhere to go (Hưng/Henry).* I should first take this opportunity to thank Châu, because without her, I would not be writing this. It was she who suggested co-authoring this piece. It was only after sitting down, talking with her, and getting to know more about her that I began thinking about my own identity. But if I redirect myself, where am I supposed to go? Everywhere I look, I see whiteness. Unlike Châu, I do not have a critical mass of ethnically similar individuals with whom to associate in my present environment. She is, in fact, the only other Vietnamese person I have met since high school. As much as I blame the dominant group for the negative identity-related experiences I have had, who can I relate to? As noted earlier, Vietnamese culture relies heavily on family and community, and both feel like they are a world away.

*"I am Vietnamese American/Canadian": The Incorporation Stage*

An individual in this stage has a positive and comfortable sense of one's identity and respect for others, including the dominant White group (Kim, 1981).

*Looking down on a spiral staircase (Trish/Châu/Patricia).* At the age of 25, I cannot say I have reached this stage in its entirety. I find moments where I am comfortable and even happy to be both. I find more moments where it feels like a constant conflict, straddling between the two contrasting identities. I still go by Châu at home, Trish to my friends and colleagues, and Patricia on paper. In line with the Vietnamese tradition, I have indeed invited complexity into my life. I



wish I was more empowered by my multiple names, but, at this point in my life, the conflicting identities bring on feelings of confusion, burden, anger, and sadness. I still hesitate and cringe a little when people ask me, "What name do you prefer?" It still feels like I have to choose one name, a single identity to be me.

I do find moments where the multiple names are self-empowering. As I continually develop a sense of social consciousness, I feel fluid in my identity, and not confined to the boxes of social construction. As a professional, I can sign petitions, memos, and reports with "Patricia Châu Nguyen" and be confident that although my race or ethnicity can be identified, that it is more of a reason to find validity in my signature. As a daughter, I can feel the closeness to my family and a return to my roots when I pick up the phone and hear "Hi Châu!" from my little sister. As a friend, I know there is someone dear to me in a concert or protest crowd when "Trish!" resonates in the air. As a student affairs practitioner, I can relate to a diversity of Asian American student experiences with something as "small" as the story behind my name. I feel like I am walking up and down a spiral staircase as I go through the stages of Kim's model again and again, sometimes over a period of years, sometimes within a couple of hours. As I am on this staircase, I can look up and down the well and see into myself. It has helped me build a great sense of self-awareness, and a strong basis from which to work towards social justice. I firmly believe it is hard to understand the experiences of anyone, marginalized or privileged, if you do not understand your own. Cheers to Châu, Patricia, and Trish.

*A melting mosaic (Hưng/Henry).* I am not yet at a stage where I can reconcile these two different parts of my identity. If asked, I would likely tell people that I am a Vietnamese-Canadian, but does placing one identity in front of the other in this hyphenated model mean that one takes primacy over the other? I am not sure my Vietnamese identity can come first because although I was raised in a Vietnamese household, I do not have a firm sense of my family's culture and traditions, and I am not sure it would be fair to identify myself with something which I do not necessarily have full knowledge.

Being the only Canadian in an American program, I often find myself using my country of citizenship as my identifier, but this too is often a struggle. Because my home country is located next to one of the world's superpowers, Canadian identity is often framed as a negative definition–what we are not (namely, American). According to Li (2007), "whether hyphenated or not, the new identity categories are meant to convey a set of social meanings" (p. 24). While it is true that there are certain images and values that are associated with Canadians (such as the Mountie in red ceremonial garb, a love of hockey, and a socialist national policy that includes services such as publicly funded health care), I am not sure that taken as a whole or individually, these come any closer to defining who I am. While I appreciate the privileges that I have grown up with, I am unsure whether this equates to a respect for the dominant culture within which I was raised. I question how far I will get, having grown up in the dominant culture and being immersed in its values and messages, in attempting to integrate these two halves of me into one. Tanaka (1972), in his analysis of Canadian social structure and its effect on Asian Canadian social discourse suggests that, "the dominant culture's exclusionary practice is involuntarily supported by assimilated Asian Canadian [artists], who tend to disassociate themselves from their own community and 'ethnic past'" (cited in Li, 2007, p. 19). The bigger question is why I felt like I needed to change my name at all. According to Takeshita, racism has been relegated to the fringe of society, and therefore complaints of racism must be an irrational pathology in the minds of minorities themselves. The consensus among many is that minorities should focus on "changing their minds rather than on changing American society" (2007, p. 261).

Canada has a strong commitment to multiculturalism and the "mosaic" approach, which encourages immigrants to hold onto their cultural particularities. This is constantly contrasted with the American "melting pot" approach that strongly encourages immigrants to become "un-hyphenated" Americans (Dyck, 2004, p. 216). Takeshita brings up an interesting contradiction in speaking about the appeal of abandoning cultural traditions by questioning, "Who wants to voluntarily become a flat stereotype?" (2007, p. 263), and at the same time, considering whether "choice away from the tradition represents ethnic disloyalty or perhaps a deeper self-hatred, or if it's simply a matter of being 'modern'" (p. 262). This is a debate I have had with myself for a long time in regards to my two identities, and it has not gotten much closer to being solved.

## What Does All of This Mean for Practice?

A person's name is very much a part of who they are, or in some cases, who they are not. For some, introducing themselves is a reflexive action that comes as naturally as breathing. There is a certain sense of security that comes from knowing who you are and being able to express this to others by confidently completing the phrase, "My name is…" a feeling that we, and many others like us, have not been able to share. In writing this, we have made sense of our names and what they mean to our lives, and we hope that by sharing our experiences we are able to shine a light on a silent struggle.

The process of realizing an identity is a fluid one. It could take a lifetime, it can happen several times within a day, and maybe it will never fully happened at all. Our conversation demonstrates that theories only provide a guideline to help practitioners understand some of the issues students face, but cannot fully represent the diverse body of experiences of Asian students. This can be detrimental to students and may lead to, "poorly informed and designed [interventions] because they are based on an inaccurate model minority myth furthered by research on aggregated Asian Americans" (Chang & Le, 2005, p. 240). Working with students is much more complex



than just reciting theories. "These are topics that academics spend a lifetime studying, but for … students, an answer is needed not just for intellectual satisfaction but for the practical reason of living" (Takeshita, 2007, p. 262). For us, understanding our names is more than a mere academic pursuit: it is how we walk in the world.

Ho (1987) and Huang (1994) note that Asian Americans are the most diverse ethnic group in the United States. At an institution such as ours, where the entire non-White population is grouped under an umbrella term for people of color, names can provide a way for students to separate themselves from the masses. The University of Vermont uses the acronym ALANA, which stands for Asian, Latino/a, African, and Native American. Yet this term is debated since it does not include every group and leaves no room for those who identify as biracial or multiracial. The term Asian can be broken down even further. Our surnames identify us as Vietnamese, whereas other names can correspond to students of Chinese, Korean, Thai, Japanese, Cambodian, Pacific Islander, Filipino, or any number of other backgrounds. Each is rich with its own unique culture and tradition, and it is unfair to assume that all Asian students ascribe to the same values. This is not to say that surnames are the definitive marker of racial or ethnic identities, but it is a step above a blanket term. According to Chang & Le (2005) census statistics based on aggregated data suggest that Asian Americans experience financial and educational success and therefore do not require any assistance in terms of public service and resources (p. 240). Aggregating Asian demographic data for institutional use such as enrollment management, climate surveys, and accreditation reports marginalizes specific and diverse ethnicities.

When working with any salient identity, whether it is race, ability, ethnicity, sexual or gender identity, religion, or socio-economic class, student affairs practitioners should proactively seek out the student's preference for being addressed. With names, it is important that every effort is made to correctly pronounce the student's name. Asking them how to pronounce their name goes a long way towards demonstrating sensitivity about the issue. Based on our experiences, the only thing more mortifying than having your name mangled in front of a class or a meeting is when the speaker does not even ask whether they have pronounced it correctly and continues blithely to mispronounce it. Our recommendations are not limited to our personal experiences as Vietnamese American/Canadian college students, but can be extended to other marginalized student populations as well.

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# Nuestros Días de Desarrollo: Days Unfolding

Iesha Gloria Valencia & Sarah Maria Childs

*How do we, as student affairs professionals, approach our work with multiracial and multiethnic students from a holistic perspective if we ourselves do not feel whole? Historically, White people have had the power and privilege to define race; therefore, impacting why people of mixed races may or may not feel whole. The experiences of those who identify as multiracial and multiethnic are unique and therefore different from others who identify as a member of a single race or ethnicity. Individuals who perhaps have not needed to examine their race, such as their White counterparts, view their racial experience differently. Our experiences as two multiracial individuals and new student affairs professionals have been a constant battle between self-identification and societal categorization. The pressure to minimize our identities to "other" or "non" because we do not fit within a predetermined category has had a profound and lasting effect on our lives and how we choose to identify. Throughout this article we will examine our collective and individual quests of self-discovery, our struggles with the dissection of our identities, and the ownership of our White identity. To provide insight into how these experiences may impact students in a racially segmented country, we have chosen Maria P. P. Roots' Bill of Rights for Racially Mixed People (1996) as a framework to illustrate our experiences as multiracial individuals.*

A growing demographic, biracial and multiracial individuals, is reaching the doorsteps of college campuses around the nation, offering a fresh and much needed look towards multicultural competencies. The growth in the multiracial

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population has heightened the exposure of multiracial issues in American media and college campuses. This increase in exposure may denote success for all multiracial individuals and the multiracial movement; it can, however, send mixed messages and an inaccurate perception of advancements in multiracial research (Wijeyesinghe, 2001). This may lead people to believe that there is an abundance of research, when in reality the heightened exposure is due to the pressing need for more research. Wijeyesinghe states that: "Although the public perception of Multiracial people is becoming more positive, the assumption that Multiracial people are confused, distraught, and unable to fit in" (2001, p. 131) is common, and a struggle that multiracial individuals face. We will begin by emphasizing pertinent terms and definitions in an effort to ensure an understanding of our topic. Throughout this article we will periodically shift in and out of our individual narratives while incorporating the Bill of Rights for Racially Mixed People.

## Definitions

Throughout this article, we will refer to people who have two or more racial heritages as multiracial. This term is the most inclusive to refer to people across all racial mixes. Thus, it also includes biracial people (Root, 1996). Race and racial groups refer to a socially constructed concept that divides people into subgroups based on real or perceived differences. Therefore, racial identity is the term used for those who self identify with one or more of the racial categories. On the other hand, ascribed racial group membership is socially applied to an individual or group that may or may not be aligned with how that individual or group self identifies (Wijeyesinghe, 2001). A person who self identifies or is ascribed a single racial group membership is defined as monoracial (Root, 1996).

Another socially constructed concept is ethnicity, which classifies the divide in racial groups based on a shared geographical, historical, and cultural experience. This decision is normally based on factors including racial ancestry, ethnicity, physical appearance, early socialization, recent or past personal experiences, and a sense of shared experiences with members of a particular racial group (Wijeyesinghe, 2001). Throughout this paper we will address our racial and ethnic identities but will not use them interchangeably. Therefore we use White as a racial label because we do not personally identify with our White ethnicities. We do however, strongly identify with our Mexican and/or Chinese ethnicities. We prefer to identify ourselves as Multiracial, not multiethnic, because we do not have a concrete White ethnicity. We hope that the key terms defined above have provided some clarity to terms that may be ambiguous in meaning or difficult to understand. This language will be used as a framework to guide our narratives.



## The Multiracial Experience: Looking Through Our Lenses

As we focus on the issues that face multiracial students in today's college population, we will narrate our personal life experiences within the context of existing research. In order for the reader to gain insight into our multiracial identities, we will share a personal writing exercise called 'Where I Am From' that will lend a panoramic view of Sarah's Chinese, Mexican, and White identity and the Mexican and White identity of Iesha. "The 'Where I Am From' exercise was expanded to read and discuss the narratives in ways that saw the whole of these students' [Minority Undergraduate Fellows] lives" (Borrego & Manning, 2007, p.138). This exercise gave us the opportunity to truly express how we, from our perspectives, navigate our lives. We invite you to look at our lives through our lenses.

*Where I Am From: Sarah M. Child*s
"Look at my family…that is how you know where I am from. I am from hot apple pie, mole, and dim sum" (Borrego & Manning, 2007, p 61). I am from immigrants. I am White. I am Mexican. I am Chinese. I am multiracial. I am from an interracial couple in which my Mexican roots dominated and where I grew an appreciation for my Chinese blood by looking at the handsome face of my grandpa and all his brilliance. I am from the greatest love of my life—my mom, and a dynasty of strong, beautiful women: Grandma, mom, Cissy, Carrie, and Connie.

I am from a childhood of growing up with my grandma and grandpa as my childcare providers. A place where I wasn't "Sarah," I was "Sara" (sawda) or "Linda" (leanda). I am from my grandma's kitchen, where I would sit on a stool and watch her cook; hearing her beautiful voice as she sang and spoke to me in Spanish so I would learn. Where there is nothing more comforting than the aroma of chiles, tomatoes, and tortillas cooking on the comal or her finger lickin' good rice that she would make me and Aaron nearly everyday.

I am from a childhood where my best friends growing up were my cousins. Where weekends were spent at each other's houses having sleepovers, watching scary movies, playing, and riding bikes. I am from a broken family. I am from a mother that kept her children safe and fought like hell to keep us together and strong during our most trying times. "We are from a childhood of playing She-Ra and He-Man in Aaron's two-toned underwear and in the front yard. We are from a country that tries to promote democracy and freedom of choice, yet when the time comes Aaron will not be able to marry the man that he loves. I am from a place that bitches and moans about how all the illegals are taking American jobs but would you clean filthy toilets and floors and break your back for minimum wage? I am from a place that values education yet makes accessibility an increasing challenge. I am from a place that values material possessions and money—where the wealthiest of the wealthy could support 60 of the poorest countries in the world and yet we still have starving nations. I am from the school of thought that 'si se puede!'" (Borrego & Manning, 2007, p. 61). I am from a place with a very complex history and I'm just trying to find my way.

*Where I Am From: Iesha G. Valencia*

I am from a place abundant with fields and crops of colorful fruit and nut trees, endless rows of vegetables, and tractors driving 20 miles per hour on Highway 99 during harvest season. I grew up in a place known as the Olive City and where in my early years of elementary school I was a proud "Mamma's little helper," sorting leaves and branches from the olives. I am from a place where my people work long labor-intensive hours harvesting the crops that soon filter into the produce aisles of American grocery stores.

I am torn; straddling the Mexico and United States border, stuck at customs, itching to go south and never return. I live the life of a biracial woman. I speak Spanish with such love and beauty but default to English in order to navigate this country.

I am from a place where my skin color is a privilege and yet achieving the perfect golden brown glow is a lucrative industry. I am from a home where we are all brown at heart, even though our skin color reflects otherwise. I am disgusted with the color of my skin.

I live in a racist and discriminatory country where hearing these words, "Speak English! We're in America!" is not uncommon. I am from a place filled with pride and shame.

I am also from a place of love, where my mother taught me mostly by example the importance of being strong, independent, bilingual, authentic, educated, and ambitious; all the while thinking both two steps ahead and behind my game in order to survive in this place I call home.

I am from a place of no regrets, strength, and culture.

*Claiming Our Rights*

A common experience we both share is the confusion we have surrounding our belonging in this world versus where people think we should be. It is the pride of our membership within the Mexican community and culture that has eased our discomfort with our multiracial identity. The frustration with the existence of oppression in the racially segmented country in which we live has shaped our animosity towards the oppressors. However, in our case, the oppressors are within our line of ancestry. We both have worked towards transforming our disdain and dislike for White people into greater self-awareness and ownership of our strong feelings as a way of shifting our negative energy into a positive form so that we can create change for others and ourselves. Root (1996) stated "The affirmation of rights below reflects resistance, revolution,



and ultimately change for the system that has weakened the social, moral, and spiritual fiber in this country" (p. 6). The set of affirmations developed by Root has been instrumental in articulating our thoughts and experiences as racially mixed people.

Our sense of self-advocacy is clearly articulated through the thoughts of Maria P. P. Root's (1996) "Bill of Rights" for people of mixed racial heritage.

Bill of Rights for Racially Mixed People
(Root, 1996, p. 7)

I have the right
- not to justify my existence in this world
- not to keep the races separate within me
- not to be responsible for people's discomfort with my physical ambiguity
- not to justify my ethnic legitimacy

I have the right
- to identify myself differently than strangers expect me to identify
- to identify myself differently than how my parents identify me
- to identify myself differently than my brothers and sisters
- to identify myself differently in different situations

I have the right
- to create a vocabulary to communicate about being multiracial
- to change my identity over my lifetime—and more than once
- to have loyalties and identify with more than one group of people
- to freely choose whom I befriend and love

Our sense of self-advocacy is clearly articulated through the thoughts of Maria P. P. Root's (1996) "Bill of Rights" for people of mixed racial heritage. If the student affairs professionals with whom we engaged during our tenure as undergraduates had a more comprehensive understanding of the multiracial student experience, then they would have provided a more holistic perspective, rather than place us in a developmental stage. Multiracial students lend a unique blend of experiences that can offer new perspectives to the field of higher education. We intentionally chose to focus on the "Bill of Rights" rather than on developmental theories because our experiences and frustration with the current models do not address all of our needs and milestones in our individual development. Root's "Bill of Rights" touches more on our general experience. For us, not all developmental models were as inclusive as we have needed them to be, because we do not fit into an easily identifiable stage.

## Race, College, and Self Discovery

As the concept of race evolves over time, the validity of our multiracial identity is continuously challenged with the interpretation of racial group membership due to the influence of peers, family and culture (Brown, Elder, & Hiltin, 2006). Multiracial people not only go to college, but they go out into the working world, they have children, and they live life and desire just as much as anyone else, yet their experience can be quite isolating.

As we explore our multiracial identities, we begin by acknowledging all parts of our identity, examining those that are more salient than others. Messages we have received from society have deeply impacted our perspectives and influenced these identities. Nishimura (1998) states:

> The additional challenge for multiracial individuals is that very little of their world is "a given," that is, able to be accepted without conscious thought and decision. In North American society, race strongly influences how an individual is perceived by others, what community an individual identifies with and, to some extent, an individual's social relationships and how an individual perceives himself or herself…. An additional step in the developmental process for many multiracial individuals is related to experiencing pressures to make a single choice regarding racial self-labeling. (p. 46)

The pressures to which Nishimura refers can be magnified in a college environment. For Iesha, college was a time to work through the pressures she faced growing up, by developing a new positive sense of self and belonging to a community, she longed to be fully accepted in.

> Knowing that my skin color does not reflect how I self identify is one of the most complex challenges that I have and continue to face. In my junior high years I quickly became hyperconscious that I was different. I wanted to be accepted for who I was, not how others perceived me. I started to judge myself and began to believe that I would never be a "good enough" Mexican. The main change that took place was that I stopped speaking Spanish as much. I stopped responding in Spanish unless I knew they did not understand English. At times, I would see other people struggling with the English language at department stores or at school and due to my new fear, would not help them. I did not like the funny looks I received when people heard Spanish words escape my mouth. Sometimes, my Spanish would get criticized. I know as a result, my Spanish lacked proper grammar. When I entered college however, my lack of confidence in Spanish was not as important anymore, and I began to embrace my Mexican heritage and involved myself in activities and student organizations that would affirm my identities. Joining Lambda Theta Nu Sorority, Incorporated, a Latina based sorority, gave me the opportunity to celebrate who I was without any explanation. (I. G. Valencia, personal communication, October 16, 2007)



Unfortunately for Iesha, there were not any student organizations specifically for students of multiple races and ethnicities. Belonging to a sorority that is Latina based, and having such an important part of her identity supported rather than rejected, at the time, was a long awaited victory. According to Root's Bill of Rights for Racially Mixed People (1996), Iesha has the right to identify herself differently in different situations, including the language she wants to speak rather than the language people expect her to speak. For some multiracial individuals, assuming different racial identities in relation to the social context serves as a coping strategy since it is uncommon for Multiracial people to feel completely accepted for their multiple identities. "Multiracial persons often find themselves in a position of simultaneously trying to examine who they are while confronting the racial designation people want to impose on them" (Nishimura, 1998, p. 46).

Nishimura (1998) articulated the impact race has had on us personally, and the experiences we both had combating peoples' impulsiveness in defining our identity for us. Nishimura continues to identify how this has heavily influenced our perception of ourselves, resulting in a strong affinity for our Latino culture. We have established a strong sense of identity for ourselves and continue to have it dismissed by others, even family members. For Sarah, the racial lines and boundaries in her family always seemed too hazy and unclear.

> It has been with my own father that I have been made to feel marginalized as a person of color. In past conversations with my father, he has adamantly stood by his belief that my brother and I are White because half of our racial make-up is White. My father telling me this also implies to me that he feels that I am not Mexican or Chinese enough since I am only a quarter of each. Whether or not this is what he believes, this has been my understanding and that is how I have been impacted by his words. I find myself continually frustrated knowing that my own father does not understand race; and furthermore, does not seem to understand or want to understand how I identify. It is unfortunate that he is not open to realizing the detriment of his words and the impact it has had on me as a multiracial individual. Along with many other racial experiences, it has been these with my father that have further driven me to feel as I do about my White identity. I do not love it. I do not embrace it. As Root (1996) states, "I have the right not to justify my ethnic legitimacy" (p. 7) but I feel like that is always what it comes down to. Unfortunately my experiences with racial categorizations have not ended here. It all started as a young child and continues today with my father referring to my family and other Chinese people as "chinks." (S. M. Childs, personal communication, October 16, 2007)

We attribute the racial slurs, discrimination and racism towards racial minorities by White people as an immediate red flag that we did not want to associate with those who oppress our people and therefore us. The almost subconscious intentional rejection of our White identity was linked to the shame of carrying the blood of oppressors, yet living a life of oppression. Other Whites may have viewed our mixed races as an infiltration of racial purity. We as well struggle knowing that being a member of an oppressive group tainted the people we wanted to be. For Iesha, her whiteness was a source of shame and guilt, feeding power to the semantics of race and skin color.

> As a biracial person, I have always identified proudly with my Mexican ethnicity. It was not until I was surrounded by White people at the University of Vermont, that I was unable to ignore the white privilege and power that was granted to me at birth. My new surroundings looked and felt unfamiliar. The communities of color that served as a personal safety net no longer surrounded me, forcing me to look at the underlying issues surrounding my privilege. I had to look back to junior high, the first time I began to understand race and realize why others had always seen me as a different type of Mexican. I had White skin and my family and friends did not. I spoke the same language, cooked and ate the same food, celebrated the same traditions, yet in the eyes of other people I was different than them. This has translated into a self-conscious perception of who I am racially and ethnically. (I. G. Valencia, personal communication, October 16, 2007)

Iesha's critical analysis of her privilege in relation to the way she navigates her life as a person of color and how she is perceived as a White person, creates dissonance in the dichotomy of her racial identities. As Root (1996) identified in her "Bill of Rights," Iesha has the right to identify differently than strangers expect her to. Only she can truly name her world and has the right to not justify her existence in this world. Root (1996) would also suggest that she has the right to not justify her ethnic legitimacy or be required to keep the races separate within her. Rather than converging all our races, we both separated ourselves as far as we could from White culture, values and beliefs. Daniel (2002) asserts:

> Eurocentrism and white racism are not merely forms of ethnocentrism—that is, racial and cultural chauvinism in which one's group is considered the standard against which all others are measured—which exists in almost every culture that has ever existed. Eurocentrism is more extreme than the mere racial and cultural chauvinism that applies almost universally, because it is based on a more systematic, comprehensive, integrated, and reciprocal set of ideological beliefs. (p. 30)

Historically, the White racial category has only been reserved as a privilege for those perceived to have "pure" blood. The principle of hypodescent, was a law that ensured the social status of people of mixed races was the lowest ranking race of their mixed race heritage (Root, 1996). This is partially determined by phenotype expression and therefore makes it difficult to identify the racial category of multiracial people who may express ambiguous characteristics. Often times, these people are referred to as people of color. However, the "white OR of color" dichotomy, is not realistic to the reality of multiracial people.



## Other or Non

The desire to have recognition as a member of a monoracial community has been historically integral to the social recognition and status as a functional member of society (Root, 1996). This is unattainable for multiracial individuals because by choosing to identify with only one of their races, they are forced to ignore or dismiss other aspects of who they are. Seeking acceptance into the communities in which we live is a natural thought process for most individuals, regardless of race.

As two multiracial individuals who openly acknowledge the way we feel about the disconnect from our Whiteness, we continue to struggle integrating our White identity with our more salient racial identities. Resolving this disconnect is in line with our desires to feel whole. This is a feeling that we believe resonates with many people. Our experience of having continual implicit and explicit messages conveyed to us further marginalizes our identities. Though many strides have been made, our identities continue to be labeled by others without our input.

Common questions posed to multiracial people are "What are you?" and "Where are you from?" The questions themselves are based on a false monoracial assumption that everyone can be placed in a single racial category (Satris, 1995). This can be especially true on college campuses that involve students joining together for the first time. It is natural for people to categorize others so that they can have a framework in which to operate. For people who have been exhausted with these questions however, it can be frustrating. "Mixed white-nonwhite persons face an irresolvable status ambiguity. They are rejected by the dominant race as impure and therefore inferior, but also disliked by the oppressed race for their privileges of closer association with domination" (Alcoff, 1995, p. 259). Certain moments with key individuals in our lives made us feel inferior and served as a reminder of our differences, and continue to do so today. Sarah conveyed:

> I strongly believe that a large part of that problem is that my father is a White man that has not acknowledged his own White power and privilege. Furthermore, as a young child of 5 years old I knew that I was different from my father. Never was it more clear to me as a child than when my father's brother lived with us for a brief time. The nickname my uncle Steve quickly gave me was "beaner." As a child I did not think anything of this because I thought my uncle was just saying I was brown like a Pinto bean, which I was. My skin color, which was similar to my mother and brother, was the distinguishing factor between my father and me. (S. M. Childs, personal communication, October 16, 2007)

As Root (1996) would suggest, Sarah has the right to identify herself differently than how her parents identify her rather than being seen as monoracial. Additionally, she has the right to keep the races separate within herself and to create a vocabulary to communicate about being multiracial. Experiences such as these reflect in the way students experience college life, the way they are perceived and treated. At times it feels like a losing situation all the way around, because we simply want to be accepted for who we are and not feel as though we have to shift our identity to parallel geography, social atmospheres, education, job force, and family.

## Recommendations for Best Practices

Susan Graham, the Executive Director of Project RACE (Reclassify All Children Equally) firmly believes that "mixed racial persons should have the same right as monoracial persons to define themselves accurately on racial classification forms" and further suggests that we need to advocate for students' rights by creating a multiracial category and therefore recognizing their racial backgrounds (Korgen, 1998, p. 105-106). The absence of such a category at college campuses across the United States has the potential of sending mixed messages to the multiracial student population. In order to support and include individuals that identify as multiracial, an adjustment on the demographic section of forms that provides multiracial individuals the option to choose "all that apply" should be made. It is important that the forms reflect this inclusive measure by avoiding options such as: Check the following: race A (but not race B) and race B (but not race A). This is counterintuitive to an inclusive approach.

Educators must take the initiative to recognize the entire student body and affirm all students through their development. Having the option to positively classify as multiracial conveys to the student body that all students are valued in the academy. For multiracial youth, this act of self-categorization is significant in their development (Brown et al., 2006).

Student affairs professionals must go beyond the recent push for a multiracial category for a rising group of the college population and must integrate the lenses of multiracial students into their own awareness. Because each individual experience is different, we encourage dialogue between students, staff, faculty, and administration. Additional support is necessary for these students, considering that college may be the first time they are given the opportunity to discuss these issues. Parents are not always cognizant that they are raising multiracial children and therefore may not share or have shared experiences, especially if parents identify as monoracial. Additionally, this is why it is so critical that student clubs and organizations, including multiracial student groups, exist. Important issues to consider in ensuring that student clubs and organizations not only exist but thrive are through financial support and the support of knowledgeable student affairs professionals.



Awareness of one's own identities and how those identities impact the interactions with multiracial students is a beginning step that is important to a greater understanding of this student population. Additionally, sharing personal identities amongst colleagues will help connect students with multiracial colleagues, which can enhance their mentorship experience and sense of belonging at the institution.

By understanding Root's "Bill of Rights" and applying it to students, student affairs professionals can continue learning how to hear the voices of multiracial students, so that they may develop an accurate sense of their truth. We must not rely on student development theory as a primary source of guidance or framework for approaching multiracial students. Current racial identity development models may not fully address all the needs of multiracial students.

## Conclusion

As multiracial people, it has been very clear to us that everything operates within a racial binary. This may be why understanding the multiracial perspective is a challenge for some people. It is not our intention to blame others for their lack of awareness or ignorance of multiracial individuals but rather to emphasize that, as educators, we must achieve a greater awareness around race. Embracing and affirming people rather than labeling them is a step in the right direction.

It is important for us as multiracial individuals in our racial development thus far to move beyond the negative racial experiences without dismissing their existence. We are now at a point in our lives where we can work through our feelings of internalized oppression of our White racial identity. Though it may not always be a fair request to forgive and reconcile with people who have caused us harm based upon their White racial membership, it is a necessary action on our part if we want to develop a more positive and healthy White racial identity. Our intention for sharing some of our personal life experiences is to give readers insight in the ways people reinforce the need for a "Bill of Rights" for racially mixed people. We hope that people will be able to analyze their interactions with current and future students and further reflect upon the way they have silenced others by not affirming all of their identities or by assuming they are monoracial.

We understand how easy it is for people to judge or make assumptions based from stereotypes and preconceived notions about group membership. We hope that our experiences will aid practitioners in their attempts to be inclusive and equitable. There is value in current research and literature, but there is still a great demand for more as the United States grows more diverse. These inclusive practices that we have shared with you can help guide our work as student affairs professionals and will hopefully leading to greater awareness.

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V

# REFLECTIONS

As members of the University of Vermont (UVM) Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration (HESA) community, past and present, we acknowledge the value in listening to one another's stories. We hope that you will enjoy these reflections as they chronicle the continuing journeys through HESA's past, present, and future.

# A Bird's Eye View

Janet E. Walbert
Vice President for Student Affairs
Arcadia University

As a passionate member of the growing ranks of the alumni of the University of Vermont, I am so pleased to have an opportunity to provide some insights from my current perspective. Having received my master's degree from one of the top programs for Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration, I am always tremendously proud of my education, of the network of colleagues that I have, and the current program at UVM. During the past year I have had the honor to serve as NASPA president, and I have had numerous interactions with other alumni, some whom I know and some whom I have just met, but each encounter begins with that knowing and appreciative smile.

I traveled from one regional conference to another last November, with a stop in Burlington, Vermont for the 35th Annual NASPA Region I Conference. As I flew in over Lake Champlain the memories washed over me and I realized it was truly in Vermont that I planted my roots for my professional development. The differences in the landscape as I had flown from Pennsylvania to New England were truly remarkable, much like the changes I personally experienced years ago at that stage of my life. The flight in, passing over Lake Champlain and then over the campus, provided a bird's eye view of one of the most significant stops in my professional journey. Though I only spent two years in Burlington, the time and energy spent there were critical to my personal and professional development in every respect. The place is powerful, but it was the people and the relationships that carved out who I am and the role I play as a professional in student affairs. Many of the individuals who helped frame my experience have stayed in touch. A few of the most influential have not stayed in contact or have passed away. Yet, whether they are actively present or not, they still influence me today.

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The opportunity to meet some of the current HESA students during that same visit to Burlington in November of 2007 was another highlight of my journey. I watched, with great admiration, as the current HESA first year class participated in a discussion about learning models. The enthusiasm and spirit, even at the end of one of those long late-afternoon-into-evening classes, energized me in seconds. I realized that the spirit and strong connections we have as UVM alumni are developed through the opportunities that we all have in common, including classes and the varied experiences in the UVM higher education community. I was invited to share my professional philosophy with the class and then invited again to contribute to this year's issue of *The Vermont Connection*. Though I have many thoughts, I will focus on three brief concepts: my UVM roots, my primary philosophy, and my passion for our students.

As a professional, the values that drive me every day are critical. In part developed through my education, who I am is central to what I do. My commitment to students, to enhancing learning, to maintaining integrity and to being intentional in my work, are essential for the focus I have in my life. The image of a tree best represents the principles that have driven me over the past years. As I have shared in numerous settings and with the first year class that November evening in Vermont, I think about the growth of a tree as a parallel to my own growth. The trunk is the core, nourished through the roots. The roots of my professional focus were cultivated in many ways while I was a graduate student in Vermont. I established priorities, developed a strong work ethic, and began to understand the breadth of students' experiences. In addition to the nurturing we received by faculty and supervisors, there was nothing more meaningful than the challenge and support from our peers. We understood what it meant to have the opportunity to be in our program at the University of Vermont at that moment. We treasured those experiences. We studied, read, and wrote like we had never done before, but for some of us, it was the practical experience in our assistantships and practica that truly made the difference.

The tree grows and it continues to build on prior experiences. The layers (the bark) add character and exhibit maturity. My core values are within the trunk and nourished through the roots. As one grows, learns, and makes critical decisions, imagine your life like that of a tree. Think of the trunk as your core, and as you learn and grow, you "branch" out. You try some things that become stable parts of your life, just like a tree trunk might split into major branches, but other times you try something and it doesn't work well. When you make decisions throughout your life you need to be sure that the most important ones are close to your core (near the trunk) and consistent with who you are inside; yet, it is also critical to remember that in order to enjoy the sunshine, he flowers or the fruit, one must occasionally go out on a limb or climb to the top. The strong decisions last and bear leaves, fruit, flowers and other branches. As we learn from experience and sometimes mistakes, some branches don't last, but ones central to the core values provide support and are the foundation for future growth. One more recent observation, one I shared with a student just before I became NASPA President-elect, is that trees tend to hang out with those like them; yet, the richness of a forest or garden is most noticeable when there is diversity among the trees. This is certainly true for us as well.

It is critical for me to recognize that if I follow this philosophy, then I must go out on a limb or climb to the top in order to appreciate the experience and see the fruit, flowers, and sky (or the results of our values and decisions). The image of growth, ever-changing experiences, cycles, and strength from our core and our values inspires my work and my life. I have learned from mistakes more than successes. I question the next steps and challenge myself to higher standards. As I consider my role with students, I ask questions to assist them in thinking about the next issue they will face.

You might ask why I use a tree as the representation of my philosophy. This philosophy started in my personal interactions with students. Faced with challenging decisions, students look for advice, and the tree image can help guide them or provide a visual for their consideration about how they have grown, and will continue to grow in the future. In truth, I realized that it continues to help me as I am always learning and growing as well. I recently participated in an intensive professional development program as a faculty member. Though I was serving as a mentor, I learned as much or more about myself as I did about others, which is often one of the benefits of volunteering for these roles. I found out one of my strongest traits is being a learner. Though I am sure it was well in place before I attended UVM, it was at that time in my life that I learned how valuable learning could be for me. Life's lessons are many – memories are built on experience. John Dewey is credited with saying, "Education is a social process; education is growth; education is not a preparation for life but is life itself." So it is true with the tree, for it represents the successes and not just the journey.

Dewey is also quoted to have said, "To find out what one is fitted to do, and to secure an opportunity to do it, is the key to happiness." My passion for students, my commitment to education, and the many opportunities I have had to continue to learn from experience, colleagues, and our students, have assured me of great happiness. The time I spent learning and growing at the University of Vermont will forever be essential to who I am as a professional, but more importantly, who I am as a person. The passion I share with my staff or the students at Arcadia University is always rooted in those experiences almost 30 years ago. Looking to the future, I will continue to learn and grow, while always remembering and honoring the roots that have mattered.



# So…What?

Patrick Brown
Director of Student Life
University of Vermont

How and when do words and concepts develop currency? What floating factors catalytically combine to capture the current values of our communities? Does any single person hold the power of the word? Or is it created and owned by the community? And how long will the currency last?

Sustainability is one of the "words" that has emerged in higher education over the past few years. Once a word breaks through the surface and becomes part of daily conversation, weekly headlines, and conference themes, then meaning becomes a bit diffuse. There is value in stopping to reflect on these diffuse concepts to re-clarify their true meaning.

Throughout the planning and construction phases of the University of Vermont's new 186,000 square foot student center, the Davis Center, we discussed a variety of environmentally-based terms and goals. We are striving for the Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification at the silver or gold level. The local media has featured our "sustainable" building. We proudly fly a whole Earth flag on one of our flagpoles. But what does it all really mean? And how did we get here?

The leadership of the Six Nations, known by many as the Iroquois Confederacy (or "The League of Power and Peace"), followed a written constitution that was heavily borrowed from by the writers of the United States Constitution. The Six Nations are called the Hau de no sau nee, meaning "People Building a Long House." The six tribes that formed this powerful alliance of native people (Cayuga, Mohawk, Onondagas, Oneida, Seneca, and Tuscaroras) held many important and personal beliefs, one of which ties directly into how we relate to our surroundings and how we prepare for the future. The Great Law, as the constitution was called, asked a current generation of people to be mindful of, and work towards, the well being of their children seven generations in the future. The translation reads something like this: "In every deliberation we must consider the impact on the seventh generation, even if it requires having skin as thick as the bark of a pine."

In planning for the Davis Center we often talked about the building being a

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100 year building. We got it wrong. If we apply the seven generations concept to our building and sustainability, then we need to be thinking out 175 years–2182. We designed many great initiatives into this project, and are working hard to use the building as a community teaching tool, but 175 years is a really long time. How many of our daily decisions consider seven generations?

I really don't like the word sustainability. I applaud the concept, but the word is way too passive for my personal ideals. It reminds me of the difference between tolerance and acceptance in our discussions on the dynamics of social justice. Sustainability only goes far enough to maintain the status quo, when, environmentally we need to actively work to restore what once was. Reduce, reuse, recycle only go so far. We need to add a fourth R to the oft chanted set of Rs that capture environmental actions to restore our ecosystems.

Walking into the bathrooms of the Davis Center, with their waterless urinals, automatic flushing toilets, motion sensor sinks and faucets, and supersonic hand dryers I wonder what word or words best captures the values that are really behind sustainability. Thinking, somewhat egotistically, that I can coin the ultimate word (while I'd rather pose provocative questions to make us all think and discuss at a deeper level) is a risky proposition. Today, drafting this piece, I am leaning towards the word stewardship.

Social stewardship. Social begins to capture the evolving interplay between humans, other members of the animal and plant world, and the broader physical environment. Stewardship places personal responsibility with each of us to take action within that social and environmental interplay. Whereas sustainability can be a call to action, stewardship requires it. I would like to posit that social stewardship includes a wide collection of words that have currency today: social justice, environmental stewardship, environmental education, and civility. It requires attention to the dominant and subordinate relationships that exist between people and those relationships that exist between people and the land.

The new Davis Center, with one of its core values being stewardship, is attempting to serve as a role model for the campus and community. From the overall architectural design to a sophisticated heating and ventilation system that senses the number of people in a room, to a glycol heating system in the loading dock floor to a wide variety of active and passive programming, the building is trying to at least look ahead a few generations of college students. As much as a building can provide an appropriate stage, the success of the production relies upon people.

So…what?

I believe that as a student affairs educator it is critical for me to model behavior that is in concert with an ongoing process of change. I must learn to stop, look, and listen to what is around me. Then I must think about and feel the realities before I move towards action that fulfills a stewardship mission.



What I believe is that each of us needs to think and act locally and globally. The nexus of these two geographic playgrounds is the individual. To only work in one arena limits one's inherent power and downplays the intersection. Local action starts in its purest form with one's self and moves towards what we typically call our local community. Global actions stretch into national and international issues and concerns. They are all important.

What I believe is that each of us needs to consider what and who will teach on a daily basis. Education is far more than what happens in the classroom, and we are charged with being dream-makers not gatekeepers. Our conversations must focus on the possible.

What I believe is that when using the word stewardship, it is important to keep in mind that it requires each of us to take responsibility for our own actions, and begin to use our ability to respond (responsibility) to change the actions of others.

What I believe is that we all need to question our actions on a daily basis. I also believe that we need to question, albeit carefully, the actions of others. We are in this together. Partnerships and collaborations will move us further along more successfully.

What I believe is that dialogue and action are necessary partners in our future.
We need to learn how to listen and learn from others–daily.

What I believe is that we need to challenge ourselves to define our personal comfort zones, and take the risks that are inherent in taking action. And within these actions we must be genuine and authentic.

I believe that we need to listen to the poet inside, and work towards a more beautiful world.

I believe that we need to challenge our associations, institutions, divisions, departments, and colleagues to fulfill their stated missions and be the leaders of society. Leadership requires risks and setting standards that embrace stewardship principals.

I believe that peace is a noble cause and that, in spite of the numerous discourses on how to define a just war, the conversation needs more depth as I remain unconvinced. We need to engage each other and our students in these discussions. If we cannot figure out how to manage the human tragedies all around us, then how are we going to address the multitude of other needs?

I believe that it is grossly wrong to drop tons of depleted uranium tipped arms in Iraq and Afghanistan. The half-life of depleted uranium is four billion years. Our current "war" effort in Iraq and Afghanistan is using sixteen times more fuel per soldier than in the Second World War. Beyond the explicit human toll, why are we not talking on our campuses about the environmental impact of war? Who needs to initiate this conversation? You? Me? Our faculty? Our buildings?

I believe each individual contributes to our world on a daily basis, and I know I can always do more. I also need to ask for help. I need to speak the truth. I also need to say thanks more often.

I know that I am always learning. Always learning. Working to restore.

So…what are you going to do today?



## THE KENNETH P. SAURMAN MEMORIAL AWARD

This award honors Kenneth P. Saurman, who will long be remembered for his dedication to the field of student affairs and to the graduate program at The University of Vermont. After his death in 1980, a memorial fund was established for a prize recognizing the outstanding graduate in the program. This award is a reminder of the professional excellence and commitment Kenneth P. Saurman inspired in his students and colleagues.

Each spring, a committee of faculty members in the College of Education and Social Services selects a student, or students, who best display(s) the established award criteria. Those recognized: (a) show a record of outstanding achievement; (b) demonstrate ability to make outstanding future professional contributions at both local and national levels; (c) demonstrate future ability to make outstanding intellectual contribution to the field in the areas of research and scholarship; (d) show evidence of having fostered a sense of community and cooperation among peers, staff, and faculty; and (e) show evidence of outstanding contribution to the University through internship and practical experience.

In May 2007, the Kenneth P. Saurman Award was proudly presented to Jessica Belue Buckley.

# Know Thyself to Know Thy Job

Jessica Belue Buckley
2007 Saurman Award Recipient

The chair was historic, or so I liked to think. It had welcomed the sitting of many from the last few generations of students in the Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration (HESA) program at the University of Vermont. The more I sat in that spot, the more I felt I was becoming a part of the community of scholars, activists, teachers, and learners who had gone before me. Like my predecessors, I sat each time facing west. Each time, seeing the view out the window over College Street, across the tops of buildings. Each time, curious what story the day would bring. This particular day I had a set of choices to make about leaving Vermont. Across the table was the person I came to see for advice; Jackie Gribbons. I shared my options, Jackie listened as always, and finally she shared her thoughts: "Jess, you have to make the right decision for you for right now. What is right is likely to change. And there is nothing that will be perfectly right. So determine what you need right now, and decide."

Plato, Shakespeare, and Gribbons all agree. "Know thyself." "To thine own self be true." "Know what is right for you." The HESA curriculum and faculty infuse these ideas of self-knowledge into the pedagogy in an intentional way, and the theme of the journal this year, "Identity: From Awareness to Action," highlights that knowledge of self-identity is key to action. When I was sitting in the chair that day, the identities that were most salient were not ones we had studied in class but were ever-present as I was making the job decision. I was (1) someone slightly in debt, (2) someone about to be married, and (3) someone who wanted a values-based job or institution with a position that provided a sense of life balance. These identities drove me to pursue certain jobs, and each position I considered ranked higher in some categories than others. What remained the same was that each position I considered needed to fit within a budget, to be near my now husband's graduate school (then a potential of eight options), to engage my values, and to allow me to develop both a rich professional and personal life in a new city.

Since that day, I have moved through many transitions. I accepted a job, I graduated, I married, and I moved. Now, still only a few months beyond those transitions, I find myself in quite a different place but with a job that fulfils the elements that were important to me in my search. What is at the forefront of my mind now is how to best integrate my needs as a professional, my identity as an individual, and my values as a moral being with the needs, identity, and values of the institution, students, and colleagues I serve.

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I often think about this big picture question of integrating my values and needs with that of the institution I serve, but at the same time find myself simply learning how to accomplish daily tasks. Equipped with tools for action but still a new professional, the big tasks of learning organizational structure, understanding departmental priorities, and developing a sense of campus culture all occur alongside the important but small tasks of finding the office supply closet, learning how to operate the shredder, and collecting all the appropriate office keys. In this stage of learning, I find that I fall in the middle of the progressive professional and personal journey this year's theme evokes. Equipped with tools from Vermont to grow in self and community awareness but not yet immersed in a campus culture to a degree that I feel comfortable acting broadly, I fall within the "to" of this year's theme. Some days I can almost literally feel the transition I am making between awareness to action–a transition that accompanies my journey from graduate school to the working world. While action is also a part of study, and awareness-building is a lifetime process, the focus has shifted for me to one of putting the tools of awareness and knowledge of scholarship into action as a professional. I pull out a book or notes from class to help me understand a student's developmental situation. I reflect on essays I wrote to help me put my identity in perspective. Or I make a mistake that requires me to think intentionally about the actions I take.

## Settling in: Mistakes, Uncertainty, and Development

Boy have I made some mistakes. Some have been funny; I selected "reply all" to a message meant for my supervisor to say, "We're cool for the BBQ!" Some have weighed on my mind long after the repercussions settled; I was missing information that I should have researched when advising a student group on how to handle a judicial situation. Probably once a week, I have needed to admit to a mistake, big or small. More often than that, I have had to admit my uncertainty or my lack of knowledge about an aspect of my job. "Where is that room?" "What is the appropriate way to respond to this problem?" "Do I really need to follow these guidelines or are these suggestions?" "Is my judgement out of line?" "Did I phrase this e-mail appropriately?"

The mistakes and moments of uncertainty have given me a productive perspective on my role within an organization and my identity as a new professional. With each answer to a question or with each mistake, I have watched my own development unfold. Learning and self-awareness have occurred in those moments when

I have paused in my daily tasks to consider my actions or inactions, my values, the values of the campus I serve, and how I can mold those elements together into cohesive action.

The mistakes and moments of uncertainty foster in me what I hope is a humble confidence. I recently had a chance to reflect on that humble confidence when Sister Helen Prejean, author of Dead Man Walking, spoke at the church I attend near campus. A line she quoted from Saint Basil remains in my daily thought: "Annunciations are frequent. Incarnations are rare." In addition to giving me a jolt that I need to live my values intentionally, this line reminds me of the way in which I should respond to both the mistakes I have made and the uncertainty that arises in my new position. Rather than pretend I know answers, I need to ask. Rather than proclaim knowledge, I need to show my use of knowledge in each interaction. Rather than simply declare an opinion, I need to enact the philosophy that informs that opinion.

## Intentional Action

Sister Prejean also left me asking a question that resurfaces throughout the week: "How did I work for justice today?" Or more broadly, "How did I act with intention today?" Without required readings to learn about new theories, without papers to draw connections between theory and practice, without classmates engaging in courses and discussions based on similar learning, I have had to work all the more to develop organic intentionality in my work with students. The visionary culture of my department and the support of colleagues and supervisors, who are role models of intentionality, fosters an environment of contemplative action. The writing, reading, and discussion that accompanies graduate school, however, are difficult to replace in a workday.

Yet again, I can see the transition I am making between the awareness-building of graduate school and an action-oriented profession. In regards to theory, I am continuing to develop the ability to integrate theory into practice without structured discussions that help me draw those connections. In his chapter "Using theory in practice in student affairs," Rodgers (1991) discusses an aspect of the transition I am experiencing. He explores the use of theory in practice as professionals grow from comprehension of theory, to knowledge of core constructs, to the ability to use theory in a way to affect broad change. The seasoned professionals around me have moved into those later stages of intentional action; they can clearly articulate how theory and research inform their actions within, and decisions for, the institution (most recently around an alcohol policy change on campus). I am just beginning to make those connections.

Intentional action, in addition to encompassing the use of theory in practice, is also



the purposeful living out of my values. With each day, as tasks accrue alongside the problems to solve, I can easily respond and accomplish items without taking a moment to understand why and how I act. Will I act with my values in mind? Or with my desire simply to accomplish the task? A few values have surfaced repeatedly in my new job as I have, with Sister Prejean's inspiration, paused to consider how my values affect my daily decisions. One of these is my belief in the dignity of each individual. Each time I meet with students who have violated community standards, I think about this value and my responsibility to educate based on behaviors in order to to uphold a person's worth. This value also arises as I encourage students to engage in programs and conversations that counteract prejudices, celebrate differences, and question norms. Another value is my commitment to a student-centered philosophy. When I might easily solve a problem I intentionally try to slow my work, to pause before answering, and to ask a student, "What do you think? What would you do with these options?" This action has sometimes been difficult for me, especially as a new professional trying to learn new protocol and wanting to prove my ability to make decisions within those guidelines. Keeping this student-centered approach in mind however, has become one of the ways in which I try to ensure that my values guide my actions.

## The Road Ahead

Education and values have been useful tools as I begin the journey into a new job as a new professional, moving from the awareness-building of graduate school to the action of the professional world. My mistakes have been many and my uncertainty has been constant, but each has helped me gain perspective on my position and understanding of expectations. I have tried to incorporate my lessons from those experiences of growth with intentional, values-based work and decision making. The reflections on my mistakes, my growth, and my work have given me a window from which to view the transitions of the last few months and to feel, almost tangibly, the process of the transition to action within a framework of awareness. The reflections have also reminded me of Jackie's wisdom; I need to know myself and my needs in this moment. I change as my surroundings change, and so should my approach to my work as I grow, learn, and hopefully become more aware of myself and of those around me.

The chair that I sit in most frequently each day now is still near the window. It faces south and looks out onto a busy sidewalk. It also has a history of those who have sat in it: curious, frustrated, confident, calm, and humorous. Some who have sat before me have left notes on lips of drawers or on desk edges: "Listen. Understand. Then respond." The chair I frequented in Vermont and the chair in which I now sit provide a sense of rootedness for me. One has been the place from which I have asked deep questions about myself and one from which I have asked questions of others trying to know themselves. These chairs have been places for both individuality or self-understanding and places where I have entered into a community and a ritual. These chairs have also been the places from which I have begun the transition from gatherer to enactor.

My hope is that with each chair ahead, I find myself as I do now, in a place seeking to move from awareness to action and to enter a community of learners and actors that inspires my best self. That I may incarnate what I annunciate. That I may know not only myself, but a version of myself that is made greater by the mistakes I have made, the uncertainty I have encountered, the values I have engaged, and the communities I have shared. That the chair itself will provide a place to reflect when I take the time to pause, sit, and ask.

## References

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# THE FINAL WORD

# V

Each year, we invite a member of our community to write The Final Word. The Final Word contributor is the consummate student affairs educator and serves as a role model to us all through dedication, wisdom, and compassion. This year, we are fortunate to conclude with Alvin A. Sturdivant, Associate Director of Residential Life at The University of Vermont.

# Finding Meaning in the Little Things: Life Lessons for Student Affairs Professionals

Alvin A. Sturdivant

I am deeply honored and humbled to have been asked to write the Final Word for The Vermont Connection. Over the course of my professional career and specifically the last five years at the University of Vermont, I have built strong bonds and relationships with many connected to HESA and consider myself privileged to have been able to walk this same path. As both an administrator in Residential Life and a faculty member in HESA at the University of Vermont, I am quite blessed to have been afforded the opportunity to work with the very best that Student Affairs has to offer. Following Jackie Gribbons in writing the Final Word is rather daunting, but I will do my best to share with you lessons that have guided both my professional practice and personal life. I am inspired by Jackie and only hope that at the end of my career, I inspire students, faculty, and staff in the same way she has for so many years.

The University of Vermont has been a wonderful place for me. I have grown immensely and in the midst of the most blissful and painful moments of my life, I was able to find hope, faith, and friendship. More than anything else, I learned to slow down and live in the moment; to appreciate the here and now while recognizing the possibilities of tomorrow. I invite you to do the same. Perhaps this is best explained by sharing how I have come to know who I am, how I came to be able to answer some of life's most difficult questions, and how I came to find direction, definition, and destiny. Through this narrative, I grant others the privilege of seeing my true self and hearing my most authentic voice.

Who Am I?

I am a Black man. I learned fairly early that life as a Black man would not be easy. Ironically, I learned this very important lesson, not from my father, grandfather, or uncles, but rather from my grandmother. The more critical lessons I learned about being Black, about being a man, and about survival as a Black man, I learned from a woman. As a six year old boy, my grandmother sat me down and explained

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to me the legacy that I would inherit. She had watched as her own sons had gone down paths of destruction and assured me that I could live a different existence with hard work, perseverance, and faith in God. In making her point, she drew my attention to the difference that made me unique and special. She acknowledged that there is no anonymity associated with being a Black man; that I would never have the ability to blend or to be invisible. She recognized that I stood on the shoulders of greatness and taught me my first lesson about my ancestral history.

I have spent my life on a journey, in search of direction and definition and have often met with uncertainty. In many ways, I have spent my life in hiding; running from who I am and ignoring what I know to be the truth. In many ways I have been pretending to be what others have expected of me. I have on many occasions altered my look, my speech, and the intonation in my voice all for the sake of fitting into a check box that did not truly represent all of me. I grew up believing that Black men looked, acted, and talked as all of those in my home community did. Uncomfortable in my own skin for most of my life, I attempted to jam myself into a puzzle in which I just did not belong. Black men in my view all spoke slang, were athletic, had multiple girlfriends, sold or did drugs and had a certain roughness and toughness about them that others envied. Cognitively, I recognized that I was not that person, but I would do everything I could to fit the mold. In the end, I became more invisible. In the words of Ralph Ellison (1952):

> I am invisible. Misunderstood, simply because people refuse to see me. Like the bodiless heads you see sometimes in circus sideshows, it is as though I have been surrounded by mirrors of hard, distorting glass. When they approach me, they see only my surroundings, themselves, or fragments of their imagination–indeed, everything and anything except me. (p. 8)

In the minds of many, I am angry, threatening, lazy, untrustworthy, shiftless, troubled, unmotivated, disgruntled, and aggressive. I bear the unique burden of being both Black and male and with that, the burden of being defined by society. I grew from an invisible boy to an invisible man. My invisibility is further reinforced each time I am called by the name of another Black man. I am not Rob, Randy, Steve, Darrell, Don, Alex, Tremayne, or the countless others for whom I have been mistaken. I do not fit neatly into a box representing all Black men, nor do I look like all Black men. I am uniquely Black, distinctively male and inimitably Southern. I am of poor working class roots and lived much of my life paycheck to paycheck. I have known what it means to go without food, to be without water and to live in darkness. I am faithful, spiritual and religious, and undeniably Christian.

I am dangerous but only in my dreams. I dream with my eyes open. I was once told by a friend and colleague to "live dangerously," a statement that can be perceived to hold a multitude of meanings. As we continued in conversation, he later concluded the statement with "live dangerously by dreaming with your eyes open" (Sawyer, 2002). I sat in silence because I had never before been so struck by the words of a friend. These words captured rather simply the way that I had always lived my life. I have always longed for my life to matter; a life that transcends degrees, titles, and money, but rather reflects my contribution to what my grandmother called the "greater good." I was born into a circumstance that for many equates to a predetermined path from the cradle to the jail house, but the difference, I believe, results from my having been taught to live dangerously with my eyes open.

I have no doubt that my grandmother's focus and investment in my life, her teachings of hard work, honesty, self-respect, and self-worth, are reflected in the success I have achieved thus far in my life. I imagine someone in your life has done the same for you. Have you recognized them and the contribution they have made to who you are? Have you expressed your gratitude for their guidance and support? Do those individuals who have been the most significant in your journey know what they mean to you? I am a college graduate because of my grandmother, and I assure you, long before she died she knew the significance she held in my life. I hope your beacon of light also knows.

When I entered college, I did so as the first in my family and with enormous expectations from my family, friends, and community. I attended North Carolina State University, a predominantly White college in Raleigh, North Carolina, where I became one of 30,000 students. It was at this point that I began to truly explore my own identity. My involvement with the Society for African American Culture and the African American Heritage Society helped me to move away from my immersed state and more militant attitudes and towards a greater understanding of the world around me. I became involved in a number of other student groups and learned to appreciate people for all that they brought to the table. It was also during this time that I took a critical look at myself and moved away from an existence that revolved around my own self-gratification. It was only after the death of my grandmother and Dwight Willie, a close college friend, that I started to truly appreciate relationships. This was the single most important turning point in my life.

After the death of my grandmother and Dwight, I approached my personal and professional life with passion, conviction, fire, and determination. No problem has ever been too small or too large. Life's journey, filled with its trials and tribulations, has been an ever-changing course from which I have learned greatly and lived fiercely. I have laughed loudly, smiled boastfully, cried profusely, and angered easily, but with each emotion felt, I have also walked away with a lesson learned. The words of Roy Matthews from *Common Fire: Lives of Commitment in a Complex World* (1996) represent best another lesson learned from my grandmother.

> But just as the problems are larger than we, so are the issues, the excuses, the aspirations; just because there are ambiguities and paradoxes, doesn't mean we can't work with them. It is in the very unpredictability of people that my hope lies. We don't know enough to be pessimists. I don't know what else to do other than keep going forward. For me to stop would be a sign of death. So the small victories will have to do. The small victories will have to do. (as cited in Parks Daloz, Keen, Keen, & Daloz Parks, p. 95)



My grandmother inspired me to be more reflective, modeled the importance of living a balanced life, and provided an exemplary model of a woman and leader of great character, fortitude, ethics, and conviction. Though she held no formal titles, degrees, or leadership positions, her intrinsic call to action represented all that I aspired to be. The promise of tomorrow was not in solving mankind's problems, but rather in the dimpled smile of a close friend, the resounding laughter of a small child, and the towering leap of another into action.

I see myself through the eyes of my grandmother, whose eyes are much like Maria's were to Steve Camden in *Leading With Soul: An Uncommon Journey of Spirit* by Lee Bolman and Terrence Deal (1995). My grandmother died on November 12, 1997 during my senior year in college, five days after the death of Dwight. Needless to say, this was one of the most difficult times in my life. I continue to grieve over their deaths, but with the recognition that they suffer no more. I recall very vividly one of my last visits with my grandmother one week prior to her death. I am reminded of this visit each time I read the following passage from Bolman and Deal; a passage that I have read almost weekly since completing the book, because of the solace that it has provided me:

> He missed seeing her eyes. They were so important to him. Intense. Beacons on his journey. Reflections of his soul. He sat and waited. Not for long. She seemed to sense his presence. She smiled broadly when she saw him. Her usual vitality seemed to return. (1995, p. 124)

My grandmother's life and death represent for me truly what it means to lead with soul. I learned a great deal from her in her physical life and I have learned even more in the spiritual awakening that I have experienced since her death.

In my interactions with my family, friends, colleagues, and students I know that I am on a personal but interconnected journey to hope, faith, and heart. I am on a search for something bigger. I am on a mission of giving gifts from the heart that breathe spirit and passion into life. I am on a search for soul, spirit, depth, and meaning in my life. In interacting with anyone and everyone, while I often have a job to do, I must first recognize and connect with the person who has just entered.

Relationships are at the core of who I am both personally and professionally. This value remains deeply rooted in the foundations to which I am connected. I agree with the sage in *Leading With Soul: An Uncommon Journey of Spirit* that my head and hands have taken me as far as they can. It is time to try a new route, a journey of the heart, as my heart is more than just a pump. It is my spiritual center, courage, and compassion. I now live for my grandmother, my friend Dwight Willie, my colleagues, family members, friends, and the countless students who I work for each day who remain faceless. My satisfaction comes not from my own success, but from seeing others achieve.

Dwight Willie was one of the most amazing people I have ever encountered in my life. He was one of the most genuine, thoughtful, and compassionate men I have ever been honored to call a friend. Dwight and I met during our second semester of college. We were both enrolled in a first year experience course designed to assist students with their transition to college. We also played on both an intramural basketball and softball team during our first year of college. Despite our numerous interactions, it was not until our sophomore year that we became more than acquaintances. I was the Resident Advisor on Dwight's floor and had met his roommate Kevin. Kevin and I had begun hanging out and by default I also began hanging out with Dwight. In the course of our friendship, we would continue to play intramural sports together, develop a love for tennis, travel together, worship together, and tattoo our bodies at the hesitance of our parents. I spent countless hours in Dwight and Kevin's room throughout college, as they remained roommates into our senior year. We never lived more than a five minute walk from one another and spent significant amounts of time in conversation. My most memorable college moments all involve Dwight. His presence in my life contributed greatly to my understanding what is truly important to me. He taught me about friendship and brotherhood and I did not know it until he was gone.

Dwight, more than most, represented what is good in this world. He saw the good in all and worked tirelessly in the pursuit of equity, education, and opportunity for those less fortunate than he. My development as a Black man is very much reflective of the many lessons I learned from him. A few months younger than me, Dwight was mature and wise beyond his years. He was my role model and confidante. I was unfortunately only able to realize how much I had truly learned from him after his death. Dwight died on Friday, November 7, 1997. Despite differences in opinion, views, backgrounds, and experiences, we shared a strong bond. Each Friday, our bond was strengthened by the time we spent together playing basketball. Basketball was not just a time for us to run and play, but really was an opportunity for us to talk, catch up, and learn from one another. Dwight opened a door for me that had long been closed. It was through my relationship with him that I truly began to understand what it meant to be a Black man, an area that had been very conflicting for me. Everything about him reinforced my notions of "being Black." It was not about the way I spoke or dressed. It was in fact, something I could not control. It sounds ridiculous to me now, but it was earth shattering then.



Dwight often spoke of taking the road less traveled and being a trailblazer, of living your life not always for yourself, but for the good of humankind. This is evidenced by his decision to major in Environmental Engineering so that he might live professionally as he had chosen to do personally and work to improve the human condition on a level that had gone unnoticed and untouched. From Dwight, I learned the importance of family and friends, of love, and most importantly of recognizing those who have made your life worth living while you have the chance. I live for my parents, siblings, nieces, nephews, friends, and colleagues, who in me, see hope for the future. I live for tomorrow, as I know tomorrow is a brand new day filled with promise.

I have found in leadership a sense of purpose: The capacity to find the values that make risk-taking meaningful. I am no longer swept up by the events that surround me, without maintaining perspective. I approach leadership from a caring place. I am often characterized as a quiet force, largely because of my introverted nature, but I am also assertive, not in a way that paralyzes, but rather in a way that allows for crystallizing experiences for those with whom I interact. I have not always been this way. Courage and compassion I have needed because I have often felt marginalized and oppressed. My introverted nature was of no real help, as it tended to push me further and further away from those who cared about me the most. I feel no differently as an adult, but now possess the tools and resources to unpack my feelings and emotions. Rather than retreating and dealing with my feelings and emotions internally, I am now able to talk through my pain, my hurt, and my anger with those who have caused it.

Greenleaf (1977, 1991) suggested,

> Leaders must have more of an armor of confidence in facing the unknown – more than those who accept their leadership. This is partly anticipation and preparation, but it is also a very firm belief that in the stress of real life situations one can compose oneself in a way that permits the creative process to operate. (p. 28)

As a leader, most often I employ a calming presence in a high stress environment and utilize creative approaches to life's simplest problems. I have never had a job in that sense of the word, as I have always approached my work with the same intensity that I approach all things in my personal life. As such, I have often found difficulty maintaining balance, saying no, and making time for me.

I learned recently from a close friend that when stressed, I retreat inside. When frustrated, I tend to isolate myself from others. This is when the introvert that I am truly begins to manifest itself. I need time to process and think so that I might better understand my true feelings, beliefs, and emotions; yet another lesson learned under my grandmother's tutelage. She was a woman of great stature, and great strength, and it is this image of her that I hold of all women and to which I aspire in my own life. It is from her that I garnered my caring and intuitive nature, my awareness, and creativity. The best parts of my grandmother are very much alive in me. I am now attempting to be a beacon of light for those I encounter, as she was for me.

It was also from my grandmother that I learned what it means to be a transformational leader. Throughout my life, she served as a constant model of great character, motivation, and intellect. It is because of her that I desire to serve as a coach and a mentor to those whom I encounter. Coleman (2002) defines transformational leadership as encompassing the four 'I's: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. The transformational leader models behavior and acts as a role model, encourages the development of each person, and acts as a coach or mentor. In my personal and professional dealings, my approach is consistent with my desire to be an agent of social change. It is reflective of my desire to stimulate further thought and to bring about a fresh new perspective. It is indicative of my desire to inspire in others what has been inspired in me. My life's goal is to impact my piece of the world in the best way that I can, so that those whom I encounter might be impacted and those who come after me might have an easier road to tow. It is to this mission and countless others that I have committed my life.

The courage that I have exhibited over the course of my life and even today as I work in higher education has not been without cost. It has often pulled me away from my roots and those that matter most to me. The road that I now travel has infinite possibilities, but I struggle mostly because there is no clear end in sight. I do not now have, nor in the recent past had, any visions of grandeur. I approach life and leadership realistically, with the knowledge that while I maintain some control over the direction that my life takes, there are many unknowns that are bound to impact me along the way. I thank my grandmother for the courage she modeled, as it has informed many decisions along my journey.

It was from my grandmother that my first lessons on leadership were learned. She was a true servant to all and the matriarch of my family, and I have for my entire life tried to emulate her strength, courage, and veracious nature. From the beginning, I have attempted to serve others with the recognition that I come from a great and mighty ancestry. Rosalyn Williams in speaking of her rise to leadership in *Common Fire: Lives of Commitment in a Complex World* stated that:

> One of the gifts of blackness is being connected to a sense of history, so that one's life isn't just for today, but it's for the hundreds of years that went before and the hundreds of years that come after…all those people paid a terrific price so that I can have the opportunities I have…When you have that sense of lineage; it's really powerful. (Parks Daloz, et al. p. 98)



From my grandmother, I learned that I had a story worth sharing. It has been my goal from the beginning to inspire others into action.

I believe it to be my personal responsibility to share my story with students through my work. Today, as the Associate Director of Residential Life for Residential Education at the University of Vermont, I continue on my journey as both a teacher and a student, seeking to learn and to be educated. I view learning as both a noun and a verb, active and passive, and reflective of both an outcome and process of education. It is a reflection of my experiences and interactions. It includes the acquisition of new knowledge and skills, and the sharing of that knowledge and skills with others. It is a reflection of different people, environments, and situations. Learning is simply experience. The classroom serves as the greatest catalyst for learning in that it provides for the free expression of ideas in an environment characterized by diversity in experience. It is however the co-curricular experience outside of the classroom that provides me with the opportunity to impact students' lives. In my daily interactions, I work first to connect with my students. It is important that I get to know them, but also that I allow them that same opportunity. I have as much to learn as I have to teach. I expect that my work in Student Affairs will be based on reciprocity. In fact, I imagine that I will learn far more than I will ever give. It is for this reason that I most value my work in higher education.

As a Student Affairs leader in higher education, I investigate and understand the intricacies of organizational development and change. I continue building upon my graduate education from North Carolina State University and my years of full-time work experience. I seek an opportunity for self-reflection and assessment of my personal knowledge, an understanding of educational history, philosophy, and debate, and the opportunity to participate in scholarly research relevant to the student experience. Don Sawyer (2002), a former colleague and my best friend, in giving a keynote speech at the Student of Color Leadership Retreat at Syracuse University closed by quoting John Gardner, a proliferate writer in the area of leadership:

> All too often, on the long road up, young leaders become 'servants of what is rather than shapers of what might be.' In the long process of learning how the system works they are rewarded for playing within the intricate structure of existing rules. By the time they reach the top, they are very likely to be prisoners of the structure. This is not all bad; every vital system must reaffirm itself, but no system can stay vital for long unless some of its leaders remain sufficiently independent to help it change and grow.

I am moved by Gardner's words because in many ways it represents a call to action.

He suggests that while rules exist, they may be altered to reflect the changing needs of the group. I refuse to be a prisoner of a system that was not made for me or structured in a way that supports my growth and development. From Gardner's words I gained a revitalized sense of purpose.

"Live dangerously by dreaming with your eyes open." These are words that will forever move me. Living dangerously is my state of being. It was represented in my pursuit of higher education. It is represented in my mere existence as a Black man in a world that was not designed with me in mind. Living dangerously means looking forward with a realistic eye, seeing what is actual and what is desired. It means living in this space, in this time, and working to influence change in my small corner of the world. Living dangerously means resisting the temptation of living life for self-gratification. It means sharing my limited resources with those who are not as fortunate as I or with those against whom I compete. Living dangerously means recognizing the impact of my existence and living my life accordingly. It means dreaming of the infinite possibilities and believing in their ability to come true. Living dangerously, as I view it, is nicely summed up in the poetic words of Anthony Moore, as recorded in *Chicken Soup for the African American Soul* (Canfield, Hansen, Nichols & Joyner, 1999).

> I am the brown clay God scooped from the sand. He molded me, then blessed me, with his own two hands. He breathed life into my lungs and sat upon the land. I am God's finest creation and he called me man. I am the beginning of humanity, intelligent and strong. My life will be full, and my days will be long. My mind is the birthplace of philosophy and mathematics, position of stars, motions of planets, I know the schematics. I am the creator of civilization and master of architectural design. Knowledge, understanding and wisdom flow from my mind.
>
> In my heart pumps the rich blood of kings and queens. I am the descendent of those who knew all things. Adam and Eve, Noah, Moses, and Abraham, The blessed Mohammad, are just a part of who I am. Formed in the womb of God's most perfect gift, the black woman, with her perfect skin, full lips and hips. The angels look down while doing protective duty, and secretly wished they possessed beauty. I am her child, her father, her brother, her lover. God is the only thing I can place above her. I am the past. I am the present. I am the future.
>
> I am the beginning. I am the end. I am what moves you. I am only beginning to understand truly who I am. I am God's glory and God's love. I am the Black man. (pp. 223-224)

In my simplest form, I am a Black man. Long before I knew anything else about myself, I knew this simple truth. I am a Black man with southern roots with a hint of a southern drawl, but unequivocally a Black man. Beverly Daniel Tatum



(1997) suggested:

> The concept of identity is a complex one, shaped by individual characteristics, family dynamics, historical factors, and social and political contexts. Who am I? The answer depends in large part on who the world around me says I am. Who do my parents say I am? Who do my peers say I am? What message is reflected back to me in the faces and voices of my teachers, my neighbors, store clerks? What do I learn from the media about myself? How am I represented in the cultural images around me? Or am I missing from the picture altogether? (p. 18)

I am who I am and that is who I forever will be; sometimes more, sometimes less, but not what you see. I am a Black man. Who are you?

On my journey, I have found direction, definition, and destiny. It was in the one place I never looked; within me. I will never be invisible again. I will never be silenced or without voice again. I am truly on my journey now. I hope you will join me on a journey of your own. I invite you to live dangerously, to dream, to lead with soul, to find direction, definition, destiny and meaning in the little things. I did, and I know you will, too.

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# NEW CONNECTIONS

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Each year, members of the graduating HESA class write original papers in the form of a comprehensive exam in order to meet graduation requirements. These papers take the form of original research, scholarly personal narratives, literature reviews, and argumentative essays. The Full Board of *The Vermont Connection* is pleased to share topics from the Class of 2007, along with the "New Connections" they have made following their graduation. What follows is the current placement of members of the Class of 2007, followed by the title of their comprehensive exam and an abstract. Please feel free to contact the authors if you would like more information about their topic.

**Adam-Jon Aparicio**
Resident Director
University of California, Santa Barbara

### *A Past Revisited: Empowerment Through Self Reflection*

Throughout my almost two years of experience in graduate school I have discovered many new aspects about myself. I have experienced challenge, change, drama, pain, frustration, joy, and perspective by interacting with others within my program as well as my work environments. The following Scholarly Personal Narrative will examine several sequences in which I explore who I am at the core and the role it has taken as I navigate my professional life as a higher education and student affairs educator.

**Raja G. Bhattar**
Assistant Director of Diversity Affairs
University of Redlands

### *The New Raja Yoga: What Hinduism Has Taught Me About Life, Student Affairs, and Myself*

What is the relationship between Hinduism and Student Affairs? Being raised in a conservative Hindu family, my spiritual and religious beliefs play an active role in my daily life. As I complete my graduate studies and embark on my first job search in Student Affairs, I will reflect on my values and how they have directed me to this line of work and what my religion has taught me about life, Student Affairs, and myself. Written in the Scholarly Personal Narrative (SPN) style, I reflect on significant events, people, and scriptures that have helped me create my identity. Some implications for the field of Student Affairs are provided.

**Jonathan Bove**
National Assistant Director, Residence Life
Campus Advantage

### *Framing Her Face: A Phenomenological Examination of Social Networking Web Site Use Among Undergraduate Women*

For years, student affairs research has described how women differ in their collegiate development from men. Concurrently, communications research has examined the stories that the media tell about women in our society – stories told and crafted almost exclusively by men and about women. This research, as told through the voices of six undergraduate women, attempts to bridge these fields of research in the light of emergent media. Specifically, this research will consider the stories these undergraduate women tell about themselves on social networking Web sites, through both text and image, and their motivations for using such sites.



**Akirah Bradley**
Residence Director/Student Services Coordinator
Semester at Sea

### *Listen to Our Reality: Experiences of Racism, Prejudice, and Bias in the Classroom*

In this study I explore the climate for students of color in the classroom setting at a university located in Northern New England. This research shines light on the experiences of six students of color. Phenomenological interviews were conducted which revealed the specific acts of racism, prejudice, and bias in the classroom. Throughout this study themes were developed based on the students' perceptions of climate. Additionally, this study implores institutions to validate the voices of students of color with one powerful institutional response.

**Randy D. Brown, Jr.**
Student Program Coordinator, University Housing
Florida State University

### *Social Justice Tempered With Mercy*

**Jessica Belue Buckley**
Hall Director
Georgetown University

### *Sensitive Footwork: Edgar Shannon's Leadership at the University of Virginia*

Edgar F. Shannon was president of the University of Virginia from 1959-1974. During this era, students at Virginia were fighting in support of co-education, integration, and enhanced voice. Concurrently, Shannon was serving many stakeholders, some who disagreed on the direction of the university and the degree to which Shannon should listen to the reverberating demands of students.

This ethnographic case study seeks to examine how Shannon succeeded during such turbulent times. Interviews with community members, transcriptions of interviews with Shannon, and university archives were studied. Findings included that Shannon's cautious progressivism, adherence to the academic bottom line of the university, belief in the university's service to the state, concern for political collaboration, and personal investment all contributed to Shannon's successful leadership at the university.

**Kristen Crepezzi**
Area Coordinator
Willamette University

### *Navigating Space, Sexuality, and Survival in College: Fat Women Speak*

The fat identity is one that has yet to be explored in a college context. Fat women on college campuses are subject to the same stereotypical and hateful attitudes about being fat that are present in United States society at large, as evidenced by the current literature. The climate on campus does not shield them from popular notions and assumptions about fatness. In order to better understand and serve fat college women, interviews with three women provide a glimpse into the thoughts, emotions, and perspectives of their unique lives on campus.

**Dara L. Forsthoffer**
Associate Director, Alumni Relations
Northeastern University

### *Writing Through White Racial Identity Development: One Higher Education Student's Reflective Journey Through Whiteness to View the World Through New Eyes*

This Scholarly Personal Narrative will explore my White racial identity development. Through this reflective mode of writing, I incorporate research into the narrative of my life as I look back on my development over the past year and a half of graduate school. After living through this experience, I offer recommendations to the field of Higher Education and Student Affairs to incite efforts to help White students learn about their racial identity development and to help dismantle racism.



**Jennifer Granger**
Assistant Director of Student Activities
Lasell College

### *Death and Illness Will Interfere: Helping College Students to Cope With Severe Family Tragedies*

During the past year, my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer, my Auntie Helen passed way, and I ended a friendship with one of my best friends. The purpose of this Scholarly Personal Narrative comprehensive paper is to explore and examine my journey through these experiences. Through my narrative, I will provide insight for student affairs professionals to help their students cope with loss, grief, and family tragedy. I want to also write my story to educate people about breast cancer, both the pain that comes with it and what we can do to help our students and ourselves as we grieve.

**Jian Guan**
Hall Coordinator, Honors Halls
University of Texas at Austin

### *Experience is Wealth: One International Graduate Student's Comprehension Through His Development in the West*

I intend to utilize my experience as an international student in order to advise other students on how to best deal with an integrating into a new culture and experiencing Quarterlife crisis. Through the use of Scholarly Personal Narrative writing, I will also advise student affairs professionals about how to best reach international students facing such difficulties and crises. This paper uses some of Arthur Chickering's Seven Vectors in order to outline how an international student can be supported through his and her development. I will connect my story and experiences to student affairs development theory in order to enable student affairs professionals to appreciate the importance of becoming global citizens and to enable them to best help international students.

**Jonathan G. Hopkins**
Development and Alumni Relations
The University of Vermont

### *Higher Education Odyssey: The Journey to HESA and the Significance of External Influences for "Non-Traditional" Graduate Students*

The biggest factor that influences my decision-making is a belief in prioritizing my family above all else. This comprehensive paper addresses how this belief transplanted me from Denver, Colorado to Burlington, Vermont, and how it has guided my decision-making throughout my graduate experience. Family, at least in my case, can simultaneously be both the source of strength *and* a barrier to complete immersion in a graduate program. Graduate school has been a *part* of my life, but it has not been my *entire* life during the past two years. I have not always felt that this point of view is welcome, especially in a student affairs program. Very few people seem to realize the challenges graduate students with partners and children face when returning to school. Students and faculty who can visibly appreciate the less-traditional student experience, through pedagogy and andragogy and thoughtful planning of co-curricular activities and events, have the potential to tremendously enhance the engagement and morale of students from this small but important population.

**Chong Sun Kim**
Residence Director
Northeastern University

### *Drawing out the Personal Stories of First Generation, Working Class Students in Epistolary Writing*

For this Scholarly Personal Narrative a letter format was chosen. A letter is a form of epistolary writing. By definition, "a letter is a written message from one person to another. The role of letters in communication has changed significantly since the 19th century. Historically, letters were the only reliable means of communication between two persons in different locations" (Guralnik, 1972, p. 811). As communication technology has diversified, letters have become less important as routine communication. With the increased use of e-mail, telephone, facsimile, and other quicker means of communication, letters are not as frequently used. Letters however, are useful in that they provide something that other means of communication cannot. Writing letters allows us to enter the mind of the writer so that we can discover their feelings and emotions and often times reveals their personalities. When individuals use verbal communication, misunderstandings can frequently occur. Each individual hears the same information differently. What we hear is colored by our expectations, personal experiences, and possibly our cultural influences. In using letters as a form of communication, we can clarify our own individual understanding of a conversation or our own thoughts. Louise Z. Smith (quoted by Nash) explains that there are "advantages of 'writing ourselves' a series of letters to significant others in our lives. She goes as far as to urge teachers to set up "epistolary symposia" in their seminars as a way of making closer personal contact with their students. and as a way to get them closer to the personal meaning of what they are reading and talking about with one another" (Nash, 2004, p. 29). This Scholarly Personal Narrative explores the experiences of a first generation, working class, Asian American woman in the academy. A letter format was chosen to express the challenges, struggles, and successes to each individual who has impacted this practitioner's experiences in higher education. This narrative addresses ways in which Student Affairs professionals can identify and better support students who have multiple identities and challenges achieve success in the academy.



**Erin K. Miller**
Admissions Officer, Residence Hall Director
Macalester College

### *Uncovering Experience, Inspiring Change: Student Experiences in a Short-Term Diversity Course*

Many college students today attend institutions that strive to promote and achieve the goals of diversity and multiculturalism; these institutions endeavor to graduate students who are culturally competent and prepared to meet the demands of life in a diverse world. Despite these attempts, a significant number of students leave college each year having developed neither an understanding of privilege nor a strong connection to social justice work. What distinguishes students who become conscious of systems of oppression during college from those who do not? How do faculty and student affairs practitioners unite to support them on this journey? This study explores the racial identity development of four college students as it relates to their experiences in a required, short-term diversity course. Combining racial identity development theory and thematic analysis of students' thoughts, feelings, and actions, the study aims to better equip student affairs professionals in fostering the development of more socially-aware, action-oriented college students.

**Garrett J. Naiman**
Assistant Director for Academic Enrichment
University of California, Berkeley

### *Street Corners to Ivory Towers: Hip-Hop's Role in the Academy*

**Jean Pak**
Assistant Director of Multicultural Affairs
Fordham University

### *Reflections on the Academy and Identity: A Narrative of My Journey Abroad*

As an Asian American womyn, I struggle to find compassion for myself because I never felt good enough for the institution. During these times, I questioned my own presence in the field of higher education and my potential to create and effect change. My journey abroad has helped me carve the space to reflect, dialogue, and come to a place of self-love. This is a collection of stories reflecting on my travels to Central America and the South Pacific and how it has helped me reconcile these dilemmas. Thus, higher education can utilize and support short-term abroad programs as a means for understanding how to model change and facilitate learning that is grounded in many histories and traditions.

**Christopher Purcell**
Program Coordinator, Center for LGBT Life
Duke University

### *The Enemy Within: Understanding and Supporting Students Battling Internalized Homophobia*

In student affairs practice, we are often conscious to make efforts to protect lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) individuals from harassment, discrimination, and overt instances of homophobia. In addition, it is vital to remember that each of us in society is taught homophobia, even those who identify as LGB. Bohan (1996) defines internalized homophobia as "the incorporation by LGB individuals themselves of the culture's vilification of gay, lesbian, and bisexual identities" (p. 94). Understanding internalized homophobia, its impact on identity development, and related issues, can prepare student affairs professionals for working with struggling LGB students. Drawing from both my personal narrative and scholarly work, strategies for working with students struggling with issues of internalized homophobia will be presented.



**Gabriel Reif**
Assistant Director of Judicial Affairs
Binghamton University

### *Higher Education's Missing Link: Examining the Gap between Academic and Student Affairs and Implications for Students*

With the expansion of higher education in the United States around the turn of the 20th century, student affairs became an integral part of college and universities. While student affairs professionals enhanced co-curricular opportunities and promoted student development beyond the classroom, faculty focused on scholarship and formal curricular education. Unfortunately, student and academic affairs grew in divergent directions and dissimilarities have led to a rift between the academic and co-curricular experiences of college students. Today, institutions must address this issue by fostering partnerships between academic and student affairs, which will lead to a more holistic educational and developmental experience for students.

**Alissa B. Strong**
Career Counselor/Alumni Programs Coordinator
The University of Vermont

### *Deepening Graduate Student-Learning: Bringing Reflective Practice into a Higher Education Program*

This Scholarly Personal Narrative is a culmination of my last few years of learning. I explore my stories in order to demonstrate how reflection has played an integral part of my learning experience, especially in the Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration (HESA) graduate program. By sharing my moments of thoughtful, challenging, invigorating and personal insight, I hope to show to my readers how much reflection can deepen and breathe new life into one's professional work. I will draw connections between service-learning pedagogy and what I call graduate student-learning, to emphasize the importance of reflection in one's graduate experience.

In sharing this manuscript, I hope to encourage Student Affairs professionals to seek venues for reflection and to take the time to ask how they bring their genuine selves into their work. As an evolving field that often provides students with direction and guidance, opportunities for meaning-making, and the discovery of new perspectives, I still wonder if we are choosing to harvest this same growth as professionals. I wil explore personal experiences as well as supporting scholarship to re-examine how reflection within the HESA graduate program happens now, and how it can be enhanced in the future.

**Nathaniel A. Victoria**
Coordinator, Special Projects
NASPA

### *Illuminating the Shadows: Uncovering Conflicting Identities Through Higher Education*

This scholarly personal narrative (SPN) presents the author's experiences as a gay, Catholic, Filipino American in a heterosexual, homophobic, White society. By exploring his sexuality, religion, ethnicity, and environment during his 19 years of education, he offers his method of achieving authenticity-celebrating his identities in a supportive environment regardless of what others say. A traditional paper would not capture fully the impact of scholarship used, so he offers an experience of both print and video. He attempts to maintain an accurate portrayal of his voice by using his cohort group throughout and making himself the protagonist. The SPN concludes with recommendations to higher education on dealing with the expression and integration of conflicting identities.

**James M. Willette**
Area Coordinator
Champlain College

### *Spiritual Revolution; Spiritual Evolution: Supporting Students' Quests for Meaning Through Holistic Higher Education*

Religion and spirituality are centrally important in the lives of many, if not most, American college and university students. For too long, college faculty, higher education administrators, and student affairs professionals have fearfully ignored what has become the taboo subject of religion and spirituality in higher education. In this comprehensive examination, I explore religious and spiritual identity on college campuses and emphasize the importance of fostering religio-spiritual identity development in college and university students. I introduce a new model, called a Fluid Lens, to better understand the process of human religio-spiritual meaning-making. Finally, I discuss implications for student affairs professionals in higher education, emphasizing ways in which student affairs professionals can foster and encourage religio-spiritual identity development and meaning-making on their own college and university campuses.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

As we acknowledge the 29th year of *The Vermont Connection*, let us also acknowledge the legacy this journal has left in the Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration (HESA) Program at the University of Vermont, as well as within the student affairs community as a whole. It is an honor and a pleasure to join the 2007-2008 Editorial Board in recognizing the supportive network we have come to know as *The Vermont Connection*.

Each year, current students in the HESA Program at the University of Vermont gather their energy, creativity, leadership, and mentorship, and take on the immense task of developing a student affairs journal that speaks to the community of higher education and student affairs professionals. They work tirelessly to solicit articles to diversify the journal with various forms of research and scholarly writing, introduce professional development sessions to strengthen their character as rising professionals, and seize opportune moments to reconnect with alumni and friends from UVM's HESA family. However, they would not and could not imagine any of this without the vision of past HESA students, faculty, and friends who have established a legacy of professionalism, relationship building, and innovative practices from which this journal continues to benefit.

*The Vermont Connection* has evolved beautifully, serving over 1,200 alumni and friends, while also providing a cohesive experience for the current students within the program. This journal is indicative of the professionals UVM's HESA Program graduates each year, and plays a prominent role with the recruitment of students who are at our doorstep each year awaiting the opportunity to become a part of the HESA family.

*Nicholas E. Negrete graduated from the Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration program in 2006 and currently serves as the Assistant Director for the African, Latino, Asian, and Native American (ALANA) Student Center at the University of Vermont.*



*The Vermont Connection* is not just a journal enabling our current HESA students to develop personally and professionally. It is a journal that honors the community we have all worked to build and the community we seek to engage at any given moment. Furthermore, the longevity of this journal signifies the commitment to the community we lovingly know as HESA.

On behalf of the 2007-2008 Editorial Board, I would like to extend our sincere gratitude for the continuous support you have all provided in order for this journal and this community to be possible. May the legacy continue, and may we look forward to many more years of *The Vermont Connection*.

Warmest Regards,

Nick Negrete '06
Assistant Director, ALANA Student Center
University of Vermont

The Editorial Board of *The Vermont Connection* would like to thank the following individuals who contributed to our successful fundraising year. Our alumni and friends are responsible for the continued vitality and success of our efforts.

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## Style Guidelines

Manuscripts must be clear, concise, and interesting with a well-organized development of ideas. The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Fifth Edition* (2001) should be followed for reference style and general guidelines.

- Double space all material, including references, quotations, tables, and figures. Leave extra space above and below subheadings and allow generous margins (at least one-inch margins).
- Because manuscripts are processed through an anonymous review system, they should contain no clues to the author's identity or institutional affiliation (with the exception of a separate title page as outlined in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Fifth Edition).* Where appropriate, institutional identification will be inserted after acceptance of the manuscript.
- Research manuscripts should total no more than fifteen (15) double-spaced, typewritten pages (approximately 3,000 words) including references, figures, and tables. Shorter articles are accepted and encouraged.
- Original research (literary, qualitative, quantitative, or scholarly personal narrative) is encouraged. All such work should be applicable to the higher education and student affairs professions.
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- Authors are responsible for the accuracy of all references, quotations, tables, and figures. Authors should make every effort to ensure that such items are complete and correct.

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- Never submit manuscripts that have been previously published or are currently under consideration for publication.
- Material should be submitted electronically only; visit *The Vermont Connection* website for more information.
- It is imperative for authors to adhere to all dates outlined in the Call for Articles.

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