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- 7 Editor's Note
HESA: Privilege, Transition, and Support
Lorri Anne Alvarado

Articles

- 10 Dispelling the Meritocracy Myth: Lessons for Higher Education
and Student Affairs Educators
Lorri Anne Alvarado
- 21 Universal Instructional Design: Tools for Creating an Inclusive
Educational Experience
Stacey Banfield-Hardaway
- 29 Modern Colonialism in African Education: The Wave of
Foreign Investment in Sub-Saharan Africa
Amarildo Barbosa
- 37 The Influence of Society on Queer Identity Development and
Classification
Kirsten E. Fricke
- 46 First-Generation College Students: How Co-Curricular Involvement
Can Assist with Success
Valerie Garcia
- 53 The Role of Critical Race Theory in Higher Education
Payne Hiraldo
- 60 Political, Not Partisan: Service-Learning as Social Justice
Education
Laura E. Megivern
- 72 Challenging the Monolithic Asian American Identity on
Campus: A Context for Working With South Asian American
Students
Viraj Patel

- 82 Art as Activism and Education: Creating Venues for Student
Involvement and Social Justice Education Utilizing Augusto
Boal's Theater of the Oppressed
Katelyn Sadler
- 96 Where Do We Belong? Addressing the Needs of Transgender
Students in Higher Education
Wendy Schneider
- 107 Tradition Today: How Student Affairs Professionals Can
Strengthen and Preserve Campus Traditions
Matthew J. Van Jura

The Moral Conversation:

*Think Globally, Act Locally, Care Personally; Connecting Personal
and Professional Discoveries in Student Affairs.*

- 118 Two Student Affairs Professionals' Journeys to (Un)Cover
Joshua Gonzalez & Khristian Kemp-DeLisser
- 128 The New Multiracial Student: Where Do We Start?
Jackie Hyman
- 136 Transnational Student Identity Development through the
Cosmopolite Lens: Benefits and Challenges of Straddling
Cultures
Jennifer "J.J." Jang
- 147 The Model Minority Student: Asian American Students and
the Relationships Between Acculturation to Western Values,
Family Pressures, and Mental Health Concerns
Nathan Panelo
- 156 Breaking the Silence: Examining Personal Preparedness of
Supporting Students Living with HIV/AIDS
Christopher Purcell
- 164 The Invisibles: Reparative Forms of Scholarly Expression
Mon'que Wright

Reflections

- 167 A Tribute to Excellence
Jackie M. Gribbons

169	Looking Back at 30 years...What I Have Learned <i>Michael Dunn</i>
171	The Gift of Error <i>Kristi Jackson</i>
173	Staying Open to Transformation <i>Paula Myers</i>
176	The Kenneth P. Saurman Award The Tao of Student Affairs: Ruminations of a First-Time Hall Director <i>Laurel Dreher</i>
182	The Final Word TVC: Getting Older and Getting Better <i>Deborah E. Hunter</i>
185	New Connections
194	Acknowledgements <i>Tricia Rascon & Alissa B. Strong</i>
196	Donors
199	Guidelines for Authors



EDITOR'S NOTE

HESA:

Privilege, Transition, and Support

Over the past few years of my burgeoning student affairs professional career, I have noticed how much “support” is emphasized in our field. Whether it is supporting (and challenging) our students, colleagues, or ourselves, we are in a helping profession where giving and receiving support is incredibly important. How do we learn when, how, and what support is needed?

At the beginning of our Capstone course entitled, “Ethics, Values, and Meaning Making in Higher Education,” Robert Nash looked around the quiet room and noted how much of a privilege it was for us to be able to sit in a classroom and discuss such topics. There is so much chaos going on in the world and in our lives, while we temporarily put our lives on pause (at least we try) to be fully present and engaged in our coursework. In class, I took a deep breath and pushed my to-do lists, worries, and outside thoughts aside. It was the first time I felt like it really hit me: we were in our last HESA class together as a cohort.

Reflecting while writing my comps, *TVC* article, and this Executive Editor's Note, looking through pictures, job searching, and being in the Capstone class, I have realized how it has been an absolute privilege to be in HESA. If you were to ask alumni/ae and current students about what the HESA program means to them, you would hear a different answer from each individual. Yet I believe every person would agree that they appreciate(d) the opportunity to be paraprofessionals: to ask questions, make mistakes, and practice skills (like support) during this unique transition point in their lives.

Nancy Schlossberg's “Transition Theory” (1981) cited the need for a supportive environment to foster development during transition. The HESA faculty, student affairs staff, and all other members of our community contribute to the program's uniqueness and intimately supportive nature, while providing a challenging and extremely rewarding experience. We are able to see wonderful models of student affairs educators, practice these skills with our students, colleagues, and cohorts, and have a better understanding of what we need in order to support ourselves.

For the 30th Anniversary of *The Vermont Connection*, we wanted this volume to reflect on the past 30 years, gain an appreciation for where we are now, and to envision our presence in the future. The following articles are exemplary examples of the quality of our program and breadth of interests and talents of current and past HESA students. From gaining a better understanding of the identities of our students, to a deeper examination of campus culture and the institution of higher education, *TVC* continues to be a venue in which to showcase our abilities and an opportunity to learn more about our field from our colleagues. Reflections from *TVC*'s first, 10th anniversary, and 20th anniversary editors and our esteemed Jackie Gribbons were invited to give context to how far we have come and lessons they have learned along the way. I hope that *TVC* lives on to educate and show the world what we are capable of for several more decades.

I would like to thank our dedicated Editorial Board who powered through the planning and implementing our fundraising, production week, and receptions. It is because of them and our Full Board, who spent many nights editing, that you are able to view and hold this thick journal in your hands. I appreciate that we remained optimistic, always laughing, and supportive throughout; I feel so much closer to each of you after this experience and will never forget the time we have spent together. I am very grateful for our staff advisors, Tricia Rascon '06 and Alissa Strong '07, who enthusiastically invested so much time and effort throughout the year. Thank you to our faculty advisor, Deb Hunter, who shared her time and wisdom and provided much needed historical context. Lastly, thank you to our donors and far-reaching Vermont Connection; it is because of you that this journal has its scholarly reputation and longevity. This journal and our national connection are only possible through the support of our HESA community. Please remember to be appreciative of the present and find and give support whenever you can.

Happy 30th Birthday, *TVC*!

Lorri Anne Alvarado



ARTICLES

Dispelling the Meritocracy Myth: Lessons for Higher Education and Student Affairs Educators

Lorri Anne Alvarado

“Just work hard and you will succeed.” This phrase and others like it represent the belief in meritocracy, which is repeated and perpetuated in our society by role models, friends, government, media, and ourselves. The myth of meritocracy is a part of the utopian belief in the American Dream, which continues to be an active narrative in Americans’ lives that many do not realize is simply a dream and not based on reality. As educators, how do we confront the meritocracy narrative and better understand how it affects our work and our impact on students? This article updates professionals on current literature and the myth’s effect on higher education. Recommendations on how to challenge and change our views on meritocracy are offered for higher education and student affairs educators.

The United States (referred to as America for the purposes of this article) is seen as the “land of opportunity.” Anyone who comes here has the opportunity to “pull themselves up by their bootstraps” and succeed as long as they work hard and persevere; you get out as much as you put in. This belief is one aspect of the American Dream, the belief that anyone in the United States has the equal opportunity for prosperity. Those who are most worthy of America’s bounty are the meritorious. This social ideal promulgates the belief that, “those who are the most talented, the hardest working, and the most virtuous get and should get the most rewards” (McNamee & Miller Jr., 2009, p. 4). Contrary to widespread societal belief, American society is not a meritocratic system, but continues to be presented as one. It is my hope to make our individual meritocratic beliefs more visible, especially the tenet of hard work, and display how these beliefs affect our work as higher education and student affairs educators.

This article will summarize the roots of the idea of hard work within meritocracy and the American Dream as a determining factor in one’s future and dispel the

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myths that are associated with those ideas, especially in higher education. The article will conclude with recommendations for higher education and student affairs educators to prevent the myth of meritocracy from perpetuating within our institution and with our work with students.

The American Dream

The reason they call it the American Dream is because you have to be asleep to believe it.

—George Carlin (2005)

The term American Dream was first used in James Truslow Adams' 1931 best-selling book, *The Epic of America*. Adams defined the concept as “the dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for every man, with opportunity for each according to his ability or achievement” (p. 404). This term is rooted in the United States' history as a country of immigrants, and characterizes the hopes of those immigrants who escaped countries that were ruled by money and family aristocracies, to pursue individual freedom, and the chance to succeed in the New World.

What does the American Dream entail? Hochschild (1995) identified four tenets:

1. Everyone regardless of origin or status can attain the American Dream (Who)
2. The American Dream is a hopefulness for success (What)
3. The American Dream is possible through actions that are under the individual's direct control (How)
4. Because of the associations of success and virtue the American Dream comes true (Why)

These tenets are deeply ingrained in the American consciousness. It is most often agreed that people are rewarded for intelligence, skill, and effort. In other words, the hardest working, smartest, and most talented people will succeed in life; these people have the merit and deserve to fulfill the Dream.

Meritocracy

Meritocracy was first used in Michael Young's book *Rise of the Meritocracy* (1958). In the book, Young described a society where those at the top of the system ruled autocratically with a sense of righteous entitlement while those at the bottom of the system were incapable of protecting themselves against the abuses leveled by the merit elite above. Instead of a fair and enlightened society, the meritocracy was cruel and ruthless. This original meaning has evolved to a radically different interpretation. Today, meritocracy is often used with a positive connotation to

describe a social system that allows people to achieve success proportionate to their talents and abilities, as opposed to one in which social class or wealth is the controlling factor. Young's book was intended to be a satire on the basis of a society where people understood, good or bad, they were getting what they deserved, meaning their status was *merited*. In contrast, today's interpretation refers to the other definition of merit that means a person's ability and achievement.

American society functions closely with the ideal of the American Dream and meritocracy. Meritocracy answers the question of who and how one achieves the American Dream. According to the American Dream ideology, America is a land of limitless opportunity in which individuals can achieve as much as their own merit allows. Merit is generally defined as a combination of factors including "innate abilities, working hard, having the right attitude, and having high moral character and integrity" (McNamee & Miller Jr., 2004, para. 1). If a person possesses these qualities and works hard, they will be successful. "Americans not only tend to think [meritocracy] is how the system should work, but most Americans also think that is how the system does work" (Ladd, 1994). This article will focus on the aspect of hard work and its association with success. However, as this article will go on to examine, this assumption is not always true.

Hard Work

Pull yourself up by your bootstraps.

— Unknown author, well-known American idiom

Hard work is seen as a powerful factor in meritocracy and the third tenet of how individuals achieve the American Dream. In the formula of getting ahead, hard work is prominently seen as a major factor in Americans' minds (New York Times, 2005). National surveys have found that hard work consistently scores among the top three factors necessary for success, "usually alternating between the first and second ranks with education and knowing the right people as its closest competitors" (McNamee & Miller Jr., 2009, p. 38). Americans agree knowingly and approvingly whenever the importance of hard work is mentioned in association with the likelihood of success. About 77% of Americans believe that hard work is often or very often the reason why people are rich in America (Longoria, 2009). But what does working hard really mean?

As Barbara Ehrenreich (2001) found when she spent a year doing menial jobs in a participant observation study, often the hardest working Americans are those who get paid the least. Whether it is the waitress, secretary, house painter, construction worker, or janitor, these individuals represent the foundation of the American *working class*. The hard work that is associated with success is the effort individuals place in creating a future for themselves, but additional hard work of

their kind, is unlikely to result in any significant upward social mobility.

Hochschild (1995) and McNamee and Miller Jr. (2009) identified that in meritocracy, hard work is the main aspect an individual has control over. In our individualistic society, when people are asked to state their reason(s) for success, they almost always provide an individualistic answer. People claim they deserve their success because they work hard. Yet, “deservedness is not equivalent to hard work, and it has been repeatedly shown, that many people who work hard are not especially successful” (McNamee & Miller Jr., p. 39).

Side Effects of the Meritocracy Myth

Young (1958) examined the harsh side effects of meritocracy. For some, there is the erosion of the sense of self-worth for those at the bottom of society, as defined by the individual. When these people believe that their current status in society is due to their lack of talent or hard work, they blame themselves. “They can easily become demoralized by being looked down on so woundingly by people who have done well for themselves ... No underclass has ever been left as morally naked as that” (Young, 2001, para. 12-13).

As Paulo Freire (1970) explained in *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, the internalization of the oppressor’s opinions, one of the inherent elements of meritocracy, causes their self-depreciation. They “so often hear that they’re good for nothing, know nothing, and are incapable of learning anything—that they are sick, lazy, and unproductive—that in the end they become convinced of their own unfitness” (para. 59). This can also be applied to those that are working toward achieving their ideal American Dream and not quite getting as far as they aspire to; this process can also cause them to doubt their self-worth and decrease their self-confidence. To an extreme, the pressure to achieve in combination with self-depreciation can lead to generalized anxiety disorder and/or depression, especially in late adolescence (Harter, 1993; Valas, 1999; Wilburn & Smith, 2005).

Most Americans may not be aware of their own value conflicts when issues of merit are raised. A review of the theoretical literature shows that there are many values that come into direct conflict when one thinks about meritocracy. Longoria (2009) stated several examples of conflicts that may come up:

Working for what one has may conflict with rewarding intelligent people because natural intelligence is not earned. Giving everyone an equal opportunity may conflict with the notion that parents should favor their own children over the children of others. Favoring the intelligent and hardworking will create an unequal society and, if one supports genetic superiority arguments, lead to a caste system without social mobility. Allowing wealthy

individuals the freedom to spoil their offspring conflicts with the ideal that every child should start life with the same chance to succeed. And support for democracy may mean that we should not elevate the smart and hard-working above the common person. (p. 28-29)

Unfortunately, many Americans never become aware of the internal conflict of values, especially when it comes to the notion of meritocracy. For example, Longoria (2009) asked undergraduate students in his political science courses, “Do you believe people should work for their money?” and then “Do you think that wealthy people should be allowed to pass on their money to their children?” (p. 11). For both questions the overwhelming majority agreed. One astute student revealed the inherent contradiction: “If we think that smart, hard-working people should have more money than others, then we can’t also have a system that gives money to people who haven’t demonstrated that they’re smart or hard-working” (p. 11). Answers to questions about their beliefs can often be contradictory.

Applications to Higher Education

Americans continue to follow the advice of Benjamin Franklin in making “the proper education of youth” the most important American social policy (as cited in Hochschild, 2003, p. 9). Education is the American answer to all the issues in the country, from waves of immigrations to the abolishing of subordination based on race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and other historically marginalized groups. Although public schools in the United States are expected to accomplish a lot for their students, “underlying all of these tasks is the goal of creating the conditions needed for people to believe in and pursue the ideology of the American Dream” (p. 9). Americans want the educational system to help translate the American Dream from vision to practice.

Today, higher education is depicted in American culture as a panacea for some of the most significant problems in our society. This past year, one of President Obama’s initiatives to help with unemployment and the declining economy mainly focused on increasing United States college graduates. He “asked every American to complete at least one year of higher education or vocational training” (Swami, 2009, para. 1). As of 2005, after accounting for the differences between those who go to college and those who do not, the premium for a year of college education was about 13-14% of an individual’s weekly wage (Winters, 2009). Just a decade ago, a high school education was enough to succeed in the job market and going to college would make a person competitive. Today, a college education is required in order to be considered a competitive candidate. Higher education is now understood as a way to realize the American Dream.

As described above, the American Dream is understood to follow its first tenet that every American has the equal opportunity to attain success. But contrary to this belief, the principle of equal opportunity does not apply to higher education. Higher education in the United States has a history of racial and class-based exclusion that continues to effect education today (Rudolph, 1991; Thelin, 2004). This is also the case for K-12 education, in that it is uneven on lines of race and class so that those in low-income neighborhoods have schools that have fewer resources than their higher-income counterparts.

These inequalities are carried over when these students apply to colleges and universities, the majority of which base their decisions heavily on academics and standardized test scores. Some may argue that admissions decisions based on a student's academic record and test scores is educational meritocracy (Stevens, 2008), but in the larger scheme of things, does everyone have the equal opportunity to work hard and do well in high school and on standardized tests? The fact is that the affluent can afford the infrastructure necessary to produce that accomplishment in their children: academically excellent high schools, rich with extracurricular programs; summer sport camps and private tutoring; "service" trips to Israel or Guatemala; and, of course, the time and money to invest in the elaborate competition for seats at selective institutions. Not everyone has the opportunity to apply or even attend college, which puts many at a disadvantage in our society; it is not merely the hard work one puts in but rather the status that one has.

Even if the playing field were level in K-12 education and all students had the monetary means to pay for college, admissions is highly competitive. Chad Alde-man (2009) referred to college admissions as a lottery:

Each year, thousands of qualified applicants bombarded the admissions office, and, even after setting a relatively high standard, the admissions office had far too many qualified applicants to choose from, and very little time to do so. ... At many institutions, in other words, it is a far more random process than colleges would like students to believe. The myth of a meritocracy, on which the selective admissions system is built, is substantially a lie. (para. 5-6)

Similar to hiring and promoting, acceptance to college is not merely about merit, but may seem like a random decision from an outside perspective. In other words, the most academically, hard-working students will not all be accepted to an Ivy League school. An example of this is the reality that not all high school valedictorians who apply to Harvard will be accepted. They may have the same qualifications and characteristics, but there is far greater demand to attend Harvard than there are available seats. Although the meritocratic utopian idea of

higher education is that everyone has an equal opportunity to attend, this idea has proven to be as mythical as the American Dream.

Recommendations

This article attempts to expose higher education and student affairs educators to the meritocracy myth, especially the tenet of hard work, with a summary of its historical roots and effects. With this knowledge and connections between the myth and higher education, we must become more aware of our beliefs and the myth's potential to affect our work, especially with students. As educators, we have the special role of being leaders on our respective campuses. In *Leadership Reconsidered: Engaging Higher Education in Social Change*, Astin and Astin (2000) defined *leadership* as comprising the following assumptions:

- Leadership is concerned with fostering change.
- Leadership is inherently value-based.
- All people are potential leaders.
- Leadership is a group process. (p. 9)

As leaders, we have the potential to promote social change in our communities. Whether or not professionals demonstrate transformative leadership depends, in large part, on their beliefs about what leadership role they might be able to play. Especially for student affairs educators who are often told that they should leave teaching to academic faculty members, affecting the culture of the institution is the responsibility of all members of the community. Another way of looking at these issues would be for educators to ask themselves the following questions: How can we fully empower our students, if we do not fully empower ourselves? Is it enough to merely encourage and support leadership development in students, or do we need to model it within the institution in new and creative ways, whether in our role as educators or as participants in governance?

If we want to make societal change, we must first work on ourselves before attempting to change other areas that are affected by the meritocracy myth. In other words, before we can help others, we must address our own beliefs and how they may affect our behaviors. To begin to address our socialized beliefs, consider these guiding questions:

1. Beliefs on Meritocracy

- a. What aspects of meritocracy do you believe to be true for yourself and others that you know?
- b. How did you get to your current career position? Socioeconomic status? Lifestyle?
- c. How did your parents/guardians get to where they are now?

- d. How did your best friend get to where he/she/ze is now?
 - e. If you have or want to have children, what will/would you pass on to your children? How will that affect their future?
 - f. How are the reasons you gave different and similar?
2. Conflicting Meritocracy Values
- a. Which conflicting values of meritocracy do you agree with?
 - b. In what ways do they affect how you see yourself and others?
 - i. natural intelligence vs. hard work
 - ii. equal opportunity vs. internal hires, nepotism, legacies, etc.
 - iii. earning a living vs. inheritance
 - iv. book smart (intelligence) vs. street smart (experience)
 - v. achievement vs. ascription
3. Meritocracy's Effects on Behavior
- a. How have you perpetuated meritocracy in your work?
 - b. What judgments have you made about students, coworkers, administrators, faculty members and their "success"?
 - c. What kind of advice have you given to others when asked about trying to succeed or reaching goals?
4. Action Plan
- a. What action steps can you take to stop this cycle?
 - b. What can you do to change the behaviors exhibited in your answers to question three?
 - c. How can you take an active role as an educator?
 - d. How can you take an active role in the governance of your institution?

The best way to enact change, especially for our students, is through our many opportunities to *model* beliefs and actions. We all must realize our "full potential as initiators and participants in institutional change efforts" (Astin & Astin, 2000, p. 67). Once we are able to reflect and make change within ourselves, the next step is to make an effort to change our surrounding communities.

Conclusion

According to the ideology of the American Dream, meritocracy is the belief that individuals get out of the system what they put into it. The system is seen as fair because everyone is assumed to have an equal, or at least "fair," chance of getting ahead. In America, the land of opportunity, the "sky is the limit," you go as far as your individual talents, abilities, and hard work can take you. These side effects of the meritocracy myth reveal that the American Dream does not

become reality despite its influence on Americans' beliefs, actions, and judgments on others' worth.

This article is not intended to suggest that merit is irrelevant or that merit has no effect on life successes. Rather, despite the pervasive rhetoric of meritocracy in America, merit is only one factor among many that influence who ends up with what; non-merit factors are also at work. Pure meritocracy is unlikely to ever occur within the United States, but perhaps some of the detrimental side effects caused by the myth can be ameliorated by making our academic institutions more fair, open, and transparent. This is possible by dispelling the meritocracy myth and allowing individuals to change themselves and the communities around them.

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Universal Instructional Design: Tools for Creating an Inclusive Educational Experience

Stacey Banfield-Hardaway

The number of students with disabilities on college campuses in the United States is growing. To address the needs of these students, all campus community members must evaluate the degree to which the campus environment and social climate are welcoming to students with disabilities. The barriers students with disabilities face can be seen in the classroom, academic and administrative buildings, and in relationships among campus community members. Universal instructional design is an approach to address the needs of students with disabilities and deconstruct prejudice against them.

College and university students around the United States have diverse needs and social identities. The many cultures and identities represented on a college campus signal the responsibility of faculty, administrators, student affairs educators, and students to identify the necessary skills and knowledge to enhance and support the educational experience. Faculty, staff, and administrators must evaluate the social climate of the community and the ways in which the tensions between students with differences affect their learning. The many differences among students include learning styles as well as physical, developmental, and psychological abilities. Recently, policies implemented by the federal government have opened the doors of the university to an increasing number of students with learning, physical, and mental disabilities.

Students with disabilities are frequent targets of discrimination because they are seen as abnormal or deficient (Myers, 2008). The combination of this discrimination and classroom stress affects their graduation rate (Johnson & Fox, 2003). Universal instructional design (UID) is a strategy that makes the educational experience more inclusive and supportive of students with all learning needs and ability levels (Evans, 2008). UID provides campus officials with instructions for creating equitable access and deepen the communal connection to assist students

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through the learning experience, regardless of their ability level. Furthermore, implementation of UID can create learning environments that are more multicultural and socially just (Myers).

Disability

According to the World Health Organization, a disability is “any restriction or lack of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within range considered normal for a human being” (Livingston, 2000, p. 184). The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) upholds the parameters of the term *disability* and was signed into law in 1990 to end discrimination of individuals with disabilities in the workplace. The act enforced “public buildings, work environments,” and other institutions be made accessible to people with “physical, visual, and hearing impairments” (Livingston, p. 183). The ADA recently expanded the legal definition of a disability to include any individual who is prohibited from performing any major life activity (Blank & Gage, 2009). This adjustment means that millions of people in the United States “will be added to the ranks of those considered ‘individuals with a disability’” (Blank & Gage, p. 5). With the passage of the most recent iteration of ADA, higher education institutions have a greater responsibility to cultivate a barrier-free learning environment.

Over the past 20 years, the number of students on college campuses who have a disability has tripled (Myers, 2008). Despite their increased presence on campus, however, students with disabilities are still less likely to complete their education than their peers without disabilities (Johnson & Fox, 2003). As the growth of this student group continues, faculty and staff must learn about the needs, rights, and expectations of students with disabilities in order to fulfill their educational goals. One way to ensure this achievement is to tend to disability issues with the diligence that other multicultural issues receive (Myers, p. 292).

Ableism

Although universities incorporate multiple social identities into their work promoting socially-just campus climates, ability level is often at the bottom of the list or left out completely (Myers, 2008). The omission of ability from identity-based multicultural education can be explained by the long-established perspective that to possess a disability is to be deficient, particularly in academic environments. The perspective described here is founded upon ableism: a prejudice or form of discrimination against individuals with physical, mental, or developmental disabilities (Livingston, 2000), “characterized by the belief that these individuals need to be fixed or cannot function as full members of society” (Castaneda & Peters, 2000; Smith, Foley, & Cheney, 2008, p. 304).

Ableism is a multifaceted phenomenon and one can see very real examples of it on a college campus. It is perpetuated by the invisibility of students with disabilities in the public sphere. When examining campus offices, one can see the narrow spaces between walls and furniture, which are difficult to navigate for an individual in a wheelchair or with a walker. Campus transportation systems are frequently cited as another structural example of ableism because they require certain physical abilities and, by so doing, exclude or single out those who “cannot meet those demands” (Livingston, 2000, p. 184). Other examples include course syllabi; many professors instruct students with learning disabilities to take tests in another location. The able-bodied assume that the person with the disability constantly needs help in relationships among faculty, staff, and students with disabilities (Johnson, 2006). These four examples illustrate the degree to which students with disabilities are “singled out” (Johnson & Fox, 2003, p. 4), creating an opportunity for stigmas. Stigmas such as: “Students with disabilities are admitted because of special accommodations,” or, “Students with disabilities are less deserving of their place in the community” are present among stakeholders around campus. In addition to causing further separation, these attitudes epitomize the focus on individuals with disabilities as abnormal.

Understanding Models and Perspectives of Ableism

The negative, accusatory sentiments described above exist, in part, because the literature and practice about disabilities are based on the medical model. This model defines a disability as an impairment that can be treated and cured with medical interventions or surgery (Evans, 2008, p. 13). In the educational context, the medical model suggests that college level education is not realistic for individuals with disabilities, implying that they are incapable of meeting the academic standards. Although medication or surgery may enhance the quality of life for a student with a disability, it will not necessarily dismantle the barriers to their learning experience. To accomplish that task, the spotlight must turn to the interaction between the individual and the environment where learning takes place (Evans).

Models Addressing Students With Disabilities

There are two models that take the individual and the environment into consideration—the social justice perspective and social construction model. Taken together, these models explain the source of the disability and address the systems in place that obstruct student learning.

Social Justice Perspective

The social justice perspective addresses the environmental and individual compo-

nents of disability. Through this perspective the environment creates “the source of the disability” and is the focus for the interventions that enable equitable education for the learners in the environment (Evans, 2008, p. 16). The social justice perspective goes beyond acknowledging the barriers in the external environment by ensuring that students themselves are valued. According to Evans, “[k]nowing how to create an inclusive environment is a necessary but not sufficient condition for working effectively with students with disabilities. Educators must also understand the students themselves” (p. 11).

Social Construction Model

This model dictates that disability is defined by how others react to bodies that do not fit the expectations of the environment (Livingston, 2000). By recognizing the oppression present within the environment, student affairs educators can begin modifying it to suit all learners in the community. Therefore, the model places the responsibility for change in the hands of the people who control the external environment (Johnson & Fox, 2003), not those adversely affected by an environment that does not meet their needs.

Both the social justice and social construction models suggest that change needs to occur in the structural and relational ways campus stakeholders build learning environments. In working to eliminate ableism on college campuses, ability, as an identity type, needs to be incorporated into the work of multicultural education (Smith et al., 2008).

Hackman (2008) stated that students with disabilities are experiencing educational barriers depriving them of educational opportunities to which their peers have access. UID is a philosophy that works to engage students in the learning process, regardless of their ability level, age, gender identity or expression, race, religion, ethnic origin, language, social class or sexual orientation (Barajas & Higbee, 2003).

Application of Universal Instructional Design

UID was born out of a concept in the field of architecture called universal design. The Center for Universal Design describes it as the “design of products and environments to be usable by all people to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptable or specialized design” (Center for Universal Design, 1997, p. 1 as cited in Myers, 2008). Universally designed environments are increasingly present in the public and private sphere. Some examples are “curb cuts on sidewalks, closed caption text on television screens, [and] electronic doors for entryways to buildings” (Scott, McGuire, & Embry, 2002). In the academic setting, universal design principles are applied under the name UID with the intention to

create inclusive and flexible curricula and programs that are welcoming to all students (Myers). UID promotes the planning for and delivery of instruction while keeping in mind the diversity of the learners “without compromising academic standards” (Scott, et al.). The principles of UID are:

- a. Creating welcoming environments,
- b. Identifying essential components [of curricula and programs],
- c. Communicating clear expectations,
- d. Providing constructive feedback,
- e. Exploring learning supports,
- f. Designing service methods that consider diversity,
- g. Creating multiple ways for students to demonstrate understanding, and
- h. Promoting interaction among faculty, staff, and students. (Cunningham, Souma, & Holman, 2008, p. 338)

The principles of UID can be applied to teaching in the classroom as well as in student support services, such as academic advising. In either setting, integrating the principles of UID into everyday practice normalizes the discussion and acknowledgement of individual needs and developmental readiness. Shaw, Kampsen, Broad, and Albecker (2008) believed that UID will enhance student engagement, as well.

As previously mentioned, UID can be applied in multiple ways. Advising services, however, epitomize the capabilities of UID. When an advisor practices universal design, it fosters a tightly knit network of student support that is more inclusive (Shaw et al., 2008). Because advising entails a hub of resources, increasing access and inclusion in advising expands a student's access to campus services. To use UID to its fullest capacity, advisors also need to understand student development theory, multiculturalism, and disabilities (p. 233). Furthermore, advisors need to be attentive to the physical space in their offices, their web space and the alternative and flexible technologies available. In keeping with the first principle of UID, advisors need to create a welcoming space in their office that is well-lit, centrally located, accessible for a walker or wheelchair, private and comfortable (Cunningham et al., 2008). The second principle of UID can be implemented by developing a document with the student that clarifies expectations and responsibilities of both the student and advisor. While this is just one example of the context in which UID can be applied, it illustrates the holistic focus on the well-being of the student and his, her, or hir learning while creating an inclusive environment.

Critiques of Universal Instructional Design

Although there are clear benefits, some scholar-practitioners are unsettled with UID as a tool. Hackman (2008) suggested that UID accomplishes the goal of

sending the message that educational accessibility is a significant undertaking. It does not, however, “do a good enough job of providing a systemic critique of issues of power and privilege within which those accessibility issues arise” (p. 35). To accomplish this, there needs to be a focus on the community’s knowledge about and dedication to understanding those issues and working to debunk the privilege Hackman mentioned. On a structural level, UID needs to be modeled at all levels of the administrative hierarchy by creating a place at the table for employees with disabilities so their voices may be heard.

A second critique is that many of the practitioners who carry out UID on campus may not have confronted their own ableism (Smith et al., 2008). Smith et al. cited an example of a “counselor with minimal training in this area [who] assumes that a client with a disability is likely to have a low quality of life” (p. 306) due to their condition. This is a realistic critique and requires immediate action and reflection on the part of the practitioner so as not to stifle the development of the student with whom they are working.

Moving Forward with Increased Focus on Universal Instructional Design

The number of students with disabilities on campus is growing due to increased access to education for students with disabilities as well as the expanding definition of a disability. Faculty, student affairs educators, and students have a responsibility to construct a welcoming campus environment and foster a community for students with disabilities. The process of creating an inclusive community includes recognizing the power and privilege that comes with being able-bodied in the campus environment and working to adapt the campus structure and educational processes to meet the needs of all students. This should be the case whether or not these students possess a disability.

UID provides practitioners with guidance on how to make the campus more inclusive and the learning process more accessible. Although critics raise questions about the degree to which UID addresses the root of ableism, practitioners can utilize UID to address the needs of the whole student. As ableism is often perpetuated by the invisibility of students with disabilities throughout campus, implementing UID is one way to create a place for these students and send the message that their educational experience is valuable.

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Modern Colonialism in African Education: The Wave of Foreign Investment in Sub-Saharan Africa

Amarildo Barbosa

Many African scholars feel that there is a need for a re-focusing of goals and purpose among universities in Sub-Saharan Africa. Because of the low retention rate of graduates, who continue to emigrate and work outside of Africa, scholars often view African higher education as a loss of investment. A current educational objective in Sub-Saharan Africa is creating a new generation of African universities that are focused on community development projects and programs aimed at aiding problems related to civil works. With significant financial assistance from foreign investors, however, African universities must be wary of the control external parties will have over internal matters. As a continent long enduring the effects of colonialism, Africa and its educational leaders must be intentional about ensuring that the primary beneficiaries of this developmental process are the African countries affected and those who study, work, and live there.

How is Africa factored into the globalizing world economy? Commerce and education play significant roles as nations on every continent become contributors to the global economy. This has created an interdependence of industries. A consequence of that interdependence is the domino effect felt when a particular industry in one nation collapses. For instance, the struggles of the oil industry, stemming from one region of the world, had dramatic effects on various continents, as evidenced by the fluctuations of gas prices in the United States and elsewhere. As the world economy continues the trend of globalization, revolving around trade, importation, and exportation of goods to and from various countries, new markets will emerge and display the potential of a promising future. Investors are seemingly always on alert about the next emerging market. The potential in the realm of higher education in Sub-Saharan Africa has been identified as such a market. International institutions and governments are looking to benefit from this untapped resource by investing in and developing institutions of higher education of Sub-Saharan Africa with hope that these countries will evolve in commerce and provide returns on initial investment.

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Fostering Economic Growth through Higher Education in Africa

Africa was seen as a hotbed of resources and a place of untapped potential when European explorers arrived. In many ways, the world continues to view the nations of Sub-Saharan Africa through an investor's lens. There is more than one side to this matter. Whether or not Africa is at a point where it can serve as a major contributor to the global economy is debatable. Several steps must first be taken in order for Sub-Saharan Africa to initiate and exhibit the benefits of growth. Development is essential to this process. In the context of developing nations, James E. Mauch (2000) defined development as the "process of improving the social, economic, and political viability of the State and its citizens as well as general improvement in the quality of life" (p. 26). The kind of trends said to be characteristic of ongoing progressive development include: a growing educational system, a stable workforce of educated and "educable" (p. 26) workers, low employment costs, an increasing per capita Gross National Product (GNP), and growing sophistication and diversity of goods, services, and "industrialized products" (p. 25). These trends are further enhanced with strengthened infrastructure, a relatively accessible economy with access to capital markets, a regulated and reliable banking system, political stability, and economic growth as a direct result of market success (Mauch). The argument is that these changes can be realized through a bolstered system of higher education.

Jee Peng Tan (2006), in the foreword of the report entitled "Higher Education: Economic Development in Africa," argued that higher education has the potential to boost national productivity, competitiveness, and economic growth in the nations of Sub-Saharan Africa. While stimulating such growth and productivity in Sub-Saharan Africa would be a good thing, there are opportunity costs associated with any investment. What is the tradeoff in this context? As mentioned earlier in this article, the notion of foreign investment in African higher education has other implications as well. What also accompanies the investment is a degree of influence in the decision-making processes of the governments and institutions of higher education themselves. Along with the financial support, universities would have to then align their academic objectives with the findings of research by international organizations like the World Bank. For example, if the World Bank commissioned a task force that generated a report stating that universities should focus on agricultural engineering, the universities would likely need to comply in order to receive support. With the goal of boosting economies to provide optimal performance and greater returns, education becomes secondary and the freedom of decision-making is stifled.

Historical Perspective: University and Social Development

Within the African diaspora, there are people who believe that African universi-

ties need to shift their focus from liberal arts and humanities and focus their efforts on courses of study that will not only give students a great deal of practical knowledge but that will also stimulate development in the communities surrounding that particular institution. Calestous Juma, of Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, is one such individual who finds it necessary for higher education and social development to merge within the African states. Juma is the lead author of "Innovation: Applying Knowledge in Development," a document generated in response to the Task Force on Science, Technology, and Innovation of the Millennium Project, designed for African nations, which was commissioned by United Nations (UN) Secretary General Kofi Annan (Dickson, 2005). In considering how these practices will benefit the nations of Sub-Saharan Africa, it is important to note that such practices have been utilized in the past by other nations, one of which is the United States of America in its early stages of development. Focusing university missions in the direction of civic works projects and social development will work in a society that has not yet reached its full industrial capacity.

The role of higher education in relation to societal development is a pre-existing practice and one that was implemented in the oldest institutions of the United States. At the moment, such a strategy is being viewed as a 21st century solution to problems in countries often referred to as "Third World." However, this is not the case. From historical examples, one may conclude that higher education is one of the critical factors in allowing a developing society to create and maintain a stable economy. Juma's claim was that the institution of higher education should be one that serves social needs (Dickson, 2005). Harvard in the mid 17th century, according to Mauch (2000), met three key social needs desired by school administrators during that particular time period. First, he argued that they attempted to educate or "Christianize" the Native Americans (p. 34). This practice was even specifically stated in the charters of some of America's oldest institutions, such as Dartmouth (Thelin, 2004). Second, Harvard served to develop an "indigenous" and trained labor force (Mauch, p. 34). Third, 17th century clergymen trained at Harvard were a vital part of society since they possessed most of the knowledge and were critical factors in the development and spread of literacy (Mauch). Mauch concluded that these three factors were essential in establishing the base for an emerging industrialized economy.

Given this historical context and the United States' economic success today, it does not seem far-fetched that higher education can stimulate economic growth within the African context. However, the conditions of Sub-Saharan Africa today differ greatly from those of 17th century New England. In a context different from Harvard and its focus on clergymen and Christianity, where should the African universities focus in order to stimulate growth? One argument is that technology and the sciences should become the primary focus of African higher

education.

Re-Focusing the University Mission: Becoming an Economic Driver

Why science and technology? The international community, who is investing in higher education, believes that having an education system focused on science, technology, and engineering will help bring economic growth, poverty reduction, and improvement of standard of living (Tan, 2006). At one point in time, these international donor institutions disregarded the importance of higher education as being vital to the development of the African nations. Consequently, efforts were placed on enrolling students at the primary and secondary education levels. The common thought was that “tertiary education,” another term for post-secondary education, would have little impact in alleviating poverty (Bloom, Canning, & Chan, 2006, p. iii). Some even argue that the international donor communities have been indirectly responsible for the neglect of higher education by some African governments (Bloom et al.).

In the mid-1980s, the World Bank set aside funds for investment into higher education, but when international organizations began to advocate for an increase in enrollment rates and education quality within the primary and secondary education levels, monetary support for higher education decreased significantly. Between 1985 and 1989, 17% of the World Bank’s worldwide education sector spending was focused on post-secondary education. This figure dropped to 7% between the years of 1995 and 1999 (Bloom et al., 2006, p. iii). Along with the decline in monetary investment, national enrollment rates in Sub-Saharan Africa dropped, as did graduation rates, quality of facilities, and academic research output at these various institutions.

Recently, there has been a re-awakening among the international donor communities. Through research and studies by various organizations, data have shown success in post-secondary education has many positive benefits for a country and its continuing development. These benefits can be viewed in two categories: the private and public sector (Bloom et al., 2006). In the private sector, higher education can foster improvements in employment prospects and salaries. These in turn can lead to greater ability to save, invest, or both, and ultimately allow individuals to maintain better health and a higher quality of life. In the public sector, a more robust higher education system can allow for what is referred to as “technological catch-up” (Bloom et al., p. iii). This is the notion that people, businesses, and society will become more technologically savvy and would be able to use technology better and more efficiently, to the degree that other developed nations are able to.

Ultimately, these efforts are expected to enable regions of Sub-Saharan Africa to

build economies that can produce output at their highest potential. Clearly, investors are providing support with the expectation that these nations will become better contributors to the global economy. They also expect these nations to become more industrialized, established, and complex economies that will sustain higher levels of global commerce. For example, these nations would have to better utilize their comparative agricultural advantages. Agricultural revitalization is the main goal in Sub-Saharan Africa, given the fact that 70% of people live in rural settings and that about 90% of those living in these rural settings depend on agriculture (Larsen, 2009). With so many people depending on the land for mere survival, a stronger agricultural economy would create a dramatic difference in the lives of many individuals. The question being asked is, "What can education do to help?" In some countries, universities have already begun to redirect their focus from arts and humanities to engineering and technological training that will directly improve the quality of infrastructure and other civic projects, particularly for agriculture.

In a sense, these universities would be doing what American universities were doing over 100 years ago. However, the needs of people in Sub-Saharan regions are vastly different than those of people living in the United States. African universities have less of a focus on liberal arts and more emphasis on technology and sciences that can be applied to the surrounding communities. The Kigali Institute of Science and Technology and Management (KIST) in Rwanda has helped implement innovative changes in local communities through technological development. In perhaps one of the better examples, the University of Zambia played a significant role in the creation of Zamnet, the largest internet provider in the country of Zambia (Dickson, 2005). University students showed that creativity, innovation, and ingenuity utilized for the good of society are attainable by an academic institution. The students are producing concrete and tangible services and innovations that benefit their communities. This is the goal of Juma and others of a similar mentality. The current goal is to create this same dynamic within other nations of Sub-Saharan Africa. For international stakeholders and investors, African universities can be used as a resource for the surrounding communities and local governments. The domino effect of positive trends that can be fostered through development of higher education will likely improve multiple forms of infrastructure and agricultural capacities, and should systematically produce a higher standard of living for a large portion of the African community.

Re-Colonization in Africa

There is a community of people who feel that what is taking place with international donor institutions and the African education system is a form of colonialism or "intellectual re-colonization" in Africa (Federici, 2000, p. 19). Re-colonization is in reference to the role that international agencies are playing in

the African system of higher education and the level of control that is being imposed on this region for the sake of investment returns. Federici argued that as a result of targeted aid, financial contributors heavily influence what is written, studied, and voiced in communities. There already exists great opposition to exploitation that has existed on the continent for a number of generations. The mere existence of the Shell oil company in some parts of Sub-Saharan Africa has been a long-ensuing debate. The concept of re-colonization is one that deeply touches the lives of many Africans. One must take into account that many regions of Luso-Africa and Franco-Africa, Portuguese and French colonies respectively, were given their independence in the 1960s and 1970s. Some of these countries have just recently emerged from colonialism, and there are thousands, perhaps millions, of people who have lived through those times and are currently still on the continent.

First hand experiences of my own allow me to speak to these on-going tensions between the colonizers and the colonized. Some of my immediate family members have lived in Africa during the time of European colonialism. Through conversation with numerous individuals, including my parents, I have learned that the time period between 1950 and 1979 was a time of great resentment and angst toward European colonialism, discrimination, and exploitation of workers, minerals, and resources. Upon liberation, foreign governments departed without leaving systems in place for developing nations to progress, and some governments collapsed or fell into civil war. Unlike past colonialism, there are seemingly good intentions in revamping the higher education system. The central concern about African higher education in 2009 is that autonomy is being lost due to the extensive involvement of external parties. Much of the research conducted in the interest of the African education system is commissioned by external international agencies like the World Bank or International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Federici, 2000). Another concern is that the success of an African university is becoming more and more linked to the ability to have a partnership with foreign donors motivated by potential economic returns. The fear of dependency is overwhelming.

In a Darwinian sense, institutions that are funded, supported, and arguably controlled by foreign agencies would survive and prosper in this restructuring of higher education. This concept is dramatically different than what usually occurs in the United States. If considered in the context of North America, many would find it difficult for U.S. institutions to be comfortable with the idea of surrendering their autonomy in such a way. Having to weigh the progress and development of education and economy for its citizens against independence and the freedom of decision-making power may pose a conflict for African governments. Declining to comply with the expectations of funding agencies would likely result in reduced funding, which has occurred in some instances already. The result, due

to lack of appropriate funding, is what a Nigerian newspaper described as having to study “with tears now in Africa” (Federici, 2000, p. 20).

Conclusion

The progression toward modern colonialism in Africa is one that unfortunately seems inevitable. Like an immovable machine, the UN, World Bank, and others continue to sponsor a project that will ultimately leave the future of African academia and research in the hands of the global powers of Europe and the United States. Unfortunately, where monetary investment is significant, it is almost impossible to expect ethics to be a major factor in the decision-making process. The African continent has had its future out of its hands since the 1500s, the point of European arrival in Africa. In a time where African nations are looking to reclaim their autonomy and live out independence in its truest sense, this new wave of foreign investors has once again staked its claim among the African lands. Long viewed throughout history as a place of great potential, the African continent has been a place vulnerable to exploitation from external parties. It is hardly plausible that the well-being of the African people and interests of international donor agencies are perfectly aligned. In essence, the question is, “Whose interests are the top priority in these matters?”

It is difficult to embrace the thought of African nations being controlled by organizations. This thought is especially difficult when one considers that academic investments come with the expectation of future economic returns and hopes of commerce. Historically, commerce involving the African continent has been a one-sided arrangement where more resources left the continent than were ever created. This trend can be seen in the recent history of the oil industry in Angola, Nigeria, and other nations. Had these foreign investments been one-time donations to aid the revival of higher education, the perception of intent may have differed. However, it is almost impossible for African humanitarians and sons of Africa, like me, to ignore the future well-being of a generation sliding down this slippery slope.

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The Influence of Society on Queer Identity Development and Classification

Kirsten E. Fricke

This article will outline the history of homosexual identity classification and the societal contexts that influenced the development of several commonly used queer identity models. The emergence of the term “homosexual” in 1869 reflected an increased interest in identifying, defining, and regulating queer behavior and identity (Sullivan, 2003). Since then researchers, scientists, doctors, and queer rights activists have clamored to develop ways of contextualizing homosexuality with various, and sometimes horrific results. Exploring the history and impact of dominant heterosexual culture on homosexual identity will provide student affairs professionals with a more complete understanding of the systemic legacy of challenges that queer college students face.

In *The Trouble with Normal*, queer theorist Michael Warner (1999) made the following observation about sexual identity:

As ways of classifying people’s sex, these apparently neutral terms (“homosexual” and “heterosexual”) are of relatively recent vintage, and only make sense against a certain cultural background. So, however much they might involve genetic or biological factors, they also involve changes in consciousness and culture. (p. 10)

In many ways identity is a social construct, defined and given value only when evaluated in terms relative to a specific cultural context. As student affairs professionals, it is important to keep this in mind when utilizing queer identity development models. Many of the models used today, although helpful, are products of the societal and cultural framework in which they were conceived and thereby reflect the biases of those times. In addition, most of the models were constructed using White gay men as participants, rendering the relevance to queer people of color, women, and transgender individuals as questionable.

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Supporting students in their identity development is central to the field of student affairs. For student affairs professionals, a critical understanding of queer identity development is integral to successfully working with queer students. This article will explore the evolution of queer identity development theory, outline several key homosexual identity development models, and examine the impact of dominant culture on identity development.

Conversion Therapy: Castration, Lobotomies, and Electroshock Therapy

Discussions on homosexual identity are often centered on the nature versus nurture debate. Many people have believed, and continue to believe, that homosexuality is either a choice or stems from the environment where the individual was raised (e.g. bad parenting). The research of Sigmund Freud has often been interpreted and used to support the “nurture” argument (Yoshino, 2006). Freud believed that all people were inherently bisexual, but that homosexuality and heterosexuality were “culturally determined” (Yoshino, p. 36). After Freud’s death in 1939, many doctors, therapists, and researchers disputed Freud’s theory of innate bisexuality and adopted the assumption that if homosexuality was a learned behavior it was only natural that it could be unlearned (Yoshino). This shift in thought led the American Psychological Association (APA) to officially classify homosexuality as a psychiatric disease in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) in 1952 (Yoshino).

Viewing homosexuality as a disease supported the practice of conversion therapy. Conversion therapy was a method used to convert homosexuals to heterosexuals, thereby curing their perceived disorder. There is evidence of the use of castration, lobotomies, and electroshock therapy as tools for the conversion of homosexuals (Yoshino, 2006). In addition, lesbians were often forced to undergo estrogen therapy and hysterectomies (Burr, 1997). Yoshino discussed one particular case in 1894, where an individual named Guy T. Olmsted underwent voluntary castration as a way to get over his love for another man:

Olmsted states, “Since the operation there has never been a day that I have been free from sharp, shooting pains down the abdomen to the scrotum.” Nonetheless, he deems the operation a success: “I have absolutely no passion for other men, and have begun to hope now that I can yet outlive my desire for Clifford.” (p. 32)

The lobotomy, invented by Portuguese neurosurgeon Egas Moniz in 1935, was another method used by doctors who treated homosexuality as a mental disorder (Johnson, n.d.; Yoshino, 2006). On her website, Johnson described the barbaric process:

The infamous transorbital lobotomy was a “blind” operation in that the surgeon did not know for certain if he had severed the nerves or not. A sharp, ice-pick like object would be inserted through the eye socket between the upper lid and eye. When the doctor thought he was at about the right spot, he would hit the end of the instrument with a hammer. There were other types of lobotomy as well ... as many varieties as there were imaginative neurosurgeons. (About Lobotomy, n.d.)

Lobotomies were used liberally until the 1970s (Johnson; Yoshino).

The APA also endorsed electroshock therapy to treat homosexuality. Yoshino (2006) recounted a 1935 APA presentation that “cautioned that electroshock treatment would not convert homosexuals unless shocks were administered at “intensities considerably higher than those usually employed on human subjects” (Yoshino, p. 33).

There has never been viable evidence to support the claim that conversion therapy works to cure homosexuality (Yoshino, 2006). Freud even stated, “In general, to undertake to convert a fully developed homosexual into a heterosexual does not offer much more prospect of success than the reverse” (as cited in Yoshino, p. 36). Freud even doubted whether they should be converted (Yoshino). In a 1935 letter to a concerned mother, Freud wrote the following:

Homosexuality is assuredly no advantage, but it is nothing to be ashamed of, no vice, no degradation, it cannot be classified as an illness; we consider it to be a variation of the sexual function produced by a certain arrest of sexual development. Many highly respectable individuals of ancient and modern times have been homosexuals, several of the greatest men among them (Plato, Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, etc.). It is a great injustice to persecute homosexuality as a crime, and cruel too. (Herek, n.d.)

Unfortunately, innumerable queer people endured torturous psychoanalytic conversion therapy due to the DSM classification (Yoshino, 2006). Even more unfortunate are the actions of fundamentalist religious organizations that persist in the practice of conversion through intensive aversion therapy (Yoshino). Known as the “ex-gay” movement, groups like Exodus International and Quest continue to try to convert queer individuals to heterosexuality (Yoshino; Warner, 1999).

“Gay is Good”: The Dawn of Gay and Lesbian Identity Formation Models

The Stonewall Riots of 1969 ushered in a new era of activism and pride within the queer community. Inspired by the “Black is Beautiful” campaign, the queer activists adopted the rallying cry, “gay is good” (Yoshino, 2006). Individuals be-

gan to strongly challenge the DSM classification of homosexuality and the existing treatment of conversion therapy. Famous gay rights activist Del Martin called psychiatry the “most dangerous enemy of homosexuals in contemporary society” (Yoshino, p. 39). This pressure, paired with research from sexologist Alfred Kinsey and psychologist Evelyn Hooker, led to the depathologization of homosexuality in the DSM in 1973 (Yoshino; Herek, n.d.).

The 1970s saw a movement toward viewing homosexuality as an identity as opposed to a behavior or lifestyle (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005; Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). With this new emphasis, researchers began to explore how homosexual identities are shaped. In 1979 Vivienne Cass introduced a stage model for gay and lesbian identity formation. The Cass Model has been widely used to plot the identity development of gay and lesbian individuals. The model is comprised of six linear stages: Identity Confusion, Identity Comparison, Identity Tolerance, Identity Acceptance, Identity Pride, and Identity Synthesis (Evans, et al.; Kort, n.d.). As individuals move through the different stages they become increasingly aware and accepting of their sexual orientation until they are fully integrated into their identity. Although groundbreaking at the time, Cass’ model has several inherent problems that make it less applicable today: it was based on a 1970s historical context, there has been little testing of the model, and the early participants of this research were White gay men (Evans et al.).

“Silence = Death”

By 1986, more than 16 thousand Americans had already fallen victim to AIDS (Yoshino, 2006). However, as people continued to die, the government and the United States largely remained silent and indifferent. AIDS was regarded as a “gay” disease. This assumption gave renewed life to the belief that queer sex was somehow inherently deviant (Warner, 1999). A new wave of conservatism took hold leading to a crack down on the queer community (Warner). In response, many gay activists galvanized their efforts with slogans such as “Silence=Death” (Yoshino). Frustrated by the lack of public outcry, some radical queer activists went even further and began exposing the gay identities of public figures against their will in order to draw attention to the AIDS crisis (Yoshino).

With the AIDS crisis as the backdrop, R. R. Troiden proposed a new homosexual identity stage model theory in a 1989 issue of the *Journal of Homosexuality* (Barnett, n.d.). Troiden’s model is noteworthy for several reasons. Most importantly, Troiden makes the observation that environmental and societal factors, such as AIDS, can dramatically influence an individual’s identity development and ability to come out (Barnett).

Troiden’s model outlined the formation of homosexual identity in four stages:

Sensitization, Identity Confusion, Identity Assumption, and Commitment (Barnett, n.d.). This model differs from Cass in that the early stages of Sensitization and Identity Confusion are believed to occur during adolescence. Troiden believed that during the Identity Confusion stage, individuals cope with the stress of their identity by going through the following steps: denial of feelings, avoidance of impulses, attempt to repair heterosexual make-up, and acceptance of homosexual impulses (Barnett). Troiden believed that individuals moving into the Identity Assumption stage primarily focused their energy on managing the social stigma of their homosexual identity (Barnett). In the final stage, Commitment, individuals begin to view their homosexuality as a “way of being, rather than a description of sexual behavior” (Barnett, para. 15).

“Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell”: Covering

The early 1990s saw a reevaluation of the U.S. military’s policy on homosexuality. The existing policy, which stated that homosexuality was “incompatible with military service,” was revised to state that an individual could be homosexual, but the person would be kicked out of the military for being openly homosexual (Yoshino, 2006, p. 69). This became known as the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy. The significance of this ideological shift is that homosexuals were no longer expected to convert, but they were expected to cover their queer identities (Yoshino).

Around this time, human development researcher Anthony R. D’Augelli proposed a new model of lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) development. He argued that an individual’s identity developed over a lifetime, not in sequential stages (Evans et al., 1998). D’Augelli divided his model into six interactive steps that an individual moves in and out of over the course of their lifetime. The steps are: Exiting Heterosexual Identity, Developing a Personal Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Identity Status, Developing a Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Social Status, Becoming a Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Offspring, Developing a Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Intimacy Status, and Entering a Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Community (Evans et al.).

D’Augelli’s model also began to take into account outside factors that influenced an individual’s identity development, mainly that “the social invisibility of sexual orientation and the social and legal penalties associated with homosexual expression represent two unique and powerful barriers to self-definition as gay, lesbian, or bisexual” (Evans et al., 1998, p. 95). Since dominant culture is overwhelmingly heterosexist, D’Augelli stressed that lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals often lacked LGB role models, which made them more responsible for their own identity development (Evans et al.).

The Biology of Homosexuality: Identity Ethics

After the DSM determined homosexuality was not a mental disorder, researchers began to explore whether homosexuality was more about “nature” than “nurture.” Moving away from the “gay is good” mantra, gay rights activists began to put forth the idea that sexual orientation was immutable (Yoshino, 2006). Yoshino described this trend as “troubling” and warned that studies attempting to prove the existence of a “gay gene” are a “leaky defense for homosexuality. These studies appear to assume biological traits are immutable, while cultural traits are mutable... [and] as our scientific technology advances genetic traits become more susceptible to human manipulation than cultural ones” (p. 48). Evidence of this manipulation was found in experiments conducted by neurobiologist Simon LeVay in the early 1990s (Burr, 1997; Yoshino). He determined that gay men had a difference in their hypothalamic structure. However, it was later revealed that all of the cadavers he used were men who had died of AIDS, a factor that could have influenced his findings (Burr; Yoshino).

With the belief that people are born gay becoming more widespread, the language around homosexual identity shifted from “I will not change” to “I cannot change” (Yoshino, 2006, p. 48). Yoshino warned that the change in this distinction was profoundly wrong, as it implied an apology about one’s identity. He quoted Leo Bersani who stated, “the very question of ‘how we got that way’ would in many quarters not be asked if it were not assumed that we ended up the wrong way” (Yoshino, p. 49). Warner (1999) also discussed this argument:

Gay people are now desperately hoping a gay gene can be found. They think they would be more justified if they could show that they had no choice, that neither they nor gay culture in general played any role in shaping their desires. Some conservatives, meanwhile, trivialize gay experience as “lifestyle,” as though that warrants interfering with it. Both sides seem to agree on an insane assumption: that only immutable and genetic sexualities could be legitimate, that if being gay could be shown to be learned, chosen, or partly chosen, then it could be reasonably forbidden. (p. 9)

To date there has been no evidence that a gay gene exists, and after years of studies researchers have still not found credible support that there is a biological root to homosexuality (Burr, 1997). Bersani also brought up a critical ethical question: would people care if there were not the insidious belief that homosexuality was wrong (Yoshino, 2006)? One could then begin to ask, if a gay gene were discovered would researchers begin working on a cure? Would parents begin selecting not to have children born with the gay gene? And, would individuals begin to seek treatment for their homosexuality?

Queers vs. Normals

With the advent of queer theory in the early 1990s, a new discussion about sexual orientation and gender identity took hold (Kirsch, 2006; Sullivan, 2003). Influenced by feminism, post-modernism, and the writings of Michael Foucault, queer theory challenges the belief that heterosexuality is the “normal” standard by which other ways of being are measured (Sullivan). Many current beliefs about sexual orientation and identity have their roots in queer theory and cluster around the concept that identity is fluid (Kirsch; Sullivan; Warner, 1999). It is very common for individuals to discuss their sexual orientation utilizing a spectrum with “homosexual” on one end and “heterosexual” on the other, and many shades in-between. The term “queer” has also been more widely adopted as a way of challenging the heteronormative system and escaping the implied binary of homosexual or heterosexual.

The concept of “normal” has been a pervasive and debilitating standard by which homosexuals have routinely and unfairly been judged. However, in an effort to be normal many individuals in the gay community have “embraced the politics of assimilation” (Yoshino, 2006, p. 77). In 1995, writer and editor Andrew Sullivan penned a book titled *Virtually Normal* that called for gays to enter the mainstream (Warner, 1999). In 1998 James Collard would go on to declare himself “post-gay” and state that gay people “no longer see themselves solely in terms of struggle” (Warner, p. 62). More recently in *The New Gay Teenager*, Ritch Savin-Williams made this statement:

The majority of young people with same-sex desire resist and refuse to identify as gay...Their desire is not to stand out “like a semen stain on a blue dress,” but to be as boring as the next person, to buy an SUV and to fade into the fabric of American life. (as cited in Kuban & Grinnell, 2008, p. 74)

This push towards normalcy has caused a major rift in the queer community. Many argue that aspiring to fit into the heteronormative dominant culture is an assault against individuals who fought hard to achieve visibility and equal rights for the queer community. Others point out that the struggle for normalcy is a racist, sexist, and classist sentiment that intrinsically favors White, middle-class men whose privileged identities allow them to assimilate more easily into dominant culture (Kuban & Grinnell, 2008; Warner, 1999; Yoshino, 2006). Current literature suggests that the debate over queer identity and post-gay assimilation is ongoing and has come to characterize contemporary gay culture.

Implications for Future Research

This analysis of queer identity development models leaves much room for future

inquiry. Future research should include developing identity models that take into account the experience of transgender individuals, people of color, and individuals with multiple intersecting identities. There should also be more work exploring how society's changing views on sexual orientation have affected models of identity development and their application. How, over time, have these shifts in ideology served to impose heteronormative biases on queer individuals? Do identity development models actually contribute to healthy identity formation in queer individuals? Exploring the generational differences that may exist between students and the student affairs professionals that work with them is also important. How do these differences affect how Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) student affairs professionals relate to LGBTQ students who may have grown up with different language around identity? Finally it would be helpful to look at a longitudinal assessment of the effect of assimilation on queer identity development. As student affairs professionals, how do we encourage students to develop a strong queer identity while recognizing that at times they are expected to assimilate or cover?

Conclusion

College students are now coming of age in a time when the Stonewall Riots and the AIDS epidemic seem to have faded into the distant past. For them, identifying as gay means something entirely different than it did even 10 years ago. With the increasing visibility of queer culture, it is easy to overlook the challenges that queer individuals have faced along the way. Through pathology, biology, and homosexual identity models, researchers have attempted to locate, define, and shape the queer identity. This search has been rife with prejudice, homophobia, and violence. Moving forward requires a reevaluation of the archaic identity development models that are still in use today. By acknowledging our haunting legacy we can begin to identify and combat the complex and numerous ways our systems and beliefs have been influenced by pervasive homophobia and oppression.

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First-Generation College Students: How Co-Curricular Involvement Can Assist with Success

Valerie Garcia

First-generation college students are students whose parents do not have any postsecondary education (Choy, 2001). These students differ from continuing-generation students in many ways including race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender. When compared to continuing-generation students, first-generation students face greater challenges in the areas of access to college, persistence throughout college, and attainment of a degree. Research positively links students' co-curricular involvement with attainment (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991) and persistence (Astin, 1977). Although this positive link has been discovered, there is minimal research that specifically addresses first-generation students and their involvement. This article will discuss characteristics and challenges that first-generation students experience as well as how involvement may result in positive links to their attainment and persistence.

Students who are the first in their family to attend postsecondary education are known as first-generation college students. When compared to continuing-generation students, first-generation students face greater challenges in college as a result of being the first in their family to attend postsecondary education. Access, attainment, and persistence are some of the challenges first-generation students encounter. Alexander Astin's (1984) research indicated there is a positive correlation between students' co-curricular involvement and their college success. Because of the high number of first-generation students now enrolled in institutions of higher education, more research needs to be conducted specifically on first-generation students and how their involvement can lead them to success.

First Generation College Students

Characteristics

There are several characteristics that distinguish first-generation students from

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continuing-generation students. For example, first-generation students tend to be older than the average college student. The National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) Beginning Postsecondary Student Longitudinal Study found in 1995-96 that first-generation students beginning postsecondary education are more likely than others to be 24 years old or older (Choy, 2001). "If they were younger than 24 and financially dependent on their parents (as most students that age are), they were more likely than others to be in the lowest family income quartile" (Choy, p. 20). This means that first-generation students are more likely to come from low-income families. It is likely that older students and students coming from low-income families have other responsibilities in addition to school. For instance, work can be another primary concern. Working while attending school means less time for studying, which is more likely to result in poor grades.

Another characteristic of first-generation students is that they are typically less academically prepared for college than continuing-generation students. First-generation students are less likely to discuss preparation for the SAT or ACT with their parents and less likely to take advanced placement tests, which can assist with college admission. These characteristics lead to first-generation students not meeting admissions requirements and not performing as highly as students who have the opportunity to take advanced placement classes and who prepare for entrance exams. Those who do meet admissions requirements may be in for a shock once they begin classes and realize the difficulty of college academics. This is a result of first-generation students being more likely to attend high schools with less rigorous curricula (Choy, 2001). Other characteristics of first-generation students include being students of historically marginalized racial and ethnic backgrounds, female, having children, and possessing lower degree aspirations (Terenzini, Springer, Yaeger, Pascarella, & Nora, 1996).

Enrolling in College

Some students grow up with the expectation that they will go to college. Other students, such as those who are first-generation, will not decide to attend college until they are in high school. One of the factors determining whether or not a student will attend college is the education level of their parents. The higher the parents' education level, the more likely a student is to enroll in college even when other factors such as family income, educational expectations, academic preparation, parental involvement, and peer influence are taken into account (Horn & Nuñez, 2000). Among high school graduates in 1992 whose parents did not attend college, 59% enrolled in some form of postsecondary education by 1994. The enrollment rate increased to 75% among those whose parents had some college education, and to 93% among those whose parents had at least a bachelor's degree (Choy, 2001).

Part of these students' decisions not to enroll can be attributed to the lack of family support, failure to meet the admissions requirements, or lack of familiarity with the application process (Choy, 2001). Since they are the first in their family to attend college, first-generation students may not be able to ask family members about the application process or what qualities to look for in a school. When first-generation students decide to apply to college, they may realize they do not have the necessary funds to pay for college. Coming to this realization may discourage them from continuing with the application process.

As first-generation students enroll in college, there are still differences between them and continuing-generation students. These differences are seen in the types of institutions that first-generation students attend. For example, first-generation students are more likely to attend public, two-year institutions rather than four-year institutions, and they are less likely to attend full time (Choy, 2001). Choosing to enroll part-time in a public, two-year institution may be because of their need to work more hours, finish their degree faster, commute a distance from home, and manage financial burdens. First-generation students are more likely to state that completing their coursework quickly, living at home, working while attending school, or receiving adequate financial aid are important factors in their decision to enroll in a particular postsecondary institution (Choy). Co-curricular involvement requires an extra time commitment, therefore first-generation students who want to finish college quickly or work while attending college may choose not to participate in these activities. Co-curricular activities can also involve additional costs, which can hinder first-generation students from participating, especially if finances are a concern.

Challenges

Gaining admission to college is not the only challenge for first-generation students. One of the first challenges they face upon starting college is the transition from high school. A successful transition bridges the student's home environment with the collegiate environment, which is critical especially in the student's first year of study (Inkelas, Daver, Vogt, & Leonard, 2006). Family and friends of first-generation students sometimes contribute to an uneasy transition. For instance, first-generation students view going to college as something that separates them from their family and friends, and this separation can make the transition difficult (Terenzini et al., 1994). Maintaining active, non-supportive ties off campus could pull the first-generation student away from integrating into the campus social life (Nora, Cabrera, Hagedorn, & Pascarella, 1996). Simply lacking the support of family and friends can make the transition more difficult for a first-generation student (Nora & Cabrera, 1996). When students successfully separate from their home and become academically and socially integrated into the college environment, they are more likely to persist (Tinto, 1993). Involve-

ment in student organizations, presence at campus programs, participation in study groups, or attendance at outside lectures are ways first-generation students can become academically and socially integrated in campus life, which can assist with persistence.

While in college, first-generation students enroll in and earn fewer credit hours, are more likely to live off campus, work more hours, participate less in out-of-class activities, have fewer non-academic peer interactions, and earn lower grades than their peers (Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, & Terenzini, 2004). Enrolling in fewer hours and earning lower grades may be a consequence of working while attending college. Working more hours and living off campus can increase the likelihood that these students will participate less in extracurricular activities, athletic events, and volunteer work (Pascarella et al.). As a result of having less participation in these activities, first-generation students may have fewer non-academic interactions. Additionally, first-generation students tend to enroll in fewer humanities and fine arts courses, study fewer hours per week, and are less likely to participate in an honors program while in college (Pascarella et al.).

Unfortunately, there is additional discouraging information on first-generation college students. According to Choy (2001), first-generation college students are more than twice as likely to leave a four-year institution before their second year when compared to continuing-generation students. Leaving before their second year may be the result of low grades, working 35 or more hours per week, and low or moderate participation in campus activities. Even after three years, first-generation students are less likely to persist to a bachelor's degree. After five years, they are less likely to remain enrolled or attain a bachelor's degree (Pascarella et al., 2004). The lack of persistence is often attributed to enrolling part-time, working full-time, and being married (Choy).

Student Involvement Theory

The Effects of Involvement

Significant research has been conducted regarding the involvement of students in and out of the classroom in correlation to success in college. In particular, student involvement theory links the amount of time and energy a student spends on the collegiate experience to persistence (Astin, 1984). The more involved college students are in the academic and social aspects of campus life, the more they benefit in terms of learning and personal development (Huang & Chang, 2004). Astin's (1977) study of college students found that those students who devote much more time and effort to academic pursuits tend to become isolated from their peers, therefore showing below average changes in personalities and behaviors. Fischer (2007) found that through interactions in the social and academic

realms, students either reaffirm or reevaluate their initial goals and commitments. Students who lack sufficient interaction with others on campus or have negative experiences may decide to depart the university as a result of this reevaluation.

A primary concern is the amount of time spent on out-of-class activities and the effect it has on academics. Some faculty members believe spending too much time on co-curricular activities means students do not spend the required time needed to study and complete homework. However, Huang and Chang (2004) found a positive relationship between academic and co-curricular involvement. Therefore, when involvement in co-curricular activities increases, there is a corresponding increase in academic involvement. Some of these co-curricular involvements included participation in campus-wide activities, departmental activities, student clubs, serving on committees, and designing activities for clubs or departments.

Involvement and First-Generation Students

Although significant research has been conducted on students' involvement and success, very little has been conducted specifically on first-generation students' involvement leading to their success. When researching college experiences and outcomes, Pascarella et al. (2004) found that first-generation students who participated in extracurricular involvement experienced stronger positive effects on critical thinking, degree plans, sense of control over their own academic success, and preference for higher-order cognitive tasks. Additionally, some programs have been examined to see if involvement by first-generation students has any positive effects on their success. For example, Inkelas et al. (2006) studied the effect of living-learning (L/L) programs on transition issues of first-generation students. The study found that after controlling for individual levels of self-confidence, L/L programs significantly helped first-generation students with academic and social transitions to college compared to first-generation college students who were not participants in a L/L program (Inkelas et al.). Further research may provide a direct link between involvement and first-generation students.

Discussion

Even before first-generation students enroll in postsecondary education, research shows they are clearly at a disadvantage when compared to continuing-generation students. Their lack of knowledge and preparation makes it difficult to begin the process of enrolling in postsecondary education. Once first-generation students enter college, they continue to face challenges that are difficult to overcome unless the student is involved in and out of the classroom. Little research has been done on the effect of involvement on first-generation student success, but the research that has been conducted yields positive results.

Further studies should include research on first-generation students attending different types of institutions, such as two-year and four-year institutions. Research on non-traditional aged first-generation students is also necessary. Discovering if certain types of involvement lead to various levels of success would be beneficial. Since the numbers of first-generation students enrolling in postsecondary education are increasing, it is my hope that additional research becomes available on the experiences of this student population.

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The Role of Critical Race Theory in Higher Education

Payne Hiraldo

Despite the substantial impact race has in generating inequities in society and educational institutions, race continues to be untheorized (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Critical race theory (CRT) is an analytical framework that stems from the field of critical legal studies that addresses the racial inequities in society. This article provides an analysis of CRT in the context of diversity and inclusivity in higher education. In addition, this article also draws from the work and research done by critical race theorists who support the use of CRT in education reform and research.

In 1994, critical race theory (CRT) was first used as an analytical framework to assess inequity in education (Decuir & Dixon, 2004; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Since then, scholars have used CRT as a framework to further analyze and critique educational research and practice (Ladson-Billings, 2005). This article will further explore how the five tenets of CRT can be used to analyze the different forms of social inequities reinforced through the institution of higher education. First, I will provide an explanation of CRT. Second, I will discuss how each CRT tenet contributes to inclusivity and diversity in higher education. Third, I will address criticisms of CRT. Finally, I will share how CRT can further benefit higher education.

An Historical Overview of Critical Race Theory

During the mid-1970s, CRT emerged from the early work of Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman, who were discontent with the slow pace of racial reform in the United States (Delgado, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998). According to Gordon (1990), CRT originated from the critical legal studies (CLS) movement (as cited

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in Ladson-Billings), which failed to address the “effects of race and racism in U.S. jurisprudence” (DeCuir & Dixon, 2004, p. 26). As a result, CRT analyzes the role of race and racism in perpetuating social disparities between dominant and marginalized racial groups (DeCuir & Dixon; Ladson-Billings; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). CRT’s purpose is to unearth what is taken for granted when analyzing race and privilege, as well as the profound patterns of exclusion that exist in U.S. society (Parker & Villalpando, 2007). Therefore, CRT can play an important role when higher education institutions work toward becoming more diverse and inclusive. For example, in a predominantly White institution (PWI) simply working toward increasing the amount of students of color enrolled is an insufficient goal if institutional change is a priority. Examining the campus climate efforts to have culturally competent and diverse staff, faculty, and administrators is a more effective way of becoming more diverse and inclusive. Fortunately, the various tenets of CRT can be used to uncover the ingrained societal disparities that support a system of privilege and oppression.

The Relevance of the Five Tenets of CRT within Higher Education

CRT’s framework is comprised of the following five tenets: counter-storytelling; the permanence of racism; Whiteness as property; interest conversion; and the critique of liberalism (DeCuir & Dixon, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1998; McCoy, 2006). Counter-storytelling is a framework that legitimizes the racial and subordinate experiences of marginalized groups (DeCuir & Dixon; Ladson-Billings; Parker & Villalpando, 2007). DeCuir and Dixon stated that counter-stories are a resource that both expose and critique the dominant (male, White, heterosexual) ideology, which perpetuates racial stereotypes. Counter-stories are personal, composite stories or narratives of people of color (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002).

The use of counter-stories in analyzing higher education’s climate provides faculty, staff, and students of color a voice to tell their narratives involving marginalized experiences. Counter-stories can assist in analyzing the climate of a college campus and provide opportunities for further research in the ways which an institution can become inclusive and not simply superficially diverse. This goal is important to keep in mind when institutions work toward creating a diverse college community. An institution can aim to increase the diversity of the campus by increasing the number of students of color. However, if the institution does not make the necessary changes to make the campus climate inclusive, the institution will have a difficult time maintaining diversity. In many cases, counter-stories support the permanence of racism, which is the second tenet of CRT.

The permanence of racism suggests that racism controls the political, social, and economic realms of U.S. society. In CRT, racism is seen as an inherent part

of American civilization, privileging White individuals over people of color in most areas of life, including education (DeCuir & Dixon, 2004; Delgado, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). In higher education, racism may be analyzed through a lens that examines the structural impact. When higher education ignores the existence of systematic racism, diversity action plans become ineffective (Iverson, 2007). Instead, these initiatives work to propel and reinforce structural and institutional racism (Ladson-Billings & Tate). Therefore, it is important to consider how well intended institutional processes and procedures can potentially promote racism when working toward improving an institution's plan for diversity and inclusion.

The third tenet of CRT is Whiteness as property. Due to the embedded racism in American society, Whiteness can be considered a property interest (DeCuir & Dixon, 2004). As a result, this notion operates on different levels. These include the right of possession, the right to use and enjoyment, the right to disposition, and the right of exclusion (DeCuir & Dixon; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Historically, the idea of Whiteness as property has been perpetuated as an asset that only White individuals can possess (Ladson-Billings & Tate). During enslavement, African men, women, and children were objectified as property (Ladson-Billings). This historic system of ownership and the reverberations from it further reinforce and perpetuate the system of White supremacy because only White individuals can benefit from it.

Particularly in higher education, the division between student affairs and academic affairs perpetuates the notion of race as property rights (Patton, McEwen, Rendón, & Howard-Hamilton, 2007). This is evident when research shows how the majority of African Americans who earn their Ph.D. in education earn them in education administration, therefore continuing as practitioners and rarely becoming faculty (Ladson-Billings, 1998). As a result, the majority of African Americans do not become part of the driving force in higher education: faculty. Professors are seen as owners of the curriculum. Therefore, they have the autonomy of designing courses according to their own understanding of their philosophy of knowledge, which can work against students of color (Patton et al.). This institutional power further reinforces the notion that being White is more valuable and important than being a person of color (Patton et al.).

This systemic reality works against building a diverse and inclusive higher education environment because it supports the imbedded hierarchical racist paradigms that currently exist in our society. Diversity tends to be more visible within divisions of students affairs, although the power of the institution tends to be centralized within academic affairs where there is less representation of women and people of color (Patton et al., 2007).

Interest convergence is the fourth tenet of CRT. This tenet acknowledges White individuals as being the primary beneficiaries of civil rights legislation (Ladson-Billings, 1998; DeCuir & Dixon, 2004; McCoy, 2006). DeCuir and Dixon argued, “early civil rights legislation provided only basic rights to African Americans, rights that had been enjoyed by White individuals for centuries. These civil rights gains were in effect superficial ‘opportunities’ because they were basic tenets of U.S. democracy” (p. 28). An example of this is affirmative action. Although under constant attack as a benefit for people of color, research shows that the major recipients have been White women (Ladson-Billings). Ladson-Billings argued that because White women potentially support households where White men and children live, affirmative action ultimately benefits White individuals in general. Therefore, White individuals benefit from a structure that was initially implemented to offer equal opportunity to people of color.

Diversity initiatives provide another example of White individuals being the primary beneficiaries of civil rights legislation. Recruitment efforts at PWIs can be seen as a form of interest convergence. Given that many international students do not qualify for financial aid according to U.S. regulations, institutions place strong efforts in recruiting students of color who have the financial means to pay for their education. Colleges and universities benefit financially from bringing international diversity to their institution. Further, their student bodies become more cultured at the expense of the international students, while the institutions’ rankings may increase.

The fifth tenet of CRT, critique of liberalism, stems from the ideas of colorblindness, the neutrality of the law, and equal opportunity for all (DeCuir & Dixon, 2004). However, when analyzing the role of racism within U.S. society:

Whereby rights and opportunities were both conferred and withheld based almost exclusively on race, the idea that the law is indeed colorblind and neutral is insufficient (and many would argue disingenuous) to redress its deleterious effects. Furthermore, the notion of colorblindness fails to take into consideration the persistence and permanence of racism and the construction of people of color as Other. (p. 29)

Colorblindness is a mechanism that allows people to ignore racist policies that perpetuate social inequity (DeCuir & Dixon, 1999).

The lack of inclusivity in the academic curriculum (Ladson-Billings, 1998) and student development theory used by student affairs professionals (Patton et al., 2007) supports the notion of colorblindness that works against dismantling social inequities. In order to take a closer step towards eradicating racism on college campuses, student and academic affairs need to incorporate dialogues around

race throughout the curriculum and student activities (Patton et al.). Institutions of higher education must recognize and work toward dismantling colorblind policies (Iverson, 2007).

Criticism of CRT

CRT can play a key role in revealing the social inequities that exist within the structure of higher education. Although many scholars like Villalpando and Delgado have subscribed to the framework of analysis of CRT, the academy still approaches it with apprehension. One could argue that this criticism is due to the perspective that CRT takes on racism. Thinking about racism as a fundamental part of U.S. societal structure is unsettling when many people are trying to dismantle and work against it. However, doing so is a necessary step that society needs to take in order for society to progress. By acknowledging racism, members of American society could recognize initiatives made by the government as improving the lives of people of color, but still benefiting the dominant. Examples of these programs include affirmative action, study abroad programs, and diversity initiatives. CRT also provides a voice to the people who have been systematically oppressed (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). This is unlike other theories that analyze systemic oppression.

Critics claim that CRT does not include social class and gender as part of its framework due to its focus on race. However, CRT scholars work to address the intersectionality of race and other social identities within their analysis (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Patton et al., 2007). One cannot simply think about race, class, sexuality or gender independent from one another. Acknowledging how these various identities are interrelated furthers the complexity of these social constructions, which, if ignored, leaves questions unanswered. For example, what happens when thinking about social experiences? What happens when these various identities do not align with social norms? Essentially CRT places race at the center of the paradigm; however this does not necessarily mean that other identities are ignored.

Conclusion

Since the introduction of CRT in education, limited progress has been made, partly because CRT is relatively new and many scholars when using CRT only focus on the two tenets of counter-storytelling and permanence of racism (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2005). Although these tenets are very important:

[T]he contributions do not capture all that CRT has to offer...it is essential that we utilize the full power of CRT, including Whiteness as property, in-

terest conversion, and the critique of liberalism. (DeCuir & Dixson, p. 30)
Through the use of all tenets of CRT, researchers are able to unmask and uncover the reinforcement of White supremacy (DeCuir & Dixson).

Patton et al. (2007) recommended incorporating critical race perspectives in daily practices within education. Doing so brings awareness about the role of race in producing racial inequities. As a result, faculty, student affairs professionals, and institutional administrators should be aware of the rooted racism in educational settings and acknowledge the systemic complexities that further disadvantage students of color (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Patton et al.). Reflecting on how campus leaders incorporate racial perspectives in the academy through the construction of the curriculum, diversity initiatives, and institutional policies is essential to the progress of higher education's relationship with racial equality.

Many hope that CRT can be used as a reference for institutions striving to become more inclusive through changes in diversity initiatives, infrastructure of institutions, and analysis of hostile environments. When thinking about these possible changes it is important for administrators to ask themselves how these potential changes continue to promote a racist structure. It is important to utilize CRT's five tenets to help reveal racial inequity. Given that all five tenets address different, yet interconnected themes, they help unearth the various ways in which institutions reinforce racism. In addition, it is necessary for academic and student affairs to work collaboratively. If both sides of the institution do not work together in making the institution more inclusive, all the work will be done in vain.

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Political, Not Partisan: Service-Learning as Social Justice Education

Laura E. Megivern

By engaging in purposefully designed community work, we can involve students in conversations about social justice and their roles as community members. Service-learning is an engaged pedagogy that encourages students to explore social justice in depth. Social justice work, as well as service-learning, can often encourage students to become involved politically in issues they encounter. Given the Millennial Generation's distaste for polarized political debates and the potential for overly political discussion to silence students, how can service-learning programs continue to support students' social justice education and political engagement while avoiding partisanship? This article introduces the concept of justice-based service-learning (JBSL) and explores service-learning as social justice education, including the philosophical foundations of socially just service-learning and the intersections of politics, social justice, and service. The author proposes six principles for creating political—not partisan—socially just service-learning.

Social justice educators are familiar with the criticisms that we are too politically liberal, too concerned with political correctness, and even that we are “indoctrinating” students into becoming politically liberal activists. One criticism is that “critical educators typically enter the classroom with preformed political objectives. Their goal is not to bring out students’ independent thoughts... but to alter students’ ways of thinking to conform with a preconceived notion of what constitutes critical thought” (Freedman, 2007, p. 444).

The same criticisms are often leveled at service-learning educators. This article is a response to those criticisms, intended to spark dialogue among social justice and service-learning professionals about how we can be effective educators. Our goal is to give students the capability to be engaged, thoughtful, and purposeful community members who think critically about issues in the community rather

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than parroting politically correct responses. In short, both social justice and service-learning professionals are seeking to promote settings where “individuals are both self-determining (able to develop their full capacities), and interdependent (capable of interacting democratically with others)” (Bell, 1997, p. 3).

In this article I will explore how service-learning as a method of social justice education can be a liberal process, in the tradition of liberal education, without having politically liberal conclusions. We will briefly explore the foundations of service-learning, the idea of charity in service-learning, a new paradigm of justice-based service-learning, and the intersections of service and politics. Taking into consideration recent findings of the Millennial Generation’s perspective on political engagement, we will close with six principles for political but not partisan service programs. To begin, let us explore some key terms.

Terminology

There are many terms to describe work promoting the civic mission of higher education, ranging from service-learning to public scholarship. Within the field, there are ongoing discussions about which terms are best for these engaged pedagogies. Jacoby (1996) offered the following definition of service-learning: “a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development” (p. 5). For the purposes of this article, service-learning is inclusive of both academic credit-bearing and co-curricular service opportunities that aim to promote student learning and development while meeting community needs (as defined by members of that community).

As a pedagogy, service-learning developed from the work of John Dewey and this foundation provides a useful framework as we begin our examination of politics, social justice and service-learning. As part of the progressive education movement, the work of John Dewey highlighted the connections between practical experience and education. Dewey’s works *Democracy and Education* (1916) and *Experience and Education* (1938) provided the foundations for modern service-learning and other experiential education pedagogies. Dewey’s concept of democracy in education entails challenging students to balance their own needs with the needs of others in the community. As Rhoads (1998) elaborated, “democracy seen in this light demands that individuals understand the lives and experiences of a society” (p. 281).

As Jacoby and Brown (2009) explained, service-learning (particularly in a global context) can “enable students to develop the very qualities to which liberal education aspires: understanding of our complex and interconnected world, reflection

and critical thinking, problem solving, communication, tolerance for ambiguity, appreciation of diversity, and respect for the views of others” (p. 225). Further, service-learning as a particular mode of civic engagement can promote ethical development. Hollister, Wilson, and Levine (2008) explained: “engaged students are more likely to think about other people’s needs and interests, about the communities in which they are studying, and about the obligations that come with their privileges” (p. 18). The idea of privilege—although we have not always used this term—has played a prominent role in service and service-learning programs in the past, as we will explore.

From Charity to Justice

Some campus service-learning efforts have evolved from a charity, or philanthropic model. As Battistoni (1997) explained, the philanthropic ethic of service emphasizes character building as well as a “kind of compensatory justice where the well-off feel obligated to help the less advantaged, though they do not conceive of those served as being part of their own communities” (p. 151). An example of a service project informed by this charity ethic is a canned food drive. Often, such projects are single or annual events and include little contact between volunteers or donors and the recipients of service. Battistoni referred to this kind of service as reflective of a “noblesse oblige of people lucky enough to be where they are” (p. 151); other authors related this to a missionary mentality or “white horse syndrome,” the idea that the privileged volunteer can sweep in and fix whatever social problem they are confronting in a short period of time.

Break Away, a national organization that supports alternative break programs, has promoted a model of service named “Triangle of Quality Community Service.” It includes three essential components for service-learning programs: strong direct service, education, and reflection (Break Away: the Alternative Break Connection, Inc., 2009). This composition is consistent with the Freireian model of service-learning preferred by many service programs. Freire (2007) encouraged educators to avoid false charity that can reinforce oppression, such as the missionary mentality as described above. “True generosity lies in striving so that these hands—whether of individuals [such as the clients of service programs] or entire peoples—need to be less and less in supplication, so that more and more they become human hands which work and, working, transform the world” (p. 45). This sentiment characterizes one of the realizations that some service-learning practitioners seek to encourage in student volunteers: the purpose of service should be to eliminate the need for it. This idea at heart is a political one, because students often examine social structures and economic systems from a more complex perspective. This reexamination often arises from exposure to the stories of people who have been marginalized, and the new perspective may lead some to adopt new beliefs. However, the solutions to the social problems

addressed by service-learning are not necessarily prescribed, and these will be examined later in this article.

Justice-Based Service-Learning

I would like to introduce a new term here to fully encompass the social justice aspects of service-learning: justice-based service-learning (JBSL). I created this term to distinguish JBSL from service and service-learning efforts that do not include an intentional social justice component. JBSL provides students with the opportunity to examine their privilege and to put it to work to create social change. JBSL incorporates reflection at all stages of an experience, especially through activities and assignments that promote critical thinking about social issues and one's own place in the world, and in the creation and maintenance of those social problems (privilege). JBSL also incorporates comprehensive, multi-disciplinary, issue-based education that places the service experience in a social, economic, historical, and geopolitical context. Whenever possible, this education includes members of the community as co-educators to fully incorporate their lived experiences. Of course, JBSL also includes a strong direct service experience that fills a community-defined need and involves direct, meaningful interactions with community members. The written and/or verbal critical reflection incorporated in the experience allows students to construct new understandings of the world, to truly connect theory and practice.

One challenge of social justice education that JBSL can address is that many students have not had opportunities to interact with diversity. When effectively facilitated, JBSL provides structured, purposeful, and thoughtfully designed opportunities in which participants can meet and truly begin to interact with and get to know people who have had different life experiences. For example, I advised a service trip to an urban area in the Northeast. Most of the students were White, first-generation, had limited travel experiences, and were from rural areas of Northern New England. One of our service sites, and the one that some students described as most meaningful, was a men's "wet" homeless shelter, which will allow people to come in if they are under the influence of alcohol or drugs. The residents were primarily people of color, and our service "job" was simply to be with the residents: to play cards, share a cigarette if you chose to, and to hear stories.

This was the first time many students had a substantive conversation with a person experiencing homelessness. From our reflective conversations later I gathered that this was a powerful encounter for the students for many reasons. From an educational standpoint it gave them a richer, deeper and perhaps more accurate view of the social problems of poverty and all its interrelations with oppression, including racism. If we asked every student to give a definition of

homelessness, I'm sure each would give a different response: their understandings were shaped by their experiences, our discussions, and their own individual backgrounds. If we had prescribed a definition and a solution, and students had not had the opportunity to interact in this way, students' responses to our question would all be the same—and they would not understand it in the same way. Powerful encounters such as this one give students an added perspective when evaluating proposed policy solutions and political candidates, and in some cases can lead them to question or solidify already-established political identities.

Politics and Service

Civic engagement efforts are sometimes seen as overly political, particularly those initiatives that are informed by a Freireian rather than philanthropic ethic. Battistoni (2002) explained faculty reactions to civic engagement efforts: “faculty on the left complain that citizenship education tends to convey images of patriotic flag-waving. More conservative faculty see civic engagement as masking a leftist, activist agenda” (p. 10). At times, the politicization of an academic setting—whether in the classroom or not—can have a silencing effect on students. In their book *How to Talk About Hot Topics on Campus*, Nash, Bradley, and Chickering (2008) described a political discussion forum that devolved into partisan extremist arguments, frustrating organizers' hopes for dialogue: “it wasn't long before argument replaced discussion, and insult replaced argument” (p. 179). What Nash et al. longed for was a free exchange of ideas, the kind of conversation that leads to innovative solutions to complex social problems in an academic setting. When discussions become overly political or polarized, even the most well-intentioned efforts are stymied.

Part of the civic mission of higher education is to produce graduates who are prepared to tackle the complex social and environmental problems facing our world in an increasingly globalized society. As Jacoby and Brown (2009) explained, “higher education is confronted with the challenge of educating global citizens who can engage with one another to address [global challenges]” (p. 213). Creative and critical thinking, in addition to the capacity for dialogue, is crucial to this preparation of engaged citizens. Michael Bérubé, a professor of literature at Pennsylvania State University, in his 2006 book *What's Liberal About the Liberal Arts?* expressed this goal in a wish:

[T]hat our graduates emerged from our institutions even more cosmopolitan, less parochial, more willing to consider themselves citizens of (and responsible to) the world, more prepared for the moral and intellectual consequences of globalization; I wish our graduates were more fluent writers and more nimble thinkers; I wish more of them majored in the liberal arts, and that more of my fellow citizens appreciated the strength of liberalism, the

power of the arts, and the appeal of liberal arts. (p. 281)

In this call for more cosmopolitan graduates, Bérubé was not simply decrying the lack of political liberalism in graduates, but rather the kinds of critical thinking and reasoning promoted by the study of liberal arts. As he explained, higher education is dominated by the kind of liberals who are “liberal intellectuals ... committed to both substantive and procedural liberalism, to a form of pluralism and reasoned debate that does not always culminate in liberal *conclusions* [original emphasis]” (p. 24). While it can be argued that justice-based service-learning is a liberal procedure, the solutions it promotes do not need to be politically liberal. By adding an experiential component to explorations of social problems, JBSL provides additional complexity and depth to the search for solutions.

JBSL does not need to be prescriptive—such as a facilitator saying, “as we saw in our service experience, x is the problem and y is the solution”—and indeed it should not be. In order to best honor diverse perspectives and the wide variety of lived experiences present in the students and community members, we need to let new solutions and understandings come from the group. As we join and learn from new groups, our understandings of social justice issues and our places in them will evolve. As Paulo Freire (1990) said, “one of the best ways for us to work as human beings is not only to know that we are uncompleted beings but to *assume* the uncompleteness” (as cited in Horton & Freire, p. 11). This assumption of “uncompleteness” is especially important in discussion and reflection activities.

Politics and the Millennial Generation

In 2006 and 2007 the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) conducted a study of Millennials’ viewpoints on political engagement, including 47 focus groups at 12 colleges and universities across the United States. For the purposes of the CIRCLE study, the Millennial Generation included people born after 1985. The resulting report, “Millennials Talk Politics,” offers practitioners several insights. First, Millennials are more involved than Generation X, but express ambivalence with politics. In particular, Millennials dislike the polarization of public issues in the media and desire opportunities for authentic conversations instead. Students in the study also expressed a greater involvement in local issues and service than with politics: “the Millennials appear to be much more comfortable and experienced with direct service than with politics, yet their feelings toward government, politicians and the media are complex. They do not want to write off politics, despite their many criticisms; instead, they seek ways to engage politically” (Kiesa, Orłowski, Levine, Both, Kirby, Lopez, & Marcelo, 2007, p. 4). Additionally, students do not see the political system as accessible to them (Lopez & Kiesa, 2009). If students do not

believe traditional modes of civic engagement, such as voting or lobbying, are accessible to them, they may seek other forms of involvement in community problem-solving or may “drop out” of community involvement altogether.

Millennial Generation students are more politically and civically aware than previous generations, with almost 34% of first-year students in 2006 reporting discussing politics frequently during their senior year of high school and over 83% of incoming students in 2005 having volunteered at least occasionally during their senior year (Hunter & Moody, 2009). This increase in awareness and interest in civic engagement requires practitioners to be prepared to support deeper engagement and civic learning. As high schools begin to offer service-learning opportunities (especially as part of a graduation requirement), higher education's civic engagement opportunities should build upon students' civic knowledge and experiences.

When combined with Millennials' experiences with politics this may provide unique challenges; as Jacoby and Hollander (2009) explained, Millennials “are angry with adults' apparent inaction on mounting social problems and with what they perceive as adults' labeling them as self-absorbed and apathetic. They are usually not drawn to 1960s-style protests, yet they are uncertain about how to respond to the problems they see around them” (p. 232). Practitioners should be ready to offer opportunities for deeper involvement with political discussion and reflection surrounding community experiences.

Suggestions for Political, not Partisan, Service-Learning Programs

Balancing the political nature of JBSL programs while avoiding disengagement from Millennial Generation students uninterested in the extremes of political rhetoric can be challenging. While JBSL should promote exploration of the public issues that necessitate service as well as possible public policy solutions (and could even encourage students to become involved in advocacy efforts), these policy solutions should not be predetermined. Rather, students should have the opportunity to produce these suggestions with the community through the intersections of practical service experience, observation, educational exploration of root causes, and reflection that encourages critical thinking and the synthesis of knowledge from multiple sources. The following are principles for encouraging thoughtful, substantive exploration of public issues through political (not partisan) justice-based service-learning.

Principle One: Introduce Students to Local Context and Highlight Public Policy Issues

Give students a thorough introduction to the local context and public policy issues that contribute to the situation they observe. The scope and duration of

the service project may determine how thoroughly you are able to do this; for a single-day project, having the organization's staff give a tour and brief history provides context for student volunteers. A longer-term project, such as a semester-long service-learning course or multi-year service internship program, allows practitioners to provide more depth. Staff can provide students with information about the history and evolution of the community and statistics about the health of the community. Inviting local organization staff, advocacy organizations, and local legislators (e.g., city council members) to speak to students about the public policy issues that contribute to community needs is particularly effective.

Principle Two: Encourage Critical Reflection

Reflection is a crucial aspect of quality service-learning. Reflecting on issues of identity and privilege as they relate to the social issues at hand is especially important. Providing students with an opportunity to reflect on their service experiences both individually and in groups can support students making connections between “out-of-the-classroom knowledge” (such as observations made during a service project) and academic learning. Using a variety of reflection activities—written, verbal, artistic, group or individual—addresses differences in student learning styles and supports the development of all students.

Principle Three: Support Long-term Engagement

Promoting long-term involvement in service projects, or at the very least long-term engagement with social issues, is essential to providing students with the opportunity to practice citizenship skills. Long-term service is often most useful to community organizations, as students become more skilled and familiar with the organization. Furthermore, long-term civic engagement provides students with the opportunity to practice political engagement skills that will serve them well after graduation as citizens. As philosopher and political economist John Stuart Mill (1963) observed:

We do not learn to read or write, to ride or swim, by being merely told how to do it, but by doing it, so it is only by practising [sic] popular government on a limited scale, that people will ever learn how to exercise it on a larger. (p. 229)

Principle Four: Ensure Equal Access

One additional benefit to JBSL is that it provides students with the opportunity to engage with people who are different from them. For many students participation in service is not feasible—particularly those with fewer resources who may need to work or take care of family members while pursuing their education.

Given the benefits of participating in civic engagement programs, as well as the advantages of having a diversity of experiences represented in discussions of potential solutions, institutions of higher education should promote equal access to service programs. This can be done through several methods, including the use of scholarships, community-service federal work-study programs, and creating credit-bearing opportunities for civic engagement.

Principle Five: Build Academic Connections Across Disciplines

In co-curricular service-learning programs, encouraging students to make connections to academic experiences can enrich group discussions. This can be accomplished through encouraging students to link their service experiences to independent academic projects (such as a research assignment), to take courses that relate to the social issues explored through the service project, and to encourage faculty to develop courses that relate to the ongoing service work. Faculty can develop courses using academic service-learning and other engaged pedagogies. Interdisciplinary work is especially helpful in finding innovative solutions to social problems.

Principle Six: Promote Safe Space and Robust Dialogue

Finally, service-learning experiences should provide a safe environment for dialogue. Using ground rules, such as those suggested by Nash et al. (2008) for moral conversation can encourage the free exchange of ideas and provide students with the flexibility to fully explore social problems and their own potential to work to solve these problems. We should be gentle with each other and ourselves when engaging in dialogue about the occasionally challenging topics that arise in JBSL settings, to keep in mind the “uncompleteness” that Freire described (as cited in Horton & Freire, 1990, p.11). Whenever possible, practitioners should seek to facilitate dialogue that holds all members of the group at an equal level: “a necessary condition for dialogue ... is that no one has a greater ability to contribute to the discussion than anyone else has” (Freedman, 2007, p. 450).

Implications

A traditional goal of higher education in the United States has been to prepare graduates for citizenship. Service-learning is a powerful tool to engage students in critical examinations of social problems and systems of oppression that create them, as well as connect students to a local context. This work is not the responsibility of student affairs practitioners or faculty alone. As we work together to create educational environments that promote the development of citizens, we can consider taking the following steps. Faculty can incorporate justice-based service-learning into their courses; administrators and student affairs profession-

als can support these curricular efforts by providing logistical support as well as financial support through release time or curriculum development grants as appropriate. Faculty can incorporate transdisciplinary examination of social problems through team-taught courses, recommending courses in other disciplines to advisees as appropriate, and considering civic engagement efforts in reassessing core curricula. Student affairs professionals can highlight long-term engagement opportunities such as internships, fellowships, club involvement, and other methods. Both faculty and student affairs professionals in service-learning can incorporate reflection activities throughout the service experience, and incorporate group ground rules to promote a healthy setting for dialogue. Justice-based service-learning can help us achieve many of our goals for graduates; taking these next steps cannot only support our students' success but the success of our communities in solving problems as well.

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Challenging the Monolithic Asian American Identity on Campus: A Context for Working With South Asian American Students

Viraj Patel

As one of the fastest growing Asian American populations, South Asian Americans have a noted presence on college campuses. Coming from a variety of backgrounds, students' ethnic identity development is constructed and challenged through participation in both historically White institutions, such as the Greek system, as well as ethnic student organizations. This article explores immigration histories and racial constructions of South Asian Americans, the relationship between South Asian American ethnic identity and Asian American racial identity, the impact of the Model Minority Myth, and notions of ethnic authenticity in South Asian American student organizations. The article also includes three models of identity development to consider when working with South Asian American students and concludes with recommendations for future research.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, South Asian Americans (people who claim heritage from India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Maldives, and Bangladesh) were the third largest Asian American group, falling behind Chinese American and Filipino American populations. Among the specific Asian groups shown in the census, median incomes of Asian Indian and Filipino households were about \$10,000 higher than the median income of all Asian households and about \$8,000 higher than the median income of non-Hispanic White households. Of the five major racial groups, Asians, of which South Asian Americans are a subgroup, have the highest attainment of college degrees. With the election of Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal and the emergence of high-profile entertainment stars such as Kal Penn and Mindy Kaling, South Asian Americans are gaining visibility. They are accruing economic capital and becoming a part of American popular culture.

Student affairs literature concerning Asian American student populations often refers to an "Asian American" ethnicity, which blurs the lines between ethnicity

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and race. Because Asian American identity is multidimensional, it is important to consider individual subgroups and their unique histories (Ibrahim, Ohnishi, & Sandhu, 1997; Museum, 2008). There are many ethnicities (such as Korean, Indian, Pakistani, Japanese, etc.) that compose Asian America, and each carries their own distinct histories and cultures. While this serves a positive purpose in terms of coalition building, it also means some important cultural and historic facts get lost in the search for a common story. While South Asian American students are identified racially as Asian, and do share some common immigration and social histories with other Asian Pacific American (APA) populations, "The use of Asian American as an umbrella category... can obscure demographic differences that need to be addressed" (McEwen, Kodoma, Alvarez, Lee, & Liang, 2002, p. 18). This article will give a brief history of South Asian Americans in the United States, address issues facing contemporary South Asian American college students, and glimpse into South Asian American student organizations on college campuses. This article will also discuss the ideas of "Indianness" and "Desiness" and how these concepts fit into racial and ethnic identity formation for South Asian American college students as well as the impact of the Model Minority Myth. Finally, the article will conclude with recommendations for future research.

History

The first South Asian Americans arrived from the Indian state of Punjab around 1900. Mostly farmers who settled in California, these men married Mexican women and remained part of the agrarian working class. While there are many direct descendents of these workers, further immigration was heavily tempered with legislation such as California's Alien Land Law of 1913 and the Barred Zone Act of 1917, among others. These pieces of legislation directly targeted Asians from being able to own land and enter the United States, respectively (Leonard, 1997). However, the landmark Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 opened the gates to privileged and highly educated Asian immigrants. The immigration laws favored white-collar professional workers such as doctors and engineers who, upon settling in the United States, were quick to attain economic success. Because the first generation had achieved the "American dream" as a result of education, their children, who benefitted from their parents' privilege and of growing up in high-income households, were members of communities where college was financially and culturally attainable and expected (Leonard; Shankar, 2008). Now, particularly on the West Coast, it is common for colleges to have APA enrollments of nearly one-fifth to one half of the overall undergraduate enrollment (Inkelas, 2004). With such high enrollment figures, "APA students' potential interaction or lack of interaction with students of other racial/ethnic groups on these campuses could have a significant impact on whether or not the promise of interracial contact can be achieved" (Inkelas, p. 286). As colleges rap-

idly add a commitment to diversity to their mission statements and even general education requirements, learning how Asian Pacific American students explore identity may impact the way university missions are enacted in terms of diversity education.

Since so many Asian Pacific American and, in particular South Asian American students, are attending college in the United States, it is crucial to consider how racial and ethnic groupings must be disaggregated when working with different populations. The relationship South Asian Americans have to the racial category of Asian is a complicated one. In the United States, South Asian Americans have been referred to on the U.S. Census as Hindoos [sic], Indians, White, Asian, and most recently, as Asian Indian. Koshy (2004) stated:

From the early 1900s until 1923, the courts offered contradictory rulings on the racial identity of Asian Indians. In 1923, in the case of *The United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind*, the Supreme Court ruled while Asian Indians may be Caucasian by scientific precepts, they were nonwhite in the “common understanding” and that popular opinion should serve as the determining criterion of their racial identity. (p. 9)

Aside from state-imposed racial identification, many other groups of people whose ethnicities fall under the “Asian” racial category have participated in in-group disagreement for inclusion or exclusion from the APA category as well (McEwen et al., 2002). The histories of inclusion and exclusion support the need to disaggregate what is traditionally thought of as a homogeneous APA population and to consider the needs of each subgroup.

Model Minority Myth and “Desiness”

On August 31, 1987, *TIME* magazine printed a picture of six Asian American children posing in a classroom surrounded by textbooks with a tagline that reads “Those Asian-American Whiz Kids.” This headline perpetuates the Model Minority Myth, the notion that Asian Pacific Americans have overcome all racial barriers and have “made it.” The term insinuates that the APA community is the “model” for all other racial and ethnic groups, which can negatively affect cross-racial relations as well as inter-group assessment of social issues (Kotori & Malaney, 2003; McEwen et al., 2002; Park, 2008; Prashad, 2000). Another side effect of the Model Minority Myth includes the belief that Asian Pacific Americans are psychologically healthy and therefore not in need of counseling services. However, research indicates that, in addition to experiencing pressure due to a need to succeed and live up to the image of the model minority, cultural influences also inhibit Asian Pacific Americans from seeking counseling services on their own (Choi, Rogers, & Worth, 2009) and can result in serious unaddressed

mental health concerns for APA students.

In a study on Asian American women in sororities, Park (2008) noted how the Model Minority stereotype affects the way students navigate Greek-letter organizations at a predominantly White institution:

A colorblind narrative...would argue that since sororities dropped formal exclusion policies decades ago, such groups are open and bias free. Within this narrative, Asian Americans are cast as model minorities that do not face discrimination, capable of assimilating into sororities and campus life. (p. 109)

However, as Park's study later showed, sororities are not a place free of bias and racism. Park found that some Asian American females reported that they did not join because they felt self-conscious about their race. Additionally, many White students blamed the lack of Asian American sorority members on Asian American students since they are not "legally" barred from joining. There are two major factors that were not taken into consideration when statements about lack of participation made by White students about Asian American students being "their fault" for not joining Greek organizations. First, the legacy of the Greek system's history of racial exclusion was ignored, indicating an assumption that history does not have a direct impact on the present. Second, the bicultural background Asian American students live in, where being a part of a Greek organization is not a family tradition, was not taken into consideration. As a combination of the aforementioned factors, and unlike many White students who grow up with exposure to Greek culture from their parents and other family members, many Asian American students do not hear about Greek culture.

As South Asian Americans are considered part of the Asian racial category and the Asian Pacific American subculture, they are also victims of the perpetuation of the Model Minority Myth and its effects. The Model Minority Myth has also adapted itself in unique ways to the South Asian American community. In her ethnography on South Asian American college students at New York University in the 1990s, Maira (2002) interviewed several youth who expressed a preoccupation with ethnic authenticity. One student, Radhika, defined herself as an American with an Indian cultural background, to which Maira responded:

Her insistence on positioning herself within the nation-state, as an "American," and her uneasiness about claiming an unqualified "Indian" identity, were strikingly different from the stance taken by most of the other youth I spoke to, who embraced the label 'Indian' more eagerly than even a hyphenated "Indian American" identification. (p. 3)

The discussion of authenticity ties to an abstract concept called "Indianness" or

“Desiness” (Baljoli & Nair, 2008; Maira, 2002; Shankar, 2008), which refers to a quantitative in-group assessment of the degree of Indianness or Desiness. While the term “Indian” is unique to people who claim heritage from India, “Desi” refers to people from the South Asian diaspora. Overall, “Desiness” refers to an ideal of what a model South Asian should act like a mythical nostalgia for the “good old days” that must be recreated. Students in Maira’s ethnography cited that some of the ways “Desiness” and “Indianness” surfaced was through pressure to join ethnic-specific organizations in college and to have only friends of South Asian descent. “Indian American youth experience early in their lives the ways in which the different social spaces, or cultural fields, they occupy are associated with particular notions of generationally appropriate behavior and ideologies of citizenship and ethnicity” (Maira, p. 92). While the pressure to accommodate “Indianness” and “Desiness” is instilled well before college, it affects the way many South Asian American students experience college.

One of the ways students approach attaining “Indianness” and “Desiness” is by joining an ethnic-specific organization. Common college student organizations are Indian Student Associations (ISA), Pakistani Student Associations (PSA), and South Asian Student Associations (SASA), although there are many variations such as an Indian American Student Association, etc. There are also a plethora of similarly-related student organizations that address a South Asian identity but separate themselves from ethnicity, such as Hindu Student Councils, Bhangra dance teams, and South Asian a cappella groups, among others. These communities create networks that stretch across the nation and connect South Asian Americans as a cultural group. For example, many universities have Bhangra, Raas, and/or Bollywood dance teams that compete both regionally and nationally. These competitions build community as well as provide opportunities for South Asian American students to come together on the basis of performing, consuming, and embodying ethnic identity.

Ethnic student organizations can foster a heightened awareness of ethnic identity as well as create community and membership on college campuses at predominantly White institutions. There is “...evidence that racial/ethnic minority students express their cultural and racial identities through their participation in ethnic student organizations” (Museus, 2008, p. 571) and that “immersion in one or more campus subcultures positively influences the likelihood of those students’ successful adjustment to, membership in, and persistence in college” (p. 573). For South Asian American students, participation in ethnic student organizations provides a venue for students to explore what “Desiness” and “Indianness” are within a social setting.

The implications for this exploration can both be negative or positive, depending on the culture of the organization and upon the individual student. Inkelas

(2004) found, from a sample of 184 students out of which approximately 25% were South Asian students, that participation in an Asian Pacific American organization led to increased awareness of APA issues and awareness of ethnic identity. Inkelas acknowledged, “Thus, ethnic club organization/involvement may be a positive influence on APA students’ long-term civic and cultural engagement, which would imply that participation in such organizations is important for democratic citizenship” (p. 297). Research also indicates that being a part of an ethnic organization can influence the ethnic identity development of students as well as create a community. The more involved a student is with an ethnically-based organization, the more likely they are to explore ethnicity outside of the classroom (Guardia & Evans, 2008; Inkelas).

While exploration of ethnic identity is encouraged within South Asian American student organizations, the ideals of “Indianness” and “Desiness” are also internally policed within the organizations and can inhibit identity exploration in other realms. For example, one ideal of “Indianness” and/or “Desiness” is for women to remain chaste and for individuals to be heterosexual. There is an abstract quantitative measure for how authentically one expresses their South Asian ethnic identity. Maira (2002) explained:

Nearly all the youth I spoke to said their parents were uncomfortable with, if not opposed to, the idea of dating...Both youth and parents discussed dating with the underlying presumption of heterosexuality; none of the youth in this study identified as queer, although this does not mean that all of them were heterosexual...I was told at a workshop on sexuality that I facilitated at NYU that no one in Shruti [the Indian student group] knew of an Indian American who was visibly “out” on campus. (p. 154)

The internal policing and defining of South Asian American identity can inhibit exploration of other identities, such as sexual orientation, because heterosexuality is seen as integral to ethnic identities. By coming out or admitting to dating, South Asian American students would be seen as less “Indian” or “Desi.”

Ethnic Student Identity Development Models

A helpful model to consider when exploring the impact of “Desiness” and/or “Indianness” with South Asian American college students is Astin’s (1993) Input-Environment-Outcome (I-E-O) Model. The I-E-O Model addresses both the student’s background upon entering college (Inputs) and the student’s actual experiences during college (Environments). Together, they determine the student’s development upon leaving the institution (Outcomes). When examining a student’s relationship to “Desiness” and “Indianness”, preexisting notions about ethnic identity, in combination with each organization’s culture around internal

policing, impact the way students interpret their ethnic identity upon leaving. Shankar (2008) alluded to this model when, as an ethnographer working with Desi high school youth, she was pressured by parents to “teach” their children about proper study habits, what defined “success” and, especially to the young women, the importance of maintaining “respectability.” These notions and cultural pressures influence what values students equate to their ethnic identification.

Another useful model is Astin’s (1984) Model of Student Involvement, which suggested that student involvement directly affects student development. According to this model, student involvement “extends far beyond memberships in clubs and student organizations. Spending time on campus, living and participating in residence hall communities, interacting with faculty ... and socializing with peers about academic matters and nonacademic matters are all included in Astin’s definition” (as cited in Harper & Quaye, 2008, p. 187). When working with South Asian American students, it is important to consider not only the impact of involvement with ethnic student organizations, but also the other environments the student operates in and how that affects the student’s holistic development.

A third model to consider is Phinney’s (1991) Model of Ethnic Identity Development. Divided into three stages, the model asserted that a student progresses by initially showing little to no interest in ethnic identity, then exhibiting a search for ethnic identity, and finally arriving at a place where ethnic identity is achieved. While one criticism of this theory is that it is all-encompassing of all ethnic identities, Harper and Quaye (2008) suggested “an ethnic specific theory... could potentially lead to misguided generalizations and insufficient engagement strategies” (p. 187). Phinney’s model is useful for analyzing the way South Asian American students can develop their ethnic identities and how that development is impacted by involvement on campus.

Research Recommendations

One large gap in the literature about South Asian Americans and the challenges with “Desiness” and “Indianness” is consideration for how these terms are defined. While members of the group may identify with the terms, there is no definitive piece to refer to for those who are not members of South Asian American populations. While canonical works (Maira, 2002; Prashad, 2000; Shankar, 2008) refer to these concepts, there is no working definition for how the terms are interpreted and their impact on South Asian Americans. In order to gauge how populations define the terms “Desiness” and “Indianness”, the sample interviewed must be a diverse group comprised of but not limited to, members from different immigrant statuses, cultural backgrounds, gender identities, age, and different levels of involvement with ethnic organizations (Ibrahim et al.,

1997).

Another research recommendation is to consider the ethnic identity development of South Asian American students who do not fit the heteronormative ideals that are enforced through ethnic student organizations. If students do not feel comfortable joining the student group, or are driven out for violating “Indianness” and “Desiness” notions but still possess a strong sense of their ethnic identity, it is pertinent to address what other campus resources, if any, influence their exploration processes.

Conclusion

Overall, it is important for student affairs practitioners to acknowledge that South Asian American students face different community issues than other APA populations. For effective advising and counseling, histories of APA subgroups must be separated from one another. While ethnic student organizations do serve a positive purpose for many, cultural influences such as the Model Minority Myth and protection of a heteronormative ideal can also damage identity exploration for South Asian American students when pressured by notions of ethnic authenticity. Student affairs professionals will benefit from critically analyzing both the positive and negative aspects of ethnic student groups as well as supporting the continued ethnic identity development of their students.

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Art As Activism and Education: Creating Venues for Student Involvement and Social Justice Education Utilizing Augusto Boal's Theater of the Oppressed

Katelyn Sadler

This article demonstrates the use of Augusto Boal's Theater of the Oppressed as a way to actively engage college students in a dialogue about social justice, privilege, and equity. Art as a form of activism, acting as a form of self-expression, and role-playing as a method of self-exploration all become a transforming experience for the actor and the audience. This discourse delves into the topic of contemporary activism's learning outcomes and manifestation on university and college campuses, and speaks to how performance can become a method of both personal and social liberation. The journey of the author in a newly-founded, student-led theater troupe at the University of Arizona is the basis for the study.

Augusto Boal's *Theater of the Oppressed* embodies a philosophy of change. Students in the *Moving Voices Social Justice Theater Troupe* at the University of Arizona did not walk into the room the first day as expert actors, and did not leave as expert actors either. These students left feeling more in tune with themselves as a result of their year as "spectactors," empowered audience members who jumped on stage looking to explore oppressive burdens, privileges, and the systems that limit and subjugate humanity. Twelve students came out of the experience with the deeply held belief that theater is one of the most visceral forms of human expression and that art, driven by a communal democratic body, is one of the most effective means of social justice education and of student activism. Utilizing critical pedagogy and research, this article creates a foundational framework for student affairs professionals looking to actively engage students in counter-narrative storytelling, improvisational risk-taking, and self-exploration. In addition to student curriculum development, these theater techniques are applicable

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to the profession itself; in fact, this article later discusses several cases of *Theater of the Oppressed's* use in professional staff training and therapy. Through talking about critical theory, social justice education, and performance, this article attempts to reframe student activism in the form of artistic expression and impart the enriching learning outcomes of civic engagement and self-awareness.

Methodology

Augusto Boal's *Theater of the Oppressed* is an effective method to empower students to take an autonomous hand in their own social justice education, and the author of this article hopes to persuade student affairs professionals to adopt some of Boal's techniques in trainings and programs. Analysis of elements of various pedagogical theories, specifically based on multicultural education, is paired with existing evidence of artistic expression as an interactive means for activism. Documented uses of Boal's methods in higher education settings by both student affairs staff and faculty are also integrated. Informal research and examples of Boal's praxis observed by the author and student groups also provide a backdrop to ground student development and theatrical theory with practice.

Multicultural Education and Critical Pedagogy

Despite earnest attempts at enacting progress, the contemporary post-secondary institution still struggles with providing a venue for student involvement in social justice education and in unseating and analyzing dominant messages, ideologies, and canons of history and knowledge. Though significant progress has occurred on the part of faculty, staff, and administration, student demand for thorough, substantial, and interactive multicultural education grows every day. According to Harper and Quaye (2007), students are increasingly dissatisfied with the divide between the rhetoric surrounding diversity and social justice education and its practice. Universities are falling far behind their mission statements in ensuring a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment for incoming students of historically underrepresented populations, and in turn are not adequately challenging students' dominant identities and educating about privilege.

The very structure of the academy continues to support a hierarchy of knowledge-transfer that does not grant student autonomy and equitable student access. The majority of classrooms still uphold the structural authority of the teacher, rather than creating an environment for student knowledge exchange and democratic discourse of ideas and personal accounts (Goldstein, 2007). The way the curriculum is structured relies on the student to access the material in certain proscribed ways, rather than provide multiple entry points for knowledge acquisition. This lack of Universal Design limits students with and without disabilities (Rose & Meyer, 2002). Methods that bridge the gap between the classroom and

the learning spaces outside the domain of faculty come up against walls set in place by systems of campus culture and institutional tradition. Student affairs professionals themselves are often disheartened by the number of institutional barriers in place preventing tangible pedagogical change for the benefit and empowerment of their students. As the academy begins to operate more like a business that values efficiency, public space turns private. Messages of dominant culture from a monopoly of voices become the standard (Giroux, 2006). Ultimately, while growing opportunities exist for students to get involved and while student affairs professionals provide niches of space for public dialogue and conversation, the primacy of dominant discourse still obscures much of this resistance.

The need for a more interactive, compelling social justice curriculum is paramount. Critical academic multiculturalism becomes more successful when more voices are heard (Trifonas, 2003). As critical theorist Henry Giroux (2006) advocated, one of the best ways to supplant dominant discourse is through the deconstruction, exploration, and recreation of dominant texts, including film, literature, and theater. The framework of *Theater of the Oppressed* allows this kind of post-modern activism.

Art as Activism

Boal believes that art, without its political and social underpinnings, is devoid of purpose and that theater and the arts have been converted from a “vehicle of natural expression of society into one of elitist expression” (Flores, 2003, p. 42). Art and other texts are some of the primary modes of message delivery and much as Paulo Freire argues that there is no “neutral education,” Boal believed that there is no neutral art or theater because both are means of education (Flores). Art has substantial power because of its didactic qualities. Many artistic texts carry such authority because there is little to no ability to interact with or contest the messages carried. However, it is this fact, combined with art’s complete and utter ability to encapsulate the human condition, that gives it such efficacy as a form of protest. The use of art in education for therapy, reflection, and liberation is what gives it such power as a means for change. The artist and the performer can interrupt the messages carried in existing pieces of visual culture to deconstruct the dominant cultural discourse of the co-curricular learning environment. Students, in essence, can take an authoritative text and subvert it to create their own meaning out of it. It is meaning-making meets multicultural education.

Recent research reveals that students who have the opportunity to interact in the arts have a higher likelihood of completing their schooling and of becoming involved in other activities on campus (Bains & Mesa-Bains, 2002). Use of art as a radical response by students and others creates a community of locals who may

come from a diverse series of backgrounds, but all comment on the state of their current surroundings and create a dialogic interchange (Fuguet, 2009). A performance ethnography, for instance, goes beyond a traditional lecture and gives students the ability to link art and content areas, share their cultural foundations, and engage in a theatrical rendition of what they are studying (Fierros, 2009). While this is not one of Boal's methods, this use of performance demonstrates how bringing art into the classroom can disrupt the overbearing discourse of the traditional teacher-student dichotomy to create a rich tapestry of knowledge.

According to Boal, theater allows people to participate in the organization and renovation of daily life. The audience members create a horizontal structure of decision-making, which affirms the inherent political nature of art and of life as mirrors to one another (Picher, 2007). Ultimately, when brought into the student affairs profession, *Theater of the Oppressed* not only grants students the ability to express themselves artistically, but also empowers them to overcome collusion and openly comment on the oppressive institutions leading them to anxiety, stress, and disenfranchisement. Theater and performance are fundamental human activities. By providing a space for students to synthesize their multiple identities and roles, students gain the agency to comment on and create change at their universities, in their communities, and on a personal level.

Student Activism and Student Development

Student activism has taken on a new face in today's population of students, and many student affairs professionals are beginning to realize the opportunity student activism presents for community and individual learning experiences. Students today no longer unify singularly around one or two big issues, as the issues and the students have diversified (National On Campus Report, 2005). Arising out of the sea of issues around identity politics in the 1990s, current twenty-first century activism focuses on a wide variety of experiences, backgrounds, and causes (Rhoads, 1998). Students find entry at numerous access points and contribute at various levels. New technologies and wider access to computers and the internet have moved much of the activist battlefield to cyberspace (Carty & Onyett, 2006). With the increasing influence of globalization, students have become more focused not just on issues close to home, but on topics and injustices happening thousands of miles removed (National On Campus Report). Contemporary collective action has come to incorporate the same tactics of global communication as the corporations, multinationals, and organizations that students are advocating against, and students are using forms of alternative media and mass communication as mobilizing tools (Carty & Onyett). An example out of the student sphere, for instance, involves labor unions of long shore workers across the world, from Spain to California, refusing to unload the ships of a Danish shipping line, following a violent clash between labor and law enforcement

in the local Charleston, SC community (Erem & Durrenberger, 2008). While this example does not involve students, it does show the great interconnectivity activists today have at their disposal and demonstrates how students across campuses are working together virtually to create change. These new communities of online student activists demonstrate a growing understanding of mutual interdependence and expose students to a range of people, beliefs, and backgrounds (Carty & Onyett).

Some student affairs professionals have recently recognized the use of activism as a method for learning and community building, and professionals are now trying to define what role they should play in their students' on-campus activism. In the past, antagonism between the administration and students was standard. However, today growing numbers of student see administrators and professionals as resources, supporters, and gatekeepers to granting student movements more legitimacy, more publicity, and in some cases more funding (Roper-Huilman, Carwile, & Barnett, 2005). Student affairs professionals and faculty have begun to work together at some institutions to guide and model good collective organizing techniques (Roper-Huilman et al.). For instance, when the Arizona state government threatened to cut 40% of the three public universities' funding, many faculty members excused students from class to attend a protest at the state capital, and student affairs professionals were the ones organizing students boarding buses. Faculty and staff attended the protest to support the students and their institution.

According to a study conducted by Biddix, Somers, and Polman (2009), opportunities for activism serve as an amazing building block for student civic engagement development. Biddix et al. believed that through activism students form a "commitment to public service," "a greater sense of individual responsibility," "a foundation in communities of practice," "engagement in principled dissent" and democracy, and engage in "reflective leadership" (p. 143). They base these beliefs on Chamber's and Phelps's theory of leadership development and point directly to the personal values, the sense of agency, and the creation of community on campus as the primary positive results of student activism.

The basis for the student affairs staff member or administrator's involvement in encouraging some level of activism, then, is significantly well established. However, this is a challenging task. Student affairs professionals must ask themselves how to best empower students to create change without becoming integrally wrapped up in a movement that could reflect poorly on the institution. This is where alternative forms of activism can take precedent. Utilizing students' dedication to self-expression and using art and viral marketing as a method of delivery could have an immense impact on the educational experience. For instance, flash mobs on the University of Vermont campus in the fall of 2009,

which were organized and talked about in a virtual space, translated to visible action on a variety of issues. One such flash mob, organized by a graduate student in the Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration program, encouraged students to join together to dance to “Thriller” on the green outside of the student center in a salute to Michael Jackson. Another, organized by a different graduate student, encouraged students to shop in slow motion on Church Street to comment on the lethargic speed of global climate-change legislation. These happenings have their foundations in many of Augusto Boal’s techniques for social change, particularly invisible theater, and demonstrate both how online activism unifies with physical artistic and expressive action, and how staff can be involved in the process of organization.

New forms of activism unite easily with Boal’s techniques because these online communities and communications are, in a sense, their own theater. Furthermore, *Theater of the Oppressed* is a tool for creating almost all of the learning outcomes associated with student activism and student civic engagement by Biddix, Somers, and Polman. It is the formation of community that is perhaps *Theater of the Oppressed*’s greatest strength. The whole basis of this form of theater is to empower communities of people to act out their angst, their feelings of disenfranchisement, and to reclaim a sense of their lost power. The theater troupe members themselves form a deep sense of connection to one another, and this connection exponentially expands to others in certain forms, like Forum Theater, which encourages the audience to actively engage in forming the scene and the action on stage. Boal’s techniques cannot exist without a community of people willing to experiment, but through the process individuals are asked to take a deep and penetrating look at their own beliefs, values, and selves. By exploring the roles that students play in their individual lives through games and reflective exercises, students become immersed in a sea of self discovery and definition, and their actions are held accountable by the community of spectators surrounding them. Ultimately, *Theater of the Oppressed* provides a foundation for student affairs professionals to engage students in conversations about identity, community, and leadership. The need for a progressive and gripping technique for multicultural education and advocacy is significant, and Boal’s format for artistic expression can fill the gap and encourage student development.

The Methods of *Theater of the Oppressed*: Boal’s Praxis

Theater of the Oppressed utilizes improvisational theater games and performances to create a democracy of voices that can lobby for political and individual change. *Theater of the Oppressed* originated in Brazil around 1971 when the regime in power brutally censored the arts (Boal, 1997). Boal and his theater troupe were put under new restrictions and forced to perform only plays sanctioned by this regime. As a result Boal and his troupe began to go into public space to perform

street theater. Audience members and people in these communities began to get involved in the theatrical experience, and this inspired Boal's use of *Theater of the Oppressed* to empower the spectator from passive observer into actor. His term for these individuals is "spectactor."

To do this, Boal (1979) created a series of games and steps that rely on four key stages, all of which are vital to create an environment where students explore their own identities and the systems that affect them and others in their communities. Stage one is "knowing the body" (p. 126). Boal developed a series of exercises that encourage the spectactor to get in tune with the movement, function, and power of their bodies. Body parts are used in conjunction with other people, and trust in members of the community grows. Stage two is "making the body expressive" (p. 126). The student spectactor explores the power of the body to express emotion, power, and self through a variety of games. Spectactors examine the roles they take on in their daily lives. Stage three is "theater as language" (p. 126). The spectactor begins to view theater as something that is transformative and evolving, as opposed to being static and didactic. The audience member takes control of the stage and imprints their own language and message on an existing text, or explores a problem that exists through their own use of theater as communication. This stage utilizes Image Theater and Forum Theater, which will be expounded on later. Stage four is "theater as discourse" (p. 126). Theater becomes political, and the actors use the theater to convey their own messages to discuss certain themes to an unwitting audience. Invisible Theater is a part of this stage.

Boal's stages use a variety of techniques, from traditional theater and improvisational games, to more formal performance-based theater. Ultimately, the techniques Boal uses are in an effort to propel the spectactor and the audience member through his stages of theatrical development.

The following three techniques are the foundation of *Theater of the Oppressed*. Suggestions for their use in an educational setting also accompany their definition.

1. Invisible Theater, one of the first pieces of Boal's method, is a scripted piece of theater performed in a public space where the audience does not know the action is a performance and comes away thinking the ramifications of the action are real. The lines between reality and performance blur and the spectator walks away unsettled, processing what they have just witnessed. These theatric pieces are also called "happenings" and have been used for revolutionary and educational purposes from communities in the developing world to high schools. From staging an invisible theater piece on body image to imitating an act of violence, these pieces can be as radical or as subtle as needed. However, invisible theater

is problematic in many ways because of this. There is no real way of assessing the outcome of the action, and follow-up with students affected by invisible theater is limited as a result of the secrecy of the action. In some cases, invisible theater happenings could be construed as staged bias-related incidents. While the troupe itself does not suffer any ill effects, it is hard to determine what the audience members' internal reactions are to witnessing these situations and how they may trigger student witnesses. For instance, an on-campus resident participated in a happening with her high school Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) where they staged a hate-crime against a student who identified as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning (LGBTQ) to get a reaction from the administration (J. Gariepy, personal communication, October 2008). This, however, created more of a harsh climate for LGBTQ students at the private school due to the administration's negative reaction to the event. As a result, invisible theater should be used with caution. Despite the hazards, however, invisible theater can be extremely successful at creating a dialogue about topics traditionally kept silent in a wider forum. It has the power to engage students who might traditionally not be willing to engage.

2. Image Theater also came out of Boal's time in Brazil. Image Theater requires students to express their opinions or views on a certain theme, chosen by the audience or by the troupe itself. Image Theater uses the body to encapsulate the ideas surrounding these themes by creating a tableau, or image, of the theme at hand, and then having the audience change this theme to better suit what they would like to see as the outcome to their theme. To start, the group uses paper to brainstorm the ideas, feelings, and views surrounding a theme. A bubble is placed around the main theme in the middle of the page, and then subsequent and related ideas surround it and connect to it and each other. For instance, if one was talking about the theme of immigration and the U.S. Mexico Border, one might yell out words such as "undocumented" or "border patrol." These individual suggestions, thoughts, or feelings are then broken up by general umbrella themes under the bigger theme. In this case, perhaps the themes would turn into (a) racial prejudice; (b) the physical representations of the border; and (c) issues of legality. Members of the troupe or the audience then collaborate to come up with physical ways to represent these themes with the human body. For instance, for the sub-theme of physical representations of the border, the group might have three people link arms to represent a border wall, separating one group of people from another. These bodily representations then are combined together into one tableau onstage, and the audience is asked to make suggestions to change the current image into one they would like to see. A new tableau is formed utilizing these suggestions. This is typically an ideal version or resolution to the

theme or problem, agreed upon by a consensus of the audience. The audience is then asked for real, tangible suggestions on how to move from the current construction of the theme to this ideal. The audience discusses the issue and the factors impacting the theme, and ultimately engages in a dialogue that promotes the expression of all people's views and encourages compromise and negotiation. The audience controls the action. These theatrical pieces have been used to help students process not only topics happening outside of their own sphere, but also to therapeutically process the stress of living up to expectations of being a good student, interacting in a constrictive campus environment, social pressures of alcohol and other drugs, and similar topics affecting collective and individual student life.

3. Forum Theater is perhaps the form of theater that utilizes the audience the most and looks the most like theater. It was also developed by Boal later than the other forms aforementioned. In Forum Theater, the theater troupe acts out a pre-written scene that involves a conflict in need of resolution. The troupe or the audience can choose this topic. A joker, or a mediator of the action, asks the audience to provide suggestions to resolve the conflict; the scene is then repeated with the new suggestions put in play. The results of these changes are discussed and more suggestions are made. These suggestions are then acted out. If any of the suggestions seem implausible or unrealistic, an audience member can yell, "Magic," and then explain why they believe the solution is too simple or why things would not play out in real life the way they are on stage. The joker encourages people in the audience to come up and take on the role of the characters on stage to implement a new idea. Through this method, the audience becomes involved in the action and in finding the solution to the oppressive action taking place. In these scenes, there must be a clear protagonist and a clear antagonist, and only the methods of the protagonist can change. A violent action can never be the solution. Utilizing these techniques, students can explore what ways are most beneficial to create change and can engage in dialogue surrounding the topic at hand. Group dialogue about how to solve these issues and what other issues might be wrapped up in them, can lead students to a better appreciation of the different voices and views people have, and how their backgrounds affect these views. The joker serves as a moderator not only of the action, but also of these conversations.

These foundational methods of Boal's *Theater of the Oppressed* provide a basic introduction to the type of work students can engage in, and how a troupe of spectators can form. No real knowledge of theater is needed. Rather, all one needs is enthusiasm, a wish to be a part of communal action, and a willingness for self-

exploration. Examining what goal the use of these techniques aspires to will help guide the level of practice. If student identity development is the goal, then small workshops may prove the most beneficial. If the goal is to make a statement or advocate around an issue, a large performance may be a better venue. The next section explores the application of Boal's techniques within higher education.

Applications in Student Affairs

Theater is complex, at times abstract, and always challenging. So is social justice education and so is student affairs. The unification of all these topics and their collaboration to create a positive outcome is difficult to measure. However, I stumbled upon several examples of how college and university campuses have used *Theater of the Oppressed* to analyze the efficacy of using Boal's techniques on a college campus and determine in what realms it makes the most impact. Many people, including myself, often use games developed by Boal as alternatives to icebreakers or team builders; they often allow for conversation following them about power and privilege. Outside of this more simple application, *Theater of the Oppressed* has been used for training staff and administrators at universities. In particular, it has been used as a way to allow administrators, faculty, and staff to analyze the university structure and comment on the politics and barriers of working within an institution that sometimes does not always allow staff to work in students' best interests (Brown & Gillespie, 1999). Staff engaging in institutional dissent through theater may sound radical, but according to Brown and Gillespie, the process of allowing the collective airing of oppressive individuals and overpowering organizational structure actually allows professionals a greater sense of empowerment, which leads to better satisfaction in their work at the university. It allows staff to collectively sort through ethical dilemmas and problems that others are facing, and come together in a manner that facilitates cross-office dialogue. This use of *Theater of the Oppressed* is quite beneficial in that it focuses on the individual finding agency through community. The individual acts out an experience they have already had and have gained experiential knowledge about, potentially gaining additional staff allies in the process.

One large caveat exists to the use of *Theater of the Oppressed* in trainings. Since *Theater of the Oppressed* uses collective knowledge and experience to determine where the conversation goes, it cannot be used to synthesize new knowledge outside of the audience's existing areas of experience. Boal's form is limited to using the knowledge presented in the room to come up with a solution. For example, a study on the use of *Theater of the Oppressed's* Forum Theater as a means of training teachers and educators on social justice topics had very mixed results (Burgoyne, Placier, Thomas, Welch, Ruffin, Flores, & Miller, 2007). For those educators who had already engaged in dialogue about social justice topics and explored the systemic oppressions and institutions contributing to injustice

and inequity, *Theater of the Oppressed* served as a marvelous tool to enhance their knowledge, skills, and self-efficacy. These teachers came out the other end feeling more confident about engaging students in conversations about social justice and using some of the techniques they learned through theater to do so. However, teachers and educators who self-identified as having no social justice background stated that they felt less confident to talk about these issues following the use of interactive theater (Burgoyne et al.). This example demonstrates a need for a parallel program highlighting some foundational knowledge on systems of oppression before using *Theater of the Oppressed* as a tool. Theater ultimately carries the risk of merely perpetuating the normative structure of society, since it itself emulates life (Boal, 1979). There is an inherent danger when separating one piece of Boal's stages from another, in that the exploratory first stages are really the time when the troupe itself works to analyze what playing roles entail, as well as how to avoid falling into the trap of playing stereotypes rather than real people. Without an accompanying conversation about hierarchy, authority, and power, Boal's techniques alone cannot address all of these topics. *Theater of the Oppressed* can only provide a conduit for participants to explore their own narratives of oppression and subordination. Boal's techniques become dangerous when a dominant identity attempts to comment on an experience they do not have.

Boal's techniques find their greatest strength in their ability to be therapeutic, but not in the contrived way most theater finds resolution. The therapy in Boal's techniques is in the power of the individual and community to express topics of conversation that may be seen as taboo. Confronting a boss or teacher on the stage may not accomplish much tangible change, but it can leave one feeling emboldened with promise. For this reason, Boal's techniques have begun to make an appearance in relationship and family therapists' offices (Proctor, Perlesz, Moloney, Mcilwaine, & O'Neill, 2008). Members of the family can explore the power dynamics within their house using *Theater of the Oppressed*, and this ultimately deconstructs the therapist's authority and allows the spectator clients to question oppressive acts and structures in their own lives. The application of this in a school counseling office or surrounding alcohol and other drug counseling may allow students to examine the pressures that pushed them into making decisions around substance use. It may allow students struggling with mental illness to comment through action and words not only on their experience, but also on the oppressive structures in place that limit their ability to thrive at the university. These opportunities provided by *Theater of the Oppressed* demonstrate potential applications outside of a traditional student theater troupe, and show that art is not only activism, but it is an integral way that people process their world and their experiences.

Conclusion

Ultimately, *Theater of the Oppressed* serves as a method of activism and art. It provides a framework for discussing multiculturalism, but grounds this discourse in the experience and narrative of the individual. Through my experience on a troupe of student activists, I came to a much deeper understanding of myself and felt empowered to continue to make change. I hope that others can use these same techniques to find their own voice and to find a way, outside of traditional activism, to actively engage the students, community members, faculty, and staff of their university or college. *Theater of the Oppressed* has the potential to provide higher education with a method of pedagogy both inside and outside of the classroom, based not on authority and canonized texts, but on self-expression and individual narrative. The connection of student affairs with critical educational theory and practice, particularly in Boal's work, could serve to create a new unique discourse that empowers educators and students to have a greater hand in their own education.

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Note to Those Hoping to Learn More:

To gain a greater foundation in Augusto Boal's theory, please read Theater of the Oppressed by Augusto Boal. For a reference to how to put this theory into practice, as well as excellent ideas for games and icebreakers incorporating social justice, Boal's Games for Actors and Non-actors is an excellent resource.

Where Do We Belong? Addressing the Needs of Transgender Students in Higher Education

Wendy Schneider

Although there has been very little research conducted on the experiences of transgender college students, the reports which do exist indicated an overall lack of access and support on campuses across the country. A fairly strong nationwide student movement has grown in response to these concerns, focused on addressing specific obstacles transgender students face in higher education. The institutions which have experienced the most challenge and student activism concerning transgender issues are women's colleges. Smith College has been in the media as an example of the opposing opinions about whether or not transgender students, specifically students who identify as female-to-male, belong at women's colleges. As this issue continues to grow, it will become vitally important that student affairs professionals and people who work in higher education become aware of the unique experiences and needs of transgender students.

The field of student affairs is committed to educating students about and embodying diversity and multiculturalism. Sandeen and Barr (2006) named diversity as a critical priority for student affairs professionals and recognized the efforts of the last 40 years toward making higher education more inclusive and increasing students' awareness of multicultural issues. At the same time, the authors indicated that there are many challenges yet to be addressed in regards to diversity within higher education.

Gender Identity and Higher Education

As an identity-based realm of diversity, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues and concerns have risen to the surface in the last couple of decades within higher education and particularly within student affairs. Since 1990, 136 LGBT resource centers have been established on campuses across the na-

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tion (Consortium of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals, 2006). Numerous studies have been conducted and articles published on the experiences of college students who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB). Various climate indexes rated campuses on how welcoming and safe they are for people of minority status in terms of sexual orientation. The progress made in regards to education about LGB issues, as well as support for LGB-identified students, is commendable. At the same time, however, very little work has been done within higher education for individuals who identify as transgender (trans or T).

According to Beemyn (2005a):

[T]ransgender is an umbrella term for anyone whose self-identification or expression crosses or transgresses gender categories, including, but not limited to, transsexuals (individuals who identify with a gender different from their biological gender), cross-dressers (the term preferred over *transvestites*), drag kings, and drag queens. (p. 107)

In the mid-1990s, Kate Bornstein and other transgender activists began publicly embracing their gender identities in an effort to educate and build networks of support and community for transgendered people. As a result trans issues came “out of the closet,” and there began a “shifting [of] the discourse on transgenderism from a personal disorder to a cultural one: the inability of society to move beyond narrow gender categories” (p. 111).

The college years have proven to be a common time for young people to begin exploring their gender identity. Not only do many people establish various facets of their identities during college, but living away from home for the first time can provide gender-variant students with an opportunity to explore their gender identity in ways they were not previously able (Beemyn, 2005a). Although there is no accurate measurement of the current number of transgender college students, direct observation and anecdotal evidence indicate that an increasing number of students are challenging the traditional understanding of gender as binary. While some of these students self-identify as transgender, others have chosen instead to describe themselves as gender-variant, non-gender conforming, genderqueer, or something else entirely. Beemyn noted that language has historically been problematic in that it fails to communicate the complexities of gender. As a result, words used to describe gender-variant people are constantly in flux and there exists much disagreement between people who identify as transgender in regards to the meaning of certain identifying terms.

Because of the perceived connection between gender identity and sexual orientation, transgender (T) issues and activism were combined with the already established LGB movement, resulting in the acronym LGBT. Much in the same

way that other marginalized identities have been grouped together, individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender are seen as part of one community, even though their individual identities and experiences can be vastly different. In order to more effectively work to meet the needs of transgender students on college campuses, faculty and staff must be educated about the differences between sexual orientation and gender identity. In his training entitled “Transgender Issues in College Health and Student Affairs,” Samuel Lurie (2008) made the distinction between gender identity and sexual orientation with the following statement:

Every individual has a biological sex, a gender identity and a sexual orientation. Being transgender does not mean you’re gay and being gay does not mean you’re transgender. Gender is about who we believe ourselves to be; sexual orientation is about who we are attracted to. Transgender people can identify as straight, gay, bisexual, pansexual and others, just like non-transpeople. (para. 2)

In higher education, many faculty, staff, and students (including LGB identified people and professionals who work at LGBT centers) have minimal knowledge and understanding of transpeople’s experiences and tend to engage in trans-exclusive practices (Beemyn, 2005a). The areas of campus life identified as particularly problematic for transgender students include housing, counseling, health care, bathrooms, locker rooms, documents and records, standardized forms, training, and programming (Beemyn, 2005b). With the increasing number of young people who identify as transgender, there exists a greater expectation of and demand for transgender-specific services and transgender-supportive professionals at college campuses. However, most institutions provide little-to-no transgender-specific programming or services.

In addition to the logistical, everyday challenges for trans students identified above, Lees (1998) outlined some of the personal thoughts and feelings these students may experience as a result of their identity:

Transgender people tend to go through “purge cycles” in which they alternately deny and embrace their feelings, disposing of and then reacquiring information, clothing, and so on. The feelings are too strong to remain buried, yet too dangerous to risk discovery. These cycles can be emotionally exhausting, interfering with everything else in one’s life. (p. 38)

The outward visibility of gender expression makes it impossible for students who are experimenting with gender identity and/or beginning the process of transitioning (changing their body through surgery and/or hormones) to remain closeted. As a result, it is not uncommon for transgender students to be victims

of bias incidents and harassment. Unfortunately, many administrators on campuses across the country fail to address the need for trans-specific services and education until they are forced to respond to acts of bias, hatred, and violence. Individual and institutional discrimination cause many transgender students to categorize their overall college experience as negative (Beemyn, 2005b). As a profession that values and embraces diversity in all forms, student affairs must work to change campus culture so that it is more inclusive and supportive of students who identify as transgender.

Movement for Change

Fortunately, there are a number of administrators, faculty, staff members, students, and activists across the country who are committed to working for change in transgender issues in higher education. In 1996, the University of Iowa was the first higher education institution to add “gender identity” to its non-discrimination policy (Beemyn, 2005a). While most non-discrimination policies include protection on the basis of “sex” and “sexual orientation,” the addition of “gender identity and expression” provides gender-variant students, faculty, and staff protection against discrimination while sending a message to the entire campus about the institution’s values surrounding diversity by using trans-inclusive language. As of January 2008, 254 colleges and universities in the United States had passed non-discrimination policies which included gender identity and expression as protected statuses (Transgender Law & Policy Institute, 2008).

Housing and bathroom facilities are two components of campus life targeted in recent years as a part of the effort to make higher education more accommodating for transgender students. From 2007 to 2008, both the number of campuses with gender-neutral bathrooms and the number of campuses that offer gender-neutral housing options nearly doubled, increasing from 141 to 271 and from 30 to 56, respectively (Gender Public Advocacy Coalition, 2008). At the University of Vermont, Annie Stevens, Assistant Vice President for Student and Campus Life, reflected on her university’s decision to designate gender neutral bathrooms: “It’s about inclusivity and accessibility and the importance of meeting all people’s needs, not just a few” (p. 6). Stanford University’s Greg Boardman, Vice Provost for Student Affairs, reflected on his university’s gender-neutral housing policy: “Stanford takes great pride in the variety of housing alternatives available to students and in the rich residential experience that results when communities are centered on principles of diversity and respect for individual differences” (p. 7).

A great deal of the work being done on campuses concerning gender-neutral policies has been student-initiated. Henneman (2003) noted, “Most of the new gender-blind policies are the result of student-led campaigns to educate faculty, staff, and classmates about how a traditional gender-segregated system can be

discriminatory” (para. 7). A prime example of the ways in which students are involved in this movement is the National Student Genderblind Campaign, which is a:

[R]apidly growing student movement to promote gender-neutral rooming options at colleges across the nation . . . [that] work[s] with college students, administrators, staff, LGBT organizations, and human rights groups to ensure that college policies and practices are affirmative to all students. (para. 1)

Another example of student-led change occurred in 2003 when students at Smith, one of the nation’s most well known women’s colleges, voted to remove the words “she” and “her” from the student government constitution and replace them with gender-neutral terms (Smith College Students, 2003). Student advocacy for the inclusion of transgender people at women’s colleges has been very controversial in recent years. This issue will be covered in more depth in the next section of this article.

An important component of any movement for change is tracking the progress made. The Gender Public Advocacy Coalition (GPAC) created the Gender Equality National Index for Universities and Schools (GENIUS Index) to monitor the work done at colleges and universities towards eliminating discrimination and promoting education regarding gender identity and expression. The 2008 GENIUS Index included data on the number of campuses that have adopted gender neutral bathrooms, gender-blind housing, trans-inclusive policies, and trans-inclusive non-discrimination statements.

Transgender Issues at Women’s Colleges

More so than other types of higher education institutions, women’s colleges have experienced significant controversy around transgender issues. The first women’s colleges in the United States were founded in the nineteenth century as a means of providing women the opportunity to pursue higher education (Thomas, 2008). With the twentieth century came a growing number of coeducational institutions, with an increasing number of college-going women in attendance. By the mid-1970s the vast majority (more than 90%) of colleges and universities were coeducational. This shift in the higher education landscape, which reflected a societal change in consciousness regarding gender, had a significant impact on women’s colleges. The number of women’s colleges in the United States declined by nearly two-thirds between 1960 and 1986, causing administrators and governing bodies of these single-sex institutions to give serious thought to their future vitality. Thomas noted:

Decisions to remain women's colleges represented an "ideological swing back toward separate education for women" and lent support for debunking the myth that equal access to the classroom served both sexes equally. . . The leaders of women's colleges were called upon to strategically reposition their institutions in response to this evolving higher education environment, redefining their single-sex institutions for the outside world as places with contemporary relevance. (pp. 571-572)

Given the threat of being overwhelmed by coeducation that women's colleges faced in the second half of the twentieth century, it is not surprising that the leaders, alumnae, and current students of these institutions have taken their mission to educate women very seriously.

In 2005, the Sundance Channel released a multipart documentary entitled *TransGeneration* which profiled the experiences of four college students who identified as transgender. One of the students, Lucas Cheadle, was female-born but identified as female-to-male (FTM) and lived his daily life as a male. What proved particularly challenging for Lucas was that he was enrolled at Smith, a women's college in Massachusetts. *TransGeneration* publicized an internal struggle that Smith, along with other women's colleges in the nation, is experiencing over the admission and graduation of students who identify as transgender.

Smith College: A Case Study

Because Smith has received the most media attention concerning the presence of transgender students at a women's college, it serves as an effective case study to examine the larger themes of this controversy. Smith opened in 1875 and was named after its founder, Sophia Smith, who wanted a school where women could "develop as fully as may be the powers of womanhood" (Offman, 2005, para. 4). Today, Smith's mission reads as follows: "Smith College educates women of promise for lives of distinction. A college of and for the world, Smith links the power of the liberal arts to excellence in research and scholarship, developing leaders for society's challenges" ("Smith Tradition," n.d.). In a statement on its website, Smith's Office of Institutional Diversity acknowledges the diversity of its students in terms of gender identity while directly asserting the school's status as a women's college:

Is Smith still a women's college? Absolutely. As a women's college, Smith only considers female applicants for undergraduate admission. And like other women's colleges, Smith is a place where women are able to explore who they are in an environment that is safe and accepting. ("Smith College, Office of Institutional Diversity," n.d.)

According to a Smith admissions counselor,

Smith is a women's college. From an admission perspective, we're looking to see that it is consistently reflected in the application that the student is female. At the time of application, admission and enrollment a student needs to identify as a woman (we use the Common Application and students must check off female); official documents (such as transcripts) must identify the student as female; and the pronouns used to identify the students (as in recommendations) must be the female pronoun. Once a student enrolls at the college, the student must complete the graduation requirements as outlined by the college. (D. Shaver, personal communication, November 14, 2008)

With Smith's current admissions policy, students who are female-born and identify as FTM may enroll and continue until graduation so long as they were initially perceived by the admissions board as female. More controversy has emerged around FTM students who begin the process of transitioning while still enrolled at Smith. Within the last year, *The Boston Globe* and *The New York Times* both published articles that specifically address the phenomenon of students entering a women's college and graduating as men.

The first major effort towards transgender inclusion at Smith occurred in 2003 when students voted by a narrow margin to replace gender-specific pronouns in their constitution with gender-neutral pronouns ("Smith College Students," 2003). Nearly half of Smith's 2,500 students voted, and the initiative passed by just 50 votes. Students who spoke out in opposition to the measure claimed that it signaled a move from women's education to coeducation. Student government leaders assured the student body that this was not the legislation's intent. The change in language in the students' constitution did not affect any other official documents or practices at Smith ("Smith College, Office of Institutional Diversity," n.d.).

Among students, alumnae, and administrators opposed to making Smith inclusive for FTM students, the most common question was: Why would a student who identifies as male want to attend a women's college? Smith College student Samantha Lewis said, "I think it's ironic that there are Smithies who do not want to be women, and, to be completely honest, it seems to me that it defeats the purpose of being at a women's college" ("Transmen' Challenge Definition," 2007).

In response to this argument, people who favor making women's colleges accessible and supportive for transgender students noted that the climate at these institutions is built on empowerment and self-expression in a way that most coeducational institutions have not matched ("Transmen' Challenge Definition," 2007). This creates an environment which is conducive to identity development,

particularly around gender identity and expression. Maureen Mahoney, a dean at Smith, noted:

Questions about what it means to be a woman or a feminist are not new to the college discourse, whether at Smith or many other leading institutions. For the most part, these are issues of diversity, and diversity has clear educational benefits. (Brune, 2007, p. 4)

In 2004, a letter to the editor, *The Smith Sophian*, Smith's student newspaper, included the following statement:

[W]here do female-to-male transgender students fit in? Although these students identify as men, they were born and raised to be women, just like every other student at Smith. Society expects the same things of them as it does of any other female, but these individuals have chosen to challenge this by rejecting the label of 'woman' itself... Being transgender is just one more way in which Smithies are changing the definition of womanhood and giving individuals the power to define themselves. (Fredlund, 2004)

The controversy at Smith over the presence of transgender students is not going away any time soon. Smith's administration opened the Center for Sexuality and Gender as a resource for students. Educators outside of higher education have taken note of the need for training and dialogue about this issue at women's colleges. *Translate* is a non-profit organization located in Boston, MA, with the mission of providing outreach, advocacy, and training about issues relevant to transgender and gender non-conforming individuals (Sennott & Smith, 2008). In 2006, *Translate* launched the "Inclusion Initiative," which aims to adapt the already existing strategies for making campuses more accessible and supportive of transgender students to work more effectively at women's colleges. According to the developers of the project:

Translate's Inclusion Initiative has created a training curriculum that engages practical, theoretical and therapeutic approaches to mediation between students and administrators, faculty and staff... Critical to the philosophy of the Inclusion Initiative is the invitation for conversations about trans(gender) experiences as they parallel the experience of going to a women's college, and exploring how these experiences may be separate knowledge(s) but are not separate from one another. (para. 5)

Moving Forward

The rate at which transgender students and activism have become more visible on college campuses in the last five years leads me to believe that this facet of

diversity will continue to grow in the coming years. As an aspiring student affairs professional, I feel there is a dire need for education and advocacy about gender identity and expression within higher education. Like many students who claim subordinate identities, transgender students are underserved at most colleges and universities and even denied access to others. The enthusiasm and energy visible within the student-led movement for increased access and support for transgender students is an indication of the need for such change. However, if this work is to be sustained over time it is essential that staff, faculty, and administrators educate themselves and contribute to making their campuses more inclusive.

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Tradition Today: How Student Affairs Professionals Can Strengthen and Preserve Campus Traditions

Matthew J. Van Jura

On November 18, 1999, 12 people were killed and 27 injured when the tower of logs they had erected collapsed, crushing the victims underneath. This tragedy took place on the campus of Texas A&M University, where students had been preparing for "Bonfire," an annual tradition nearly 90 years old. As a result of tragedies like this, some critics oppose campus traditions.

Yet, traditions have long played an instrumental role on college campuses through their ability to build community, connect students with the heritage of their alma mater, and develop institutional pride. The question facing many administrators today is what should be done about traditions that marginalize or put students at risk. This article offers student affairs professionals suggestions for ways campus traditions may be preserved and strengthened, thus improving their school's community.

Traditions play a unique role in the culture of student life. They have the potential to teach students about the history of their institution, provide a means of building community, instill common values that span generations of students, and generate pride and enthusiasm. However, there can also be negative qualities associated with college traditions. As certain rituals become ingrained in a university's culture, it may become increasingly difficult to recognize the risks that some traditions pose to health and safety, requiring university officials to take appropriate action to correct them. Similarly, as campus populations become increasingly diverse, traditions that fail to create an inclusive environment for historically marginalized students must change as well. For the sake of correcting, strengthening, and preserving these rituals and all the positive contributions they have to offer, today's practitioners must also recognize the faults within them. This article will study the development of college traditions before focus-

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ing specifically on past and present practices at the University of Vermont, Texas A&M University, The Ohio State University, and Bryant University. In addition to examining these institutional traditions, national hazing statistics will provide a context for rituals that often occur at a student organizational level. All examples will be placed within the context of recent scholarship, examining the need for traditions, and the importance they have for students. Suggestions will be offered for ways in which student affairs professionals can preserve such customs in a safe and inclusive manner so that students may enjoy them for years to come.

History

Original campus traditions were not the campus-wide gatherings attracting large numbers of students and alumni that are common in higher education today. When Greek letter organizations first appeared in the 1840s, they introduced the importance of social communities to a select few (Rudolph, 1962). Other students whose campus accomplishments were most noteworthy might receive recognition from their peers by being selected or “tapped” into a class honor group. While such rituals may have been memorable for those who were fortunate enough to participate in them, these experiences were nonetheless restricted to a privileged elite of the student body. By the start of the 20th century, new traditions began to emerge for students outside the realms of Greek organizations and honor societies, focusing on the advancement of class unity and institutional pride.

Some of the most popular traditions were associated with athletics. In the 1890s, students began to adopt school colors, mascots, and compose lyrics to alma maters. Dressing in school colors and singing fight songs while attending athletic contests, such as football games, allowed students to exhibit allegiance to their institution in great numbers (Thelin, 2004). Other traditions focused on building loyalty and cohesion among members of a particular class, often beginning during their first year. At the University of Vermont, a variety of rules were in place for first-year students to follow, including the need to wear beanie caps displaying their class year. As described in the Freshmen Handbook, “The Freshman Beanie has become a tradition on this campus. This tradition is a part of that intangible and indefinable entity called ‘spirit’ which is significant to any university. Please remember this and wear your beanie” (University of Vermont, 1960, p. i).

Although many colleges and universities had similar regulations in place for first-year students, eventually schools began to adopt rituals unique to their respective campuses, as well. At Texas A&M, the tradition of Bonfire began in 1909 to celebrate the Aggies’ annual football game against their rival, the University of Texas (Fearn-Banks, 2002). In the decades that followed, other schools developed their own traditions associated with sporting events. Various football programs have

their own unique game day rituals performed every autumn for generations that serve to remind current teams of their schools' storied histories. Players might walk through the grove at the University of Mississippi on their way from the student union to the football stadium, rub Howard's Rock in the final moments before running onto the field at Clemson, or touch the "Play Like a Champion Today" sign that hangs in the Notre Dame locker room. Even beyond the scope of athletics, at institutions such as Bryant University in Rhode Island, traditions play a key role in student life. Each December, students, alumni, staff, and administrators participate in "The Festival of Lights," an event that celebrates the various holidays occurring near the end of fall semester. Although the institution is secular and the event planners attempt to celebrate multiple holidays, Christian images frequently dominate the decorations.

Some rituals, however, can be dangerous and put the institution in a position of being held liable, should an accident occur. Others may neglect the beliefs or identities of a particular student population, thus alienating those students from the sense of community that the tradition is intended to provide. In some instances, administrators may have no alternative but to discontinue a tradition.

When Tradition Goes Wrong

In 1883, students at the University of Vermont (UVM) began a custom that, for the next 86 years, would become the most popular event of the school year for students, alumni, and citizens of Burlington. "Kakewalk," as the tradition was called, was held each February as a variation of a winter homecoming, featuring performances by a nationally known band, a ball, the crowning of a king and queen, and skits performed by fraternities and sororities. The most popular event was held on Friday and Saturday nights, when pairs of fraternity men would dress in blackface and perform dance routines many had been practicing since December. At the conclusion of the performances, winners would be announced and trophies awarded.

Yet as University Archivist Jeffrey Marshall (1991) explained, "the spirit of Kakewalk was the spirit of racism" (p. 78). The performance took its origins from slavery, where plantation owners would force slaves to entertain them by dancing, awarding pieces of cake to the winners. The UVM tradition was originally named the "Kulled Koons Kakewalk," with the three "Ks" highlighted on posters. In addition to dressing in blackface, performers would wear kinky-haired wigs and dance to the song "Cotton Babes" (Marshall). Over time, this explicit symbolism faded. However, the tradition reinforced a subconscious degradation of African Americans, which many community members did not see as harmful (Marshall).

Opposition to Kakewalk began as early as the 1950s when writers for the school

newspaper, “The Cynic,” demanded that performers no longer dress in blackface. In 1964, the Interfraternity Council obliged and instead mandated that students paint their faces green, but public reaction was overwhelmingly negative as many thought this “ruined the event” (Marshall, 1991). In 1969, amidst continued concerns of racism, students voted to cancel the 1970 performance. Kakewalk has not been held since. The tradition of Bonfire at Texas A&M met a similar fate in 1999, though for different reasons.

In many Texas A&M publications, Tradition is literally a word spelled with a capital “T,” and Bonfire has historically been the school’s most popular Tradition (Fearn-Banks, 2002). First held in 1909, the fire represented the Aggies’ “burning desire to defeat its archrival,” the University of Texas, or “t.u.” as the school is called to purposely agitate Longhorn fans (Fearn-Banks). Beginning in 1935, the structure grew larger each year, with the 1969 Bonfire reaching a record height of 109 feet. In 1970, limitations were placed on the Bonfire’s height and diameter, although these restrictions were rarely enforced (Special Commission, 2000).

Bonfire was managed almost exclusively by the students. Preparation would begin 2 months in advance and involve roughly 5,000 students devoting approximately 125,000 work hours to the project’s construction. Once completed, Bonfire structures often weighed approximately 2 million pounds. On the eve of the football game, 30,000 to 70,000 students, alumni, and members of the community would gather for the tower’s lighting with legend dictating that if the fire burned past midnight, the Aggies would win the following day (Bonfire Memorial Website).

In the weeks following the 1999 collapse, the University established an independent commission to examine the factors that caused the tragedy. In its report, the commission cited both structural and organizational mistakes as contributors to the accident. First, there was no written methodology for how to build the Bonfire structure. According to one individual, “Bonfire was never built the same way twice” (Special Commission, 2000, p. 27). Instead of an established plan, students who lacked engineering expertise were responsible for making the decisions that contributed to the structural failure. In addition to these structural deficiencies, the cultural bias toward Bonfire carried equal responsibility. Administrators ignored past warning signs, and although the University valued the safety of its students, it did not take proactive measures to address the problems of Bonfire due to the widespread belief that “we have always done it this way, and it has always worked” (Special Commission, p. 35). A lawsuit filed against Texas A&M stemming from the Bonfire tragedy was recently settled, with the institution ordered to pay \$2.1 million to victims and their families due to lack of engineering oversight (2008).

In addition to the cancellation of these two notable university-wide traditions, administrators' attempts to phase out traditions practiced by student organizations have also been subject to controversy. Most notably, hazing rituals have attracted increased scrutiny due to the dangers these ceremonies pose to student well-being. Perhaps most frequently associated with Greek letter organizations, a recent study indicated that hazing behaviors are also common among student athletes, student organizations, military groups, club sports, and honor societies (Allan & Madden, 2008). The study found that, "college students are participating in unacceptable, high-risk, and potentially illegal behaviors in order to belong to a student group or team," (p. 16) and that these behaviors included: drinking alcohol to the point of getting sick or passing out, sleep deprivation, verbal harassment from older members, enduring harsh weather conditions without being provided appropriate clothing, performing sexual acts, and more (Allan & Madden). When students were surveyed regarding their perceived outcomes of having experienced such treatment, many believed that hazing had positive results such as: causing one to feel more like a part of the group (31%), feel a sense of accomplishment (22%), or feel stronger (18%). Fewer students believed the effects of hazing were negative; such as feeling stressed (11%), humiliated (3%), or in danger (2%) (Allan & Madden). Ninety-five percent of students responded that they would not report hazing to campus officials, yet every year students are injured or die as a result of their participation in such rituals (Allan & Madden). HazingPrevention.org, a website created by the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors, stated that as of November 1, 2007, 89 known student deaths have been attributed to hazing rituals conducted by Greek organizations and that 82% of these cases involved alcohol.

Traditions such as Kakewalk or Bonfire, as well as rituals that involve hazing, pose a threat to the university. These activities put students at risk of suffering physical, emotional, or mental harm, and they work against their stated purpose of building community. Nevertheless, these cases are extreme examples and their inclusion in this paper should not be perceived as a condemnation of all traditions on campuses. On the contrary, research shows that when planned and executed properly, school traditions have many positive effects and enhance the student experience.

How to Build Community: A Qualitative Approach

In his 2004 article, "Student's Sense of Campus Community: What it Means, and What to do About it," David X. Cheng attempted to qualitatively determine, from a student's perspective, what components of campus life contribute to the development of community. Cheng, the Assistant Dean for Research and Planning at Columbia University, had noticed in recent surveys that students were unsatisfied by the lack of community on campus. A web-based survey was sent to

first-years, sophomores, and juniors, presenting students with 26 statements such as, “I feel valued as a person at this institution,” “My social interactions are largely confined to students of my race/ethnicity,” “I am proud of this institution’s history and heritage,” “The institution’s traditions and celebrations play an important role in my life as a student,” etc. (Cheng, p. 221). Students were asked to rate their reactions on a four-point scale from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” (Cheng, p. 220). The analyses of the survey data led Cheng to three conclusions. First, that a student’s sense of individual value and belief that the institution cares about them directly impacts the student’s belief that they belong to the university community. Next, “the most negative influence on a student’s sense of community comes from his, her, or his feeling of loneliness on campus” (p. 227). Finally, the quality of social life, not only among friends, but also through access to university-sponsored programming, enhanced a student’s feeling of community (Cheng). Cheng summarized his findings by stating the following:

In order for students to have a sense of campus community, student affairs administrators should strive to build a community that (1) has an open environment where free expressions are encouraged and individuality is accepted and respected, (2) engages faculty and students in teaching and learning, (3) provides an active social and learning environment in residence halls, (4) fosters positive relationships among ethnic and cultural groups through programs and student activities, (5) celebrates traditions and heritage of the institution, and (6) provides assistance to students when they feel lonely or depressed (p. 226).

These recommendations are supported by Kathleen Manning in her 1994 article, “Rituals and Rescission: Building Community in Hard Times.” Manning agreed that traditions play an important role in building community on campus. The actions associated with traditions allow people to express their beliefs, values, and associations with one another in a manner that language often cannot convey. Traditions allow students to connect with their institution’s heritage and share a common set of ideals, and can also be adapted to strengthen community as the needs of student populations change. As student bodies become increasingly diverse, traditions play a pivotal role in either welcoming marginalized groups into the greater community or further alienating these students. Manning (1994) stated that, “rituals reinforcing campus monoculturalism...are not neutral but, rather, embody a history extending into the present. This history often causes conflict on campuses and becomes the focus of contentious battles concerning culture, race, and change” (p. 275).

Examples would include the traditions at certain institutions of displaying the Confederate flag at events such as football games (Manning, 1994). In the past, the flag might have had one particular meaning for students and alumni, yet today

students of color attending these institutions may interpret the flag's presence on campus from an entirely different perspective. These students may subsequently question the degree to which the institution cares about their community if school officials attempt to rationalize the flag's affiliation with the institution while discounting the objections voiced by those who feel threatened or offended by its presence.

At their core, traditions are designed to foster feelings of community. Administrators must be wary of traditions that send the message that some members of the community are more valued than others. When planned and enacted properly, traditions not only reinforce established institutional ideals, but can also "draw new, existing, and disenfranchised members into the community" (Manning, 1994, p. 278). For student affairs professionals, the task therefore becomes preserving traditions on one's campus while ensuring these rituals are conscious of both an increasingly diverse campus population as well as matters of risk management.

Suggested Action Steps

With the importance that traditions have on positive student experience and the need for greater professional guidance, it might seem that improving traditions would be an ideal opportunity for professional staff to offer increased support to the students planning these events. In reality, the answers are not as clear as one might believe. There is much debate as to whether or not student culture can be effectively managed or controlled by administration (Manning, 1993). Administrators who seek to evaluate campus traditions and implement changes must first understand that for any decision to be well received by students, students should be a part of the decision making process from start to finish. Through collaborative meetings between student affairs staff and student leaders, both parties can gain a stronger understanding of what needs to be done to improve traditions on campus while preserving the spirit and heritage of these customs. One strategy that practitioners might successfully employ is reaching out to historically marginalized student populations to ensure that these student voices are incorporated into any conversation regarding the evaluation of existing traditions or the creation of new ones.

In some cases, where the very foundation of the tradition cannot be salvaged, the best decision for all may be to end the tradition entirely. Kakewalk is an ideal example of this scenario, since the spirit of the ritual had its roots in racism and a foundation that may never be erased. At other times the circumstances are less clear, such as with Bonfire at Texas A&M. While some may feel that the deaths of 12 students in such a tragedy would automatically prevent the tradition from ever taking place again, when it comes to traditions, the circumstances on each

campus must be treated independently (Manning, 1994). The culture of Bonfire is such that even after a catastrophe, many believe that the proper means of honoring the victims is to allow the tradition to continue. These proponents include students, alumni, family members of victims, and even former President George H.W. Bush, whose library is located on the campus of Texas A&M (Fearn-Banks, 2002). In regards to the importance Bonfire has for the community, many say, “you have to be there” to understand the importance of the tradition and that it epitomizes “the Spirit of Aggieland” which “keeps Aggies of today and yesterday in a tight bond” (Fearn-Banks, p. 175). Since 1999, no university sanctioned Bonfire has been held on campus, but unofficial Bonfires have been hosted off campus. Based on the culture surrounding the event and the lessons learned from the commission’s report, the best course of action may be to allow Bonfire back on campus. If managed under the supervision of administrators and engineers who can regulate Bonfire from year to year and ensure that proper safety precautions are in place, the tradition will be safer than if Bonfire continues unregulated off campus, where mistakes could easily be repeated.

A recent study evaluating the Mirror Lake Jump at Ohio State offered a similar recommendation. Each November during the week that leads to the Buckeyes’ football game against archrival Michigan, thousands of students gather on campus at Mirror Lake one night to jump into its shallow waters, sing fight songs, and display their excitement for the upcoming game. To date, no student has suffered debilitating injury or died from participating in the event, but taking proactive measures to ensure that students understand the risks that accompany jumping into a shallow body of water in late November is in the university’s best interests. Rich Hollingsworth, former Vice President of Student Affairs at Ohio State, is in favor of keeping the event but believes it can be safer (Hwang, Fisher, Tighe & Whalen, 2008). Currently, the university’s facilities and operations office remove all fountains in the lake prior to the night of the jump, and during the event 60 police officers are present to manage crowd control. However, the students conducting the survey recommended that further action be taken, such as the creation of an official website which provides students with information regarding the depth of the lake, the dangers of hypothermia, frostbite, alcohol use, and drowning (Hwang et al.).

Finally, at Bryant University, simply balancing the emphasis of which holidays receive the most attention would address the concerns that many students have regarding the Festival of Lights. While not all cultures celebrate a winter holiday, creating a conversation space for students and administrators to discuss a solution would be a step in the right direction. These students must understand that their experiences matter to the institution and that they are a valuable part of the community on campus. The decision to have this conversation lies with the administrators, who must admit that at present the tradition does not satisfy its

intended purpose and work with students to create a tradition that accurately reflects the diverse identities of all students at the school.

University traditions have come a long way since the days when first-year students were initiated into the campus community through hazing rituals. However, there are still improvements that can be made to the traditions that students currently participate in year after year, both on an institutional and organizational level. As decisions are made concerning the future of these rituals, it is important for administrators to realize that traditions must remain a primary component of student life, that the heritage of traditions should be preserved when possible, that the culture of the institution plays a critical role in any decision making process, and that to truly serve their purpose, traditions must unite all students as one community. To an observer these ceremonies may seem silly or trivial. Yet for those who live these rituals, traditions create a bond between students and their alma maters that lasts far beyond graduation. Given the potential for positive effects on student life, these experiences should be preserved for tomorrow's students to enjoy.

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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 *Think Globally, Act Locally, Care Personally; Connecting Personal and Professional Discoveries in Student Affairs*.

Two Student Affairs Professionals' Journeys to (Un)Cover

Joshua Gonzalez & Khristian Kemp-DeLisser

An African-American student named Jamal adopts the nickname "Jay" when he runs for the student government association. A transgender sophomore dresses impeccably in suits and ties, even for biology lab. Yoshino (2006) described these actions as covering, where an individual masks one's own recognized marginalized identity in order to gain acceptance within the dominant identity. The authors—a gay African-American and a heterosexual Latino—are both male student affairs professionals at predominately White institutions (PWIs). They will each look at the subtle and covert ways student affairs professionals reproduce pressures to cover and offer ways to understand the impact of conforming to the majority culture.

In his book, *Covering: The Hidden Assault on Our Civil Rights*, Kenji Yoshino (2006) described a phenomenon called "covering" as the requirement to conceal aspects of one's identity in order to achieve acceptance into the perceived mainstream culture. Covering differs from other forms of oppression because it does not seek to cure or deny the existence of marginalized people. It does not force them to be something else in order to gain acceptance. Rather, covering attaches certain conditions to their full integration into society. The critical factor is that people in dominant identities impose the societal norms in subtle ways to maintain the status quo.

Joshua Gonzalez graduated from the University of Connecticut where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Family Studies. He is a 2009 graduate of the University of Vermont's Higher Education & Student Affairs Administration (HESA) program, where he held assistantships in the Department of Residential Life as well as the African, Latino, Asian, and Native American (ALANA) Student Center. He exposes his professional philosophy, "Let your happiness define your accomplishments; do not let your accomplishments define your happiness" as a Residence Hall Director at the University of New Hampshire.

Khristian Kemp-DeLisser (HESA '05) works full time as the Coordinator for Student Retention and Assessment at UVM's African, Latino, Asian, and Native American Student Center and takes classes in the Educational Leadership & Policy Studies doctoral program. His current preoccupations (which he prefers over research interests) are marathon training and social justice in higher education.

The impact of covering is difficult to appreciate or identify unless one can see the toll it takes on individuals and personal relationships. Furthermore, one cannot begin to counteract the pressure to cover before one recognizes the ways one is complicit with perpetuating this phenomenon in one's professional and personal life. To that end, the two authors will apply a critical lens to our own personal and professional development and practices. We will each share personal narratives about the subtle and covert ways student affairs professionals reproduce pressures to conform. We conclude by offering a practical alternative leadership that is more inclusive and multicultural.

Covering

Yoshino (2006) described three major methods employed by the dominant society to suppress or oppress deviant populations: pressure to convert, to pass, or to cover. The deviant populations Yoshino focused on were women, gays and lesbians, and people of color. He argued that these three communities have successfully battled the first two pressures of conversion and passing, moving them closer to full civil rights and social acceptance. However, they still struggle against the final and most insidious pressure: covering.

Conversion is an active attempt to change one's target identity to fit with the dominant culture. Passing is accepting one's marginalized identity but concealing it from others. People who cover are "persons who are ready to admit possession of a stigma... [but] nonetheless make a great effort to keep the stigma from looming large" (Yoshino, 2006, p. 18). There are four axes along which one can observe people covering:

Appearance concerns how an individual physically presents himself [sic] to the world. *Affiliation* concerns his [sic] cultural identifications. *Activism* concerns how much he [sic] politicizes his [sic] identity. *Association* concerns his [sic] choice of fellow travelers—spouses, friends, colleagues. (p. 79)

There are many social institutions capable of applying these pressures, ranging from medicine and religion to history and law. Yoshino, a professor and lawyer by training, found that the legal system best demonstrated how covering is used to limit the lives, behaviors, and legal rights of women, gays and lesbians, and people of color. This article examines the pressure within higher education to cover.

Methodology

We employ the methodology of Scholarly Personal Narrative (SPN) to construct narratives out of personal stories. SPN allows an individual to be both researcher and subject, and educators and scholars to offer voice to the voiceless, even if it

is themselves. Robert Nash (2004) wrote: “SPN is about giving yourself permission to express your own voice in your own language; your own take on your own story in your own inimitable manner” (p. 24).

SPN requires that the researcher contextualizes and grounds their personal story in the work of previous scholars and research, and identifies narratives that communicate universalizable messages. The heart of this style of writing—the human story—can be liberating and empowering:

... [I]f a human life is described with enough particularity, the universal will begin to speak through it. What interests me about my story, and the stories of others, is how similar they are in revealing the bones of our common human endeavor, the yearning for human emancipation that stirs within us all. (Yoshino, 2006, p. xii)

In his book, Yoshino’s (2006) historical and legal information provided the theoretical framework; he used personal vignettes to illustrate real life applications and poignant lessons. Similarly, by dividing Yoshino’s four axes among themselves, the authors will each provide two examples of how covering can be observed in their own lives. The voices, identities, and the transition from one author will be very different but to understand how covering affected each of the author’s lives Khristian Kemp-Delisser will describe the Appearance and Association axes and Joshua Gonzalez will describe Affiliation and Activism axes. However, collectively they serve as case studies and practical examples to help recognize the pressure to cover for both professionals and students in educational settings.

Appearance

An experience I had as a Resident Advisor (RA) demonstrates the principle behind covering appearance, which is when individuals alter physical or visual cues and characteristics in an effort to avoid stigma. As a sophomore, I became a mid-year replacement RA in an all-male, first-year hall. I was the second RA on the floor, and I was determined to endear myself to my new residents to allow them to get to know me. I set about collecting posters of Leonardo DiCaprio and other male famous movie stars. One day as I decorated my room and started hanging my favorite pink Disney wall calendar, my friend, a lesbian, made an observation. “There’s a lot of men on your walls,” she said. “Don’t you think you can turn your flame down just a little?”

As a gay man, I had only been concerned with creating a safe space that reflected my interests and personality. I told her she was being overly cautious and was making assumptions about my residents. Still, the thought lingered. I asked my supervisor, the Resident Director (RD), and after mulling over my question for

a moment, he suggested that not all male students will feel comfortable around me if I was so “in their face.” Nonetheless, he said toning down my decor was my call.

A few weeks later, I made signs and put them on the walls along the hall. The flyers advertised our weekly floor meeting but featured a pithy joke: “What starts with an ‘F’ and rhymes with ploor meeting?” I returned a few hours later and saw the sign had been defaced. Someone had scrawled in response: “fag beating.” When I saw the paper, I finally knew my limits. There would be no photos of male movie stars on my walls and no pink wall calendar. From then on, I had to be vigilant whenever I walked the halls of my floor or interacted with my residents. I could not risk being an easy target for their scorn or threats of violence. I never denied my sexual orientation; I simply downplayed it. Additionally, I avoided anything that could be transformed into an attack, like my jovial flyer. Eventually, I limited my interactions with residents and disclosed as little as possible. I stayed under the radar screen and did not draw any attention. I never told my RD, figuring he would have just said I brought it on myself.

What makes this example uniquely fitting to higher education is how the pressure to cover can be cloaked in the language of inclusion or accessibility. By saying the decision was “my call,” my supervisor was implicitly supporting my right to be gay but not for my decision to reflect a non-conforming expression, which my gay identity allowed. Student affairs professionals who embrace social justice must be vigilant about and aware that our efforts to be inclusive have the potential to turn into tyranny. Privileged populations’ rights to not have their sensibilities offended must be weighed equitably (rather than equally) against the need to provide sanctuary and autonomy to populations whose freedoms those same sensibilities limit (Watson, 2007).

The premise behind covering is that the majority group will accept differences in identity only to the extent that its norms are not confronted with nonconformist behavior. That nonconformist behavior is often labeled as flaunting (Dille, 2007). My friend, my boss, and the person who defaced the flyer, all sent the message in different ways that my behavior and the symbols of my personality were nonconformist.

Affiliation

In my short career as a student affairs professional, I have tried to follow this motto when working with students: “Higher education is not about learning how to earn a living; rather it is about learning how to appreciate life.” Through literature, art, social media, and the expanding wonders of technology that have changed students’ experiences into ones personified by a global society, I want

to expose my students to the beauty of the world. By appreciating the difference of environments and embracing the little nuances that make us individuals, we can understand and celebrate what makes us different and most importantly, what makes us similar. As an educator and life-long learner, one of my roles as a student affairs administrator is to create an inclusive space where people can feel safe expressing their ideas without fear of judgment or persecution.

As a student affairs administrator, I expose my students and colleagues to my Latino heritage: especially the cultural value of “Mi casa es su casa.” In her book, *Salsa, Soul, and Spirit: Leadership for a Multicultural Age*, Juana Bordas (2007) described this cultural value as, “A sprawling sense of inclusiveness and generosity. It encapsulates a joy of sharing and implies ‘what I have is also yours’” (p. 59). I believe that if we, as administrators, can reflect on our own identities, values, and passions, it would help us understand a person’s point of view when it conflicts with our own. This sense of wanting people to be familiar with my personal side, especially my cultural heritage, was crucial when I transitioned to a new institution. I could feel the excitement building up inside myself when I exposed my colleagues to my Latino identity and my strong passion for social justice. In addition, I wanted to explain how important it is for us as professionals to look at our own dominant and marginalized identities and understand how we can use our privileges responsibly to create inclusive policies for marginalized students.

On a daily basis I discussed these topics in staff meetings and with my supervisor, but most importantly, I shared the essence of what makes me a human being. If we as administrators can understand our passions and what makes us get up in the morning, we can enhance the student experience by creating educational moments outside of the classroom. One day I had a conversation with a colleague, and I inquired about the staff’s perception of me. I expressed my concerns of not being part of the team and how I felt as though I was a passing ship in the night. To my surprise, one of my colleague’s statements were (with no malicious intent), “One might believe that you see everything through a racial lens, or one might believe you may come down heavy with the social justice if they say something inappropriate.”

In that moment, I realized for me to make individuals feel comfortable I would have to “tone down” my cultural heritage of family, generosity, and passion for social justice. Though I will always accept my Latino identity, the rationale was that in order to create clout with some of my peers I would have to be more cognizant of my mannerisms and how I use my values to express myself personally and professionally.

Activism

It is May 1, 2006, and I am studying in the student union at the University of Connecticut. While immersed in my studies, I overhear a woman state, “As a Latina, I should be at the protests and educating people about the dangers of this bill.” As I look up, I notice her watching the news coverage on the anti-immigration protests of the congressional bill, H.R. 4437. Some of the controversial provisions of the bill were the potential for being charged with a felony if knowingly employing or harboring a non-U.S. citizen, and the construction of security fences along the U.S.-Mexican border (Ferre, Garlikov, Oppenheim, Spoerry, Keck, & Whitbeck, 2006). I replied to the woman by stating, “I am Latino too, but yelling and screaming is not going to give immigrants U.S. citizenship, and protesting is not going to help you with your finals.” To my surprise, the woman jumped out of her seat and said, “As a Latino, you should be ashamed of yourself, and of course helping *our* people is more important than taking a final.” In the moment, I did not understand why one of my peers was so upset by my comment.

Through the lens of Yoshino’s (2006) axis of activism, I was concerned by the way my peer was publicly politicizing her Latina identity by drawing attention to immigration reform instead of concentrating on her studies. In actuality, my concern was not directed at my peer but rather at myself. This example of covering demonstrates internalized oppression and the lack of my own understanding of racial identity development. I was burdened by the fact my peers would only see me as my racial identification, and possibly assume my views were the same as the protestors on television and ignore the intricacies that made up my individuality. In my undergraduate career, I wanted to be viewed as a student admitted to the university based on academic merit rather than the continuous demoralizing questions of, “What diversity scholarship did you get?” “Where is a good Mexican restaurant?” (Despite knowing I identify as Puerto Rican), and “You’re Spanish, can you show me how to salsa?” Signithia Fordham (1988) described this concept as racelessness, when a person assimilates to the characteristics of the dominant identity by de-emphasizing characteristics that might associate them with a subordinate group. During that time period, I never identified myself as White (dominant racial group) but made the decision to hide the traditions of my Latino heritage. When my Latina peer publicly vocalized her opinion on the congressional bill, it confirmed my concern the dominant group would primarily see me for my race, when I wanted to be the exception.

Association

As demonstrated in the “appearance” example, oppression can often be lateral: meaning members of a marginalized group can enforce the dominant culture’s boundaries on other members of their own group. The example also illustrates

the extent to which we all have the capacity to continue the cycle, no matter our personal identity or group membership. This next story similarly complicates the relationship of sender or receiver. It is intended to capture covering through association, which governs one's public allegiance and membership, including how time is spent volunteering and one's vocation or career.

My career began in a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered (LGBT) student services office. At 26 and fresh from graduate school, I was one of two staff members. The other, my supervisor, was a man who had been at the institution more than 20 years, and in the position of director for seven of the nine years the office existed. Not very different than many other LGBT directors; he was a seasoned professional who had been in his position a long time, expecting to retire from that job. I admit I was slightly disturbed by what seemed like an entire field of professionals who aspired to no position higher than their particular functional area. The lack of out LGBT people holding dean or higher administrative positions seemed to be evidence of a "lavender ceiling," a concept popularized by Friskopp and Silverstein (1995), referring to an inevitable career threshold that LGBT people may reach without having to conceal their sexual orientation. I knew the lack of open LGBT people in high positions meant I had to limit my affiliation with LGBT organizations in order to move ahead in my career. I heard from my supervisor and others that I needed to branch out and diversify my work, while I observed others who charted rather direct courses through areas such as residential life or judicial affairs. After three years in the LGBT student services office, I began to wonder out loud to a colleague about what my career path would be.

"Well, all you have been doing is this LGBT stuff," he replied. "You know what they say, the more you know about one thing, the less you know about everything else. Branch out." This sentiment, that my specialty was too niche, never rang true with me; my LGBT students showed up to my office with a wide variety of concerns that I needed to help them navigate. In truth, my specialty gave me special insight into everything from residence hall bias protocol, Greek community climate, and campus recreation facilities. The pervasive misconception that my knowledge of LGBT issues made me ignorant of all others devalued my work and condemned it to second-class status.

Relative to the number of universities and colleges in the country, the number of offices with dedicated space and resources for LGBT student affairs is still rather small (Sanlo, 2000). Progress still needs to be made to provide consistent and quality education around LGBT issues in graduate preparation programs. Despite my knowledge of and history working in LGBT offices, when a lesbian student I worked with recently told me about her intention to pursue a degree in student affairs, I found myself cautioning her not to get an assistantship in

LGBT affairs. “You do not want to be pigeon-holed,” I told her. The words, and my tacit concession to the professional stigma that goes along with working in LGBT, still echo in my head.

Implications

Stories like those in the previous section of students and professionals demonstrate the consequences and the toll of conforming in order to be accepted. They provide a mandate for change but also demonstrate a flaw in the covering theory. Covering relies on ambiguous pressure that is often difficult to attach to a specific source other than cultural or systemic pressures. Unless expressed through some sort of overt communication, the observer assumes any act of covering. The theory insufficiently reconciles those occasions when one’s natural actions or behaviors simply look like covering, but in fact are not an attempt to cover. Yoshino (2006) shared a story of a female colleague who reminded him of the danger of automatically assuming she is covering when she replaces the tire on her bike. She said, “I don’t fix my bike because I’m trying to downplay the fact I’m a woman. I fix my bike because it’s broke” (p. 190). Sometimes practical needs and innate skills take precedence over social pressures.

Clearly, one must not only consider covering allegations critically when leveling them at others but also be equally self-critical when examining one’s own role in the process. The experiences of the authors demonstrate not only when we have “toned down” or compromised our true selves, but also when we have asked others to compromise theirs. Covering is problematic because it is forced rather than chosen. There is potential of being just as proscriptive and inhumane in dealing with the problem as the forces that created the problem. Imagine a restrictive and heavy-handed Orwellian response in which everyone is immediately assumed to not be acting like their true selves. The antidote to covering is not thought-control; it is liberation. It is engaging in a process of critical inquiry and reflection, requiring us to be present and attuned to our inner selves. Yoshino (2006) himself concluded the only way to “uncover” covering is by removing it from the legal realm and into the public lexicon through dialogue. Person-to-person discourse has the effect of disrupting the pressure by naming it and offering an opportunity to confront the reasons behind it. These “reason-forcing conversations,” (p. 195) involve an exchange of perspectives and values, and offer new possibilities for being ourselves and treating one another justly. As Yoshino wrote, “they should happen informally and intimately, where tolerance is made and unmade” (p. 195).

Social justice principles and models continue to pick up steam among student affairs professionals who face ever-increasing demands to create safe, inclusive, and welcoming educational institutions for people of all identities. However, as

the example with the resident advisor and his supervisor illustrates, even practitioners who claim to be pluralistic can result in perpetuating dominant cultural norms. Covering can be a damaging tool of oppression. Yoshino (2006) called it “a hidden assault on our civil rights” (p. xi). It is hidden, not only because of the subtle methods in which it is employed, but also because it can be internalized. Student affairs professionals must be committed to professional and personal development and keep their own biases in check. We must actively engage one another and reflect on our practices, organizational structures, and understanding of our identity development.

We encourage professionals to model integrity by staying true to themselves and their own desires. Truly, the goal is to create a world in which the full spectrum of human expression is the norm. Sometimes that requires one person to risk stigma with the knowledge that when we dare to be ourselves, we give permission for others to do the same (Williamson, 1992). The path to liberation from the pressures to assimilate or conform is paved with authenticity and vulnerability.

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The New Multiracial Student: Where Do We Start?

Jackie Hyman

In 2004, one in 40 persons in the United States self-identified as Multiracial. By the year 2050, it is projected that as many as one in five Americans will claim a Multiracial background, and in turn, a Multiracial or Biracial identity (Lee & Bean, 2004). With racial lines becoming more blurred, it is increasingly important for practitioners in higher education to address the issues surrounding identity development in Multiracial college students. By looking at a personal narrative of a Biracial woman, recent studies of Multiracial identity development, and the daily challenges that Multiracial and Biracial students face concerning their identity, student affairs practitioners can begin to create more inclusive spaces for this growing population of students.

Ambiguous facial features, complex ancestries, and an array of experiences and questions from the world currently shape the Multiracial community. Outside pressures to identify, specifically as one race, pose a constant threat to the identity of a young Multiracial student who has yet to experience a community that does not rely on strictly defined identity boxes. “What are you?” and “Where are you from?” are questions that are heard on an almost daily basis. These are questions that are not only intrusive, but can be very intimidating for a young adult who is not quite sure how to respond. Similar to their peers, young Multiracial adults need the time, space, and opportunity to develop their own racial identity. Unfortunately, however, not all college campuses have spaces for this growing population to do so. Understanding the journey of racial development for Multiracial youth can be difficult, but more important for student affairs professionals is comfort in students’ uncertainty of how to racially identify. By examining different studies that have been conducted, different theories of identity that exist, and a personal account of racial fluidity, student affairs professionals can gain a clearer understanding of what this “not knowing” looks like.

Jackie Hyman earned her Bachelor of Arts from the University of Maryland, College Park in 2008, and is anticipating her graduation from HESA in 2010. Having gone through periods of doubt and confusion throughout her graduate career in identifying as Biracial, she is now more confident than ever in her racial identity. Because of her experiences at University of Maryland and University of Vermont, she has committed herself to creating a Multiracial student group at UVM, as well as creating potential spaces for Multiracial students at her next institution, wherever that may be. Without a doubt, a passion has been ignited that will guide her research and involvement on college campuses for years to come.

Theory to Practice: How Do Multiracial Individuals Identify?

Multiracial individuals have an array of identity classifications that they can choose from and change however many times they feel necessary throughout each day, week, year, or lifetime. Depending on which point the individual is at in their racial identity development, these classifications can include identities such as Black, White, Biracial, Multiracial, no race at all, or however else the individual chooses to identify. The fluidity of race within the life of a Multiracial individual is a practiced and lived concept. In fact, social constructionists “argue that racial classifications can differ not only among nations and historical periods, but also in the day-to-day lives of individuals” (Harris & Sim, 2002, p. 615). To see race as a fluid concept, individuals must understand the three dimensions in which racial identity is distinguished: internal racial identity, external racial identity, and expressed racial identity. Internal racial identity is what individuals personally claim as their race independent of external factors. External racial identity is what observers perceive as the individual’s race. Finally, expressed racial identity is how individuals articulate their racial identity to the general public (Harris & Sim). This expressed racial identity can take the form of the individual’s internal racial identity, external racial identity, or a unique mixture of the two. Within the life of a Multiracial individual, depending on the environment or the context, one of these dimensions can shift, creating a different racial dynamic for that individual.

While examining data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Harris and Sim (2002) were able to identify patterns among the seventh through twelfth grade respondents pertaining to their self-selected racial identity. Harris and Sim found that 87.6% of the students expressed their identities consistently across all the contexts in which race was presented. Yet, most youth who reported being Multiracial in one context reported being Monoracial in others, leading Harris and Sim to conclude that “no more than two-thirds of youth with known Multiracial ancestry express a Multiracial identity” (p. 620). They also found that 75% of the mixed Black and White youth chose to identify as “Black” when asked, “Which one category best describes your racial background?” This figure demonstrated the enduring power of the one drop rule, established in the 1960s, declaring that an individual with any connection to Black ancestry is to be regarded and is to identify as Black. This figure not only demonstrated the commitment to a Multiracial identity among this particular racial group, but it also illustrated the fact that mixed Black and White individuals have a difficult time denying part of themselves and part of their racial ancestry. This is due to the perceived racial distance or separation between the Black and White identities and the perceived separation within this mixed identity (Cheng & Lee, 2009).

There are several variables that can affect one’s racial identification. The most common and researched variables are bilingualism, one’s proximity to a non-

White community, and one's phenotype based on generational status (being the direct or indirect product of an interracial relationship). "A consistent finding is that speaking a language other than English at home significantly increases the likelihood that Biracial children will adopt a non-White identity, supporting the thesis that language maintenance is critical in ethnic identity formation" (Lee & Bean, 2004, p. 230). In addition, exposure to the minority parent's culture within one's neighborhood context can also increase the likelihood that a Biracial child, more specifically a child who has one White parent, will identify more strongly with a non-White identity. Finally, one's phenotype is a significant determinant. "Skin color has been found to affect mate and friend selection" (Brunsma & Rockquemore, 2001, p. 30) among all individuals, but this presents a unique problem for Multiracial individuals. The more one resembles a specific race, the more likely that individual will feel comfortable claiming that identity due to the perceived acceptance from that group. Having little resistance and few questions when entering a specific atmosphere, Biracial and Multiracial individuals will more readily claim membership in that group. This becomes difficult for certain individuals because "Biracial individuals' appearances are often times ambiguous" (p. 30-31), therefore not readily fitting into any one specific community.

The Higher Education Setting

In college, students can explore their identity through media such as academic work, campus life, and residential community living. It is shocking to learn that the experience of the Multiracial student, a steadily growing student population, is scarcely documented or explored. How are these students navigating a traditionally modernist structure where race is considered "a master status, an identity that overrides all others in others' judgments of the self" (Stephan, 1992, p. 51)?

In 2000, Renn conducted qualitative research with 24 different self-identified Biracial college students from three preselected colleges. In her data analysis, Renn found two distinct themes that emerged for the Biracial students: the notion of a safe physical space and the impact of peer culture and acceptance in relation to those spaces. Several of the Biracial participants expressed concern when they noticed certain social borders or socially constructed barriers that were present around the various culture-based campus communities. Although some of these borders were more permeable than others, the three main elements of public space-making were a shared culture, physical appearance, and participation in legitimizing activities (Renn).

In her interviews with students, Renn found that several of them felt comfortable entering cultural spaces due to their shared cultural knowledge with the other students about such elements as language, food, religion, customs, and value of culture. For most, this shared cultural knowledge enabled the Biracial

students to participate and feel a sense of belonging on their respective campuses. However, the downfall to this is that a lack of cultural knowledge can be just as powerful in keeping a student out of a certain space. Feelings or attitudes of not being racially adequate, such as “Black enough” or “Asian enough,” can serve as a divisive tool for individual Multiracial students and cultural groups on campus. In order to combat these labels, Multiracial students may feel pressure to be an expert in their cultural histories, potentially becoming an exaggeration of their ethnic selves.

Physical appearance is another major element in maintaining barriers. Several of the interviewed students recalled a time when they entered a meeting of a group of Monoracial students of color and felt out of place and questioned. An interesting dynamic that plays out here, however, is that “many students looked ‘ethnic’ enough to be perceived as ‘not White’” allowing them the space to “belong to a general community of students of color” (Renn, 2000, p. 407). Although participating in this general community gives them an opportunity to get their foot in the door, true acceptance into a more specific ethnic group is still not guaranteed. Hopefully, in getting to know individual members and the cultures of the groups present, the Multiracial individual will begin to make one-on-one connections and be accepted by the group.

Participation in legitimizing activities gave Biracial participants a way of negotiating the perceived boundaries of various communities. By writing for the school newspaper as a representative of students of color, participating in the various cultural group’s academic, political, or social programs, or even establishing themselves as a strong part of campus dialogue about race, Biracial students found they were better able to cross existing boundaries. Once they established credibility, their acceptance was still relatively fragile. It was also expressed within the study that if the student then engaged in activities with predominantly White organizations, or began their college careers with such involvement, participation alone can negate one’s legitimacy in the eyes of their peers of color (Renn, 2000).

All of these students expressed the need, desire, and importance of feeling accepted and welcomed in their own space. Those participants that were unable to find their place contemplated the option of transferring to other institutions in order to feel a sense of belonging. “Given the importance in student development and racial identity development theory of having a group of like-others with whom to affiliate, the inability of most Multiracial students to find such a group is cause for concern” (Renn, 2000, p. 415). The level of involvement that one has on his, her, or his campus and the sense of belonging created by the institution is paramount to the overall success and development of that student. Multiracial students need a space and a voice on campus in order to create an inclusive environment for not only themselves, but for other Biracial and Multi-

racial students on campus as well.

My Personal Story

In the last decade, scholar Maria Root (1996) developed an ecological Multiracial Identity Model that shifted the importance from a final outcome to a focus on the context of identity development of Multiracial individuals. Root proposed that there are four race contexts in which Multiracial individuals engage; this engagement is called, “border crossing.” The term border crossing refers to “the idea that identity could be deployed situationally by well-adjusted, intellectually, and emotionally mature individuals” (Renn, 2004, p. 81). There are four different race contexts that Multiracial and Biracial individuals can navigate. One of these contexts is the ability to “hold, merge, and respect multiple perspectives simultaneously” (Root, p. 56). Another context is for individuals to assume a situational identity based on context or environment. The third framework is to create an independent and hybrid Multiracial reference point apart from family and peers. The final circumstance is for the individual to consistently maintain a Monoracial identity when entering different environments (Miville, 2005). Growing up and navigating my different surroundings, I found myself quickly identifying examples from my past where I engaged in all four border crossings.

My father identifies as African American and my mother identifies as Italian American. I identify strongly as Biracial. In middle school and high school, I never really thought about my race in relation to the students around me. I always had a diverse group of friends, so my personal differences never seemed very important or salient to me. It was very apparent in the different ways that we were raised, the different traditions and holidays we celebrated, and the different ways in which we interacted with our families that we all had unique stories and individual identities. However, these differences were never examined and we continued to bond over things such as basketball, music, and the inevitable middle and high school drama and gossip. This is where I feel I developed my ability to respect multiple viewpoints simultaneously without placing a particular value on any one perspective.

In high school, I would float almost seamlessly between different racial groups by automatically code-switching, changing my behavior, language, and style based on my surroundings. During each class transition I assumed a situational identity based on context and environment; I thought nothing of it. To be myself meant having two selves and that seemed normal. I didn’t know anything else. My mannerisms, my style, and my speech would all change in the blink of an eye from walking down the hallways with one group to entering a classroom with another. I felt comfortable and welcomed in both settings. The amount of energy that it took to “switch” back and forth from one identity to another never crossed my

mind.

At one point in high school, I denounced my White identity and maintained a Monoracial identity, regardless of what environment I entered. I had submerged myself into the Black culture of the early twenty-first century and spent most of my free time with other Black students. One of my friends would cornrow my hair monthly, even though the braids would begin to unravel and fall out within 2 days. I would go out with my friends on the weekends to clubs that had all-Black clientele. I only listened to the three radio stations in my hometown that played R&B, rap, and hip-hop music. Although I maintained the friendships that I had with my White friends at the time, my connections lost some of their strength during this period. Each month and each year, it was a slightly different story, a slightly modified identity, and a slightly new approach to tackling the world of race relations.

It was not until college that I truly began to develop my Biracial identity and created a hybrid Multiracial reference point apart from family and friends. What allowed me the opportunity to engage in this exploration and land on my two Biracial feet was the fact that there was a structured and newly established Multiracial student group at my undergraduate institution. Being in a space with students who shared my racial identity, understood my stories, and sympathized with my struggles offered me the amount of support that I needed to gain footing. The discussions that we had, the programs that we planned and executed for other Multiracial students, and the times that we collaborated with the other cultural groups on campus allowed me the opportunity to claim and, more importantly, be proud of my Biracial identity. No longer was I switching from room to room and group to group. No longer was I denying a part of myself and my heritage. No longer was I inadvertently ignoring difference, because now I wanted people to see each and every one of my differences each and every day. I have established, solidified, and found solace in my creation of a Multiracial reference point. My Biracial identity could not then and cannot now be wavered or manipulated in any way, and that is due to my undergraduate institution. My institution offered me the support and the space that I needed to develop, experiment with, and find my identity the same way that my peers of color were able to, and I am eternally grateful.

A Call to Student Affairs Practitioners

Navigating the Multiracial and Biracial population can be a difficult and mind-bending task. The voices, experiences, struggles, and successes of Biracial and Multiracial students, however, cannot continue to go unnoticed, unheard, or understated regardless of the adaptations practitioners will have to make to the unconventional methods of racial identity development. As this population steadily

grows, it is important for practitioners to understand the many identities that a Multiracial individual can take on, the need and importance of their own self-identification, and for practitioners to be comfortable with the fluidity of race that many people exhibit. It is important that student affairs practitioners are able and willing to help these students navigate the systems in place at any given institution. The critical mass of Multiracial students is increasing. Creating a space where they feel welcome and their identities acknowledged and celebrated is an important step in the right direction.

There is ample opportunity for research focused on the Multiracial and Biracial population. Hearing the voices and narratives of individuals who grew up in an interracial household but identify as Monoracial would add an entirely new perspective to this subject matter. Conducting more research on individuals who have two parents of color and no White identity would not only illuminate a new student experience, but it would shed light on a new set of successes, struggles, and challenges in one's life. Engaging in more research on mixed Asian and White and mixed Native American and White identities would give voice to those Biracial students who are often overshadowed by mixed Black and White Biracial individuals in the literature and research concerning Biracial and Multiracial identities. Looking at the experiences of Multiracial and Biracial college students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Latina/o or Native American Serving Institutions, two-year institutions, and single-sex institutions can provide practitioners with a broader scope of identity fluidity, identity development, and the role of intersecting identities among Multiracial individuals.

Because the Multiracial and Biracial movement is relatively new, researchers and scholars have only examined the surface level of the issues facing this population. As more and more individuals identifying as Multiracial enter higher education and become a more visible presence on campuses around the nation, researchers, scholars, and practitioners will be forced to view racial identity in a different light. As of now, there are still many implications to be understood, and much work to be done, given the current volume of articles and publications dedicated to these individuals. Slowly, however, this group is being recognized, celebrated, and given voice, while unifying and demanding nothing less.

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Transnational Student Identity Development through the Cosmopolite Lens: Benefits and Challenges of Straddling Cultures

Jennifer "J.J." Jang

Have you ever felt like you are completely alone, or stuck between worlds? In this age of globalization, there is an increasing number of students who were raised in multiple countries and cultures. Why do these students find it so difficult to answer the question, "Where are you from?" How do childhood experiences influence one's sense of identity, social interaction patterns, relationship attachment styles, and worldview? This moral conversation explores the characteristics of transnational students, identifies benefits of their experiences, examines their unique challenges, and uncovers their associated life patterns from straddling cultures. Through my personal narrative as a self-defined "cosmopolite," (koz-mop-uh-lahyt) I will shine light onto the silent struggles of this often invisible student population.

"Home": a word and concept very concrete and familiar to some, yet abstract and foreign to many. The meaning of home could vary drastically depending on the interpretation of the individual. Home could refer to one's "homeland" indicated by a legal document, or a place where one "feels at home" (Storti, 2001, p. 3-4). As the world becomes more internationalized, many individuals do not feel a distinct link to any one place or set of traditions. The concept of home is often described more as an emotional location rather than geographical one (Pascoe, 2000). For many, having a community and home during childhood can be a source of stability and strength. However, for those straddling cultures, the concept of home may be very unclear. For these students, myself included, defining and finding home can be a lifelong journey.

Twelve years ago in Taipei, Taiwan, a father made a quick announcement of his decision to move the whole family to Saipan. In less than a month, a devastated ten-year-old girl was ripped away from the only life she had ever known. Everything that she called home forever vanished with one airplane ride. Without

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knowing a single letter of the alphabet except for A, B, and C, she was thrown into an English-speaking environment two months later. My name is Jennifer Jang, and I was that girl.

My experience as a first generation, ethnic minority, female international student on a predominantly white campus has greatly impacted my college career. Coming alone to the United States as an international student in pursuit of higher education was not an easy task. I struggled with a complete change of language, culture, traditions, values, societal standards, and a way of life, all during the difficult developmental transition into college. Through this transition, I realized that I possess a much different life paradigm than those around me. From this, I began to identify my life experiences that have contributed to my present perspective.

According to Pollock and Reken (2001):

A Third Culture Kid (TCK) is a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents' culture. The TCK builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership in any. Although elements from each culture are assimilated into the TCK's life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar background, other TCKs. (p. 19)

Although TCKs, also known by the terms "Global Nomads" (McCaig, 1992) and "Transcultural" (Willis, Enloe, & Monoura, 1994) come from all walks of life, there is something about living the transnational lifestyle that is shared. "Sometimes we bond based on who we are, but more times we bond based on what we know and what we have experienced" (Dr. Mary Childers, personal communication, November 4, 2009). Chinese students that I have interacted with in the past claim that I do not look fully Chinese, speak unaccented English, have more "American" friends, dress differently, and walk differently; therefore, I am not Chinese enough for them. I tend to find solidarity with other TCKs because my peers who have not been overseas rarely understand my experience (Fail, Thompson, & Walker, 2004). There is an intrinsic understanding and acknowledgement of the transnational lifestyle such that explanations are not necessary.

Transnational students live a cross cultural and highly mobile lifestyle. We interact deeply with various cultures and relocate frequently between countries and cultural environments (Shields, 2009). For many, college may be the first time we explore our identity. How does one's childhood experience impact one's social interaction patterns, communication styles, and adult life?

“Where Are You From?”

There is a pause that strikes in my mind after this question, which inevitably causes me a lot of internal conflict. How does a person who is on her second passport and has been to more than ten countries before the age of 18 answer this question? Every time I am asked this question, I am forced to choose which part of my past to share, then decide the level of vulnerability I will share with this person, and finally examine the cultural context in which the question is asked to determine the socially acceptable answer. I get anxious thinking that I may be taking airtime from others, dominating the conversation, or preventing others from engaging in the conversation when I am in a group setting.

It also appears to me that when individuals ask this question, they are not genuinely interested in where I am from. They want to know what they can expect from me, what my values and beliefs are, and how they should interact with me. It is social sense making and a simple label they are after. Moreover, the question, “Where are you from?” comes with the assumption that my values and standards directly correlate with and are shaped entirely by one single geographic location, which is not necessarily the case.

Coming from a multi-racial and multi-ethnic background, I do not feel that I fit easily into one social category constructed by American culture, which makes it difficult to understand how I fit into this culture’s perception of the world. The Greek roots of the word Cosmopolite are *kosmo* and *polites*, which, together, means citizen of the world. I am raised in a neither/nor world, a culture that is neither my parents’ nor the culture I grew up in. Similar to TCKs, I have developed my own life pattern differently from students who are born and raised in the same culture (Pollock & Reken, 2001). This culturally ambiguous background creates its own unique set of challenges and benefits for transnational students.

Advantages and Benefits

These children see the world in all its richness and variety. Theirs is a privileged life, filled with opportunities to extend and enhance their knowledge of the earth and its people. Bilingual or even multilingual at an early age, immersed in an interrelated, interdependent world community, they are able to enjoy a broader and more mature perspective than many of their more rooted peers. Theirs is a global education. (Eidse & Sichel, 2004, p. 21)

As a consequence of their childhood circumstances, many transnational students have grown up speaking multiple languages and have heightened interest and ability to learn new languages. Transnational students are flexible and adaptable to new environments. One student expressed, “I am, by inmost nature, a chame-

leon, a sponge, a being of multiple selves. When I arrive anywhere I observe the mores and values of the place then seek to mimic them, becoming in a sense, each time, someone new" (Taber, 1994, p. 46). Food is a good example of this: I grew up eating seaweed ties and congee, fried squid and raw octopus, duck tongue and gizzards, tripe and pig liver. Chicken feet are popular movie-munchies. I am from a culture where dark meat is better than white meat, leafy greens are better cooked than not; and fish eyes and pigs' feet are delicacies. There was no place for salad or cheese. I have learned to eat cold raw vegetables with dressing on top.

Transnational students often have a multi-dimensional worldview, and are able to see the world from many aspects due to extensive contact with various culture characteristics. These students may be more mature than their mono-culture counterparts (Useem & Cottrell, 1999) due to routinely dealing with international travel, foreign currency, formal functions, and sometimes international crisis as part of their normal lifestyle (Kebshull & Pozo, 2006). TCKs are life-long learners, and the world is their classroom. During a time in which "global vision is imperative, where skills in intercultural communication, linguistic ability, mediation, diplomacy and the ability to manage diversity are critical, global nomads are probably better equipped than others" (McCaig, 1994, p. 33). While this transnational lifestyle can bring many benefits, rewards, and advantages, it also comes with struggles and challenges unique to TCKs as they struggle with their sense of identity and belonging in the world.

Challenges and Issues

While the transnational lifestyle may seem like a glamorous childhood to some, many experience hardships that are overwhelming and seem to cancel out the benefits of their unique life journey (Pollock & Reken, 2001, p. 8). Not only do questions like "Where are you from?" place the nomads at a disadvantage in cultural situations (Smith, 1994), they are also "not permitted by their mobile parents to sink roots, their lives are adventures lived moment by moment, built place by place" (Elidse & Sichel, 2004, p. 23). Transnational students experience the sense of rootlessness, insecurity, and emotional instability just as "When a tree is transplanted too often, its roots can never grow deep" (Pollock & Reken, p. 71). TCKs may struggle with a mixed sense of identity, interrupted development, and navigating relationships. Compared to their mono-culture peers, they must alternate between various cultures and incorporate an array of values and standards from each (Useem & Cottrell, 1999).

Identity Crisis

Who am I? What is my name? A person's name can provide significant identity to who one is; I do not know how that feels. I have two legal names; one Taiwan-

ese, one English. The name I use now was picked out of a list of English names when I first moved out of Taiwan – I did not realize that by losing my first name I erased the first decade of my life and part of my identity. My name was simplified and changed again when I went to Japan to better fit Japanese culture. Now in the United States, my current name fails to encompass all of me. Each name that I have portrays only a part of me, not the whole me. There is a sense of comfort and security that comes with knowing one's name and confidently sharing that with others—a significant aspect of one's identity that I lack.

Not only do I not know where I am from, I do not know what I am. When I am in my passport country, I am too international. When I am abroad, I am still too foreign. I never feel “enough” for any particular culture. One may have a split sense of identity from their experience with the belief that they belong to and can easily navigate several cultures but own none—belonging simultaneously everywhere and nowhere (Pollock & Reken, 2001). Like a language, when not used or heard in a while, one tends to forget how to speak; my multiple identities often get jumbled and confused. With 99% of the people that I encounter every day looking racially different from me, I struggled to find a sense of self. There are days the only time I get to see a person that looks like me is when I look in the mirror. Over time, I feel I am forgetting what it means to be Asian, Taiwanese, and Saipanese. In order to succeed in this culture, I had to set aside certain aspects of myself to integrate, amalgamate, and adapt to the “American way.” In doing so, I have lost touch with my own culture and traditions – something that is very close to my heart and very painful to push away, but I do.

Interrupted Development

Culture can provide a strong sense of identity, confidence, and belonging. Living in a culture long enough allows one to be able to interpret behaviors and understand their connotations. One has almost an intuitive notion about what is appropriate, humorous, and offensive in different settings (Kebshull & Pozo, 2006). Culture shock is natural when transitioning into a different culture. However, adults go through this adjustment period with all of their core values, relationships, and beliefs solidly established; I was thrown into a new culture before I had formed my own personal and cultural identity (Pollock & Reken, 2001, p. 39). As I transition in and out of cultures, instead of learning and practicing the essential social interaction skills between peers, I was learning how to understand and communicate in a new language. Even after my fifth year in the United States, I still have a hard time translating sarcasm.

Being in-the-know, on the contrary, provides a deep sense of security and stability. My sense of identity and self are challenged every time I transition cross-culturally where learned behaviors may no longer be appropriate or acceptable.

I have to adapt and adjust again and again to the basic rules of how the world around me operates (Fail et al., 2004). My energy is spent “surviving rather than thriving, struggling to understand what is happening rather than fully participating,” (Kebshull & Pozo, 2006) and hesitating to interact out of fear of making social mistakes that would jeopardize relationships.

Family Ties

Unlike many of my peers, I am unable to return home on weekends and holidays. It took me 28 hours to travel to the States in 2005, and I have not been home since. Home is where family is, but because of time and distance, I am unable to visit or celebrate national holidays and religious festivals with my family. To succeed as a first-generation international student in this country, I have to work extra hard and I certainly cannot return home whenever I desire. I have never even looked up the price of a plane ticket home. On my back lies not only the standards I hold for myself, but a tremendous amount of pressure from cultural backgrounds, societal principles, and family values.

Immigration Status

A harsh reality of my transnational lifestyle that I have discovered is the high possibility that I will not be able to go home, to Saipan, after graduation. Due to my visa and citizenship status, if I do not find a job that will sponsor my visa application, I will not be allowed there. My parents will have been living with work visas in Saipan for 15 years when I complete my master's degree. However, when I lived with them, I was there on dependant status.

Just as I do not have the privilege to take time between my degrees due to my visa status, I also get shipped off the North American continent when I graduate. Usually when this happens, international students return to their home country to be with family. My situation is different as my citizenship is in Taiwan and my family lives in Saipan. When I graduate and my visa expires, without sponsored employment, I will be sent to Taiwan instead of Saipan, where my family is. The possibility that I may not be able to go home has become a heavy burden that I am constantly aware of in my mind.

Relationship Attachment Styles

Having been unplugged from the only world I knew, I define my home and roots in terms of relationships rather than location. I immediately trust certain individuals, but hold back confiding in others. I go to great lengths to nurture relational ties, but keep an emotional margin of safety and a sense of detachment. I worry about getting too close, or becoming vulnerable due to repeated shocks

of separation, transition, and broken trust in relationships. I may be able to navigate conferences, strike up conversations with strangers, and form quick initial connections with folks, but with deep, long term connections, the more attached I am the more I fear I will be hurt by the inevitable goodbye that always comes. I am not alone in this. Approximately 40% of TCKs struggle with creating close friendships or intimacy (Pollock & Reken, 2001).

Impact on Education

I constantly feel like I am the outsider in school because of having no shared educational experiences. I attended school where every grade had 18 classes and every class had over 30 students. There were no janitors; instead all students participated in a “cleaning” period. Our playground and physical education class took place on the beach, and we had warnings for tsunamis instead of earthquakes or hurricanes. People cannot comprehend what it was like to have school dismissed because a volcano erupted on a nearby island, causing the air to become pitch black with ash and creating potential health hazards. This inability to relate to my experiences can be very isolating.

Although TCKs are four times more likely to earn a bachelor’s degree than domestic U.S. mono-culture students, a considerable amount of these students transfer at least twice, take time off before completing a degree or drop out in the middle due to lacking a sense of belonging (Useem & Cottrell, 1999). They come to college with a far greater knowledge of the world than their domestic counterparts (Kohls, 2001), but are also less proficient in interacting with their peers in social situations (Shames, 1997). “In exchanging the security of roots for the diversity of nomadism, their lives are filled with change, their perspectives broadened, their childish souls opened to the wisdom new experience brings” (Eidse & Sichel, 2004, p. 23). However, the emotional stress of being repeatedly uprooted and lacking a sense of belonging may be a greater predictor of depression more so than social support (Shields, 2009).

“TCKs are not a new phenomenon. They’ve been around since the beginning of time, but, until now, they have been largely invisible” (Pollock & Reken, 2001, p. 6). Many TCKs’ first opportunity to live in the United States and experience the U.S. culture for themselves is when they enroll in college (Kohls, 2001). So what does this mean for student affairs professionals?

Relevance to Student Affairs

“Few communities anywhere will remain culturally homogeneous in this age of easy international travel and instant global communication...Growing up among cultural differences is already, or soon will be, the rule rather than the exception”

(Pollock & Reken, 2001, p. 7). When I came to the United States, I was insecure and overwhelmed by being on my own in a completely new social context that I had to learn in order to survive. It is important to acknowledge the unique background of each TCK and support them in their adaptation to the university setting. TCKs benefit greatly by gaining insights into the new culture with institutional support (Ruhter, 2001). Diversity is not just difference in the visible layers of culture (Sanghera, 2005). If we do not expand our definitions and assumptions on diversity and culture, individuals in the student affairs profession may easily falsely categorize our students and end up escalating the negative effects of alienation and stereotyping (Reken & Bethel, 2009). Helping transnational students to name themselves and frame their unique experiences will not only aid them in cherishing many benefits of their cross cultural upbringing, but also enhance the perspective and pedagogy of student affairs professionals as institutions become more diverse and global.

A TCK constantly struggles with these challenges to form their own identity. Questions of origin, culture and ethnicity are hard to define to someone who has grown up in multiple environments. They lack a sense of security in their own identity that their peers may acquire from growing up strongly rooted in the same social background. Stemming from this is a prominent sense of isolation, with the inability to relate to their peers or form close personal relationships because of their transient lifestyles. TCKs also experience problems with immigration, and other legal or cultural structures that many students never have to think about. However, many of these problems can be opportunities for TCKs, their peers, and student affairs personnel to learn and grow within themselves and within different cultures.

The transnational advantages, challenges, and experiences can be universal and applicable to anyone who grew up in a cross cultural context. Foster youth may share the sense of insecurity and a lack of belonging, a friend who identifies as a gay man may feel like “the only one” growing up, or Bi- or Multiracial individuals who drift may never feel able to find that solid identity and foundation. There are some who straddle socio-economic classes and are torn by feeling like they have to choose between their background and their present situation; transfer students who feel alienated from their peers; and the seemingly invisible group of immigrants, individuals with disabilities, and underrepresented racial populations within the United States.

Increasing awareness of the transnational student profile will not only help higher education professionals identify those students who may benefit from understanding more about their own unique background, but institutions will also benefit by the increased diversity, deeper cultural understanding, international knowledge, and linguistic skills that transnational students and individuals

in other group identities bring to campus. In turn, this will allow these students to share their personal narratives, use the gifts of their heritage and qualities to flourish, and shine light onto this silent struggle.

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The Model Minority Student: Asian American Students and the Relationships Between Acculturation to Western Values, Family Pressures, and Mental Health Concerns

Nathan Divino Panelo

As the Asian American student population grows in United States (U.S.) higher education, so does the demand for resources on campus. One major concern facing Asian Americans today is the cultural pressure from home which often leads to mental health concerns. Many Asian American students acculturate to Western values in United States colleges, and in doing so, sacrifice part of their traditional identities. As Asian American students acculturate to Western values, it becomes difficult for them to relate to their immigrant parents or first-generation Asian American parents. In contrast, Asian American students who feel close to their traditional values can find difficulty transitioning into college due to the discrimination toward their culture and lack of social support. This article will identify how acculturation to Western values and parental pressures about academics can leave Asian American students—often referred to as “model minorities”—depressed and emotionally unstable.

During the beginning of the fall semester at the University of Vermont (UVM), I found myself studying in a relatively secluded area. As I was immersed in my reading, I noticed an Asian male staring out of a window with a concerned look on his face. I decided to flag him down and have a friendly conversation. As we talked, we started to discuss how it feels to be an Asian American at a predominantly White institution. Our experiences adjusting to the campus were quite similar even though we grew up with very different childhoods. He grew up in Boston and I grew up in Seattle, but we both had a strong connection to our culture and our family.

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We discussed how it felt to be first-generation college students growing up with American ideologies, sharing cultural values and interests. When I asked what he was majoring in, he said that he was going into medicine, mostly because it is what his parents wanted. He also said that he was taking a class in visual arts and that his true passion was drawing. When I asked him why he was not majoring in art, he responded, "Because my parents would disown me if I told them I wanted to major in drawing cartoons." He went on to say that he felt like he was not able to connect with anyone on this campus and he contemplated transferring to a school that would suit him better. I got the impression that it was not until our conversation that he felt comfortable talking about his feelings about his experiences at UVM. As we parted ways, I started to think about when I was a first-year undergraduate and how therapeutic it was for me to vent to someone who understood my frustrations and anxieties as an Asian American.

This article will discuss the concerns of Asian American first- and second-generation college students who feel fully integrated in their cultural heritage and how their acculturation to Western culture relates to mental health concerns. This article will also address how parental involvement or pressure to perform academically perpetuates the model minority myth. Finally, I outline the steps student affairs professionals must take to support Asian American students on college campuses.

The terms "Western," "American," and "United States" (U.S.) are used interchangeably in this article. Most of the literature reviewed uses these terms to represent U.S.-born Asian American students. Further, the research studies summarized here were conducted in the U.S. However, the terms "Western" and "American" encompass more than just the U.S. and findings could apply to Asian American students in other parts of North America. It is also important to note that the Asian culture is broken up into subcultures (for example, Chinese, Korean, Laotian, Hmong, Japanese, Filipino, etc.) that do not exactly follow the same cultural ideologies. What might work for one subgroup might not work for another.

Asian American Students and Acculturation

Asian American students who have lived most, if not all of their lives, in the U.S. may have mixed feelings about acculturation into American society (Kim & Omizo, 2005). Acculturation is defined as adapting to the normative process of the dominant culture (Kim & Omizo). Some examples of acculturation are: assuming English as one's primary language, adapting to Western societal values, and displaying mannerisms normative in American society (Lee, Choe, Kim, & Ngo, 2000). An individual's acculturation of Western culture can vary depending on the length of time lived in the U.S., regional location, socioeconomic

status, and demographics of the community (McCarron & Inkelas, 2006). Many first-generation students in higher education acculturate to Western culture much faster than their immigrant parents (Lee et al.). It is common for family members who immigrate to America to reject acculturation by consistently using their native language, practicing traditional lifestyles and cultural norms, and by forcing their children to abide by their native cultural values (Lee et al.).

Asian American students are typically perceived as having either traditional or Western values. Asian Americans who hold traditional values are characterized as valuing interdependence, harmony, collectivism, and hierarchy in family structure (Chang, 1996; Kim & Omizo, 2005). In contrast, Western culture is perceived to value individualism, autonomy, future-oriented thinking, and competition (Kim & Omizo). Both Western and traditional Asian values guide how Asian American students think, feel, and behave throughout their college experience (Kim & Omizo). Traditional Asian values can be enforced by parents, family, and community, but are often rejected by students who believe it is beneficial to follow Western culture (Lee et al., 2000). Studies have shown that some Asian American students who adopt these opposing sets of values may lead to conflict when attending college while living at home (Aldwin & Greenberger, 1987). Also, possessing both Western and traditional Asian values can result in a pessimistic personality, or feeling guilty, anxious, or both (Zane, Sue, Hu, & Kwon, 1991).

Kim and Omizo (2005) stated that Asian American students can find resolution by integrating Western and Asian cultures into their daily interactions on campus. Student integration is defined as becoming proficient in the dominant culture while simultaneously maintaining their set of indigenous cultural values. Psychologically, integration for Asian American students, as well as many other racial identities, can allow cultural values to be expressed in both Western and Asian American systems, particularly when cultural values are in opposition. Many Asian Americans have settled and integrated into Western culture, giving an outward perception of “content conformity.” This conformity may reinforce the assumption that Asian Americans do not need the support and resources afforded to other diverse groups. Unfortunately, this is not the case.

The Model Minority Student

In a study conducted by McCarron and Inkelas (2006), Asian students had the highest graduation rate compared to other underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. A reason for this could be due to a solid work ethic and the drive for success valued in Asian cultures, also known in the Asian/Asian American community as the “American Dream” (Cheng & Espiritu, 1989). This leads to the perception of Asian Americans as a “model minority.” The term model minority is a label for Asian Americans because they are seen as the most culturally adap-

tive minority group (Mallinchrodt, Shigeoka, & Suzuki, 2005; Solberg, Ritsma, Davis, Tata, & Jolly, 1994). Though the idea of being a model minority seems like a positive perception of Asian Americans and their community, this designation has negative effects.

As model minority students in college, Asian Americans are expected to academically outperform and work more than students from all other minority groups in classes, co-curricular activities, and part-time jobs (Cress & Ikeda, 2003). This idea of being the model minority student can be reinforced at home by family and parents' high expectations. Unfortunately, many parents do not understand the social and psychological problems that come with being labeled as the model minority.

In Cress and Ikeda's study (2003), 508 Asian American college students were surveyed over two years. The survey's intent was to compare their feelings of depression to those of other college students. The study found that more Asian American students reported feeling depressed than their peers, both White students and other students of color. The study also found that the majority of Asian American students who feel depressed see their campus as having a negative climate where they experience hostility and discrimination (Cress & Ikeda).

The model minority label also discourages Asian American students from seeking support services on campus, which leads to further academic pressure in the classroom. Many Asian American students, especially first-generation Asian American students, have trouble transitioning from high school to college because of parental expectations that they be capable of surviving stressful situations without support (Solberg et al., 1994). These students who are striving to perform as model minority students and at the same time reject academic and social support from the college can find themselves struggling throughout their college experience. Student affairs offices, such as multi-ethnic centers, can offer immigrant parents on-campus programs and workshops during family weekends, orientation, or move-in days. These workshops can help Asian American parents understand the complexities of college life and the overall experiences for Asian American students in higher education.

Family and Parents

Family pressure can be a factor leading to mental health concerns in Asian American students. Lee et al. (2000) stated, "Numerous scholars have also noted that Asian immigrant families tend to have closed communication patterns, rigid hierarchical relationships, and limited quality time between parents and children" (p. 220). The more students acculturate to Western values, the more difficult it can be to openly communicate about personal college struggles to parents who

still embrace their Asian cultural values. For Asian American students, the need to be perceived as independent and autonomous makes it hard to communicate about stress, depression, anxiety, and frustrations about college life to their parents. This concept is contradictory to the Asian American traditional values of interdependence and support (Chang, 1996; Kim & Omizo, 2005).

Asian American students with immigrant parents have frequent intergenerational arguments concerning language usage and cultural relations. Lee et al. (2000) stated, “family acculturation conflicts are more likely to occur among recent immigrants where the gap between parents and children is greatest” (p. 212). Because of the differences between the rate of acculturation with U.S.-born Asian Americans and immigrant parents, known as the “acculturation gap,” consistent conflicts and miscommunication can take place at home.

Family conflict and miscommunication can also be due to parents’ lack of knowledge about U.S. higher education. “Evidence suggests that first-generation students encounter a lower perceived level of family support, a lower level of importance placed on college by parents, and less knowledge of the college environment and campus values among parents” (McCarron & Inkelas, 2006, p. 536). For example, parents may lack knowledge of available financial resources, institutional terminology and language, academic support, and the role of a college advisor, mentor, or both (McCarron & Inkelas). Parents’ lack of knowledge of higher education can lead Asian American students to experience “culture shock” (Inman & Mayes, 1999). This can lead to negative outcomes for the student, such as depression resulting from environmental discomforts, the misinterpretation of financial awards and assistance, and eventual withdrawal from classes (McCarron & Inkelas).

Many Asian American parents immigrate to the U.S. seeking a better life for their family. In addition, many immigrate for the sake of providing better educational opportunities for their children and therefore higher likelihood of success in their futures (Cress & Ikeda, 2003). It is common for Asian American parents to choose their children’s major, career, and social activities (Okagaki & Frensch, 1998). For Asian American students who are raised with traditional values where parents dictate your major and your extracurricular activities, high grade achievement is expected. This can result in added stress in college, which can lead to depression and other mental health concerns (Cress & Ikeda).

On campus, student affairs professionals should learn to recognize Asian American students’ patterns of difficulty and the causal cultural factors at work. Staff and administrators in student support services need to be cognizant that the pressures from home on Asian American students can add a deeper burden to their academic and social lives, which can contribute to mental health concerns.

Depression and Mental Health Concerns

Acculturation to Western values can also contribute to the Asian American students' struggles with depression and mental health (Atkinson, Whiteley, & Gim, 1990; Liao, Rounds, & Andrews, 2005; Mallinchrodt et al., 2005; Solberg et al., 1994). Solberg et al. attempted to identify the resources Asian American students use to seek help in academics, personal identity development, and substance abuse. Solberg et al. found that Asian American students who use counseling centers develop ongoing relationships with the services as needed. Atkinson et al. also stated that Asian American students who are more acculturated to Western culture would regard campus-based psychologists and counselors as a common and acceptable resource.

Asian American students who feel attached to their traditional values often reach out to older members of the community, such as community elders and religious leaders, or to social groups, like student organizations (Mallinchrodt et al., 2005; Yeh & Wang, 2000). This leads students to develop a strong ethnic identity, which can result in inclusion in a larger community, a positive approach to mental health, and confidence in transitioning to a college setting (Yoo & Lee, 2005). In a study conducted by Yeh and Wang, 470 Asian American students were surveyed about their support system when faced with a problem or concern; 94.7% would cope with a friend, 59.7% would cope with parents, and 7.7% would cope with a counselor. The students in the study also saw social and family activities which emphasize the Asian culture as interdependent and harmonious as a means for psychological coping.

One of the leading causes of mental health struggles among Asian American students is the pressure to adhere to the traditional values that prevent them from expressing their social and psychological difficulties (Cress & Ikeda, 2003). In particular, many first-generation college students and individuals who identify closely with Asian values feel embarrassed to go to counseling because having any psychological problems is believed to bring shame and humiliation to their family and community (Kim & Omizo, 2005; Atkinson et al., 1990). Asian Americans who primarily embrace Asian traditional values seek social accord, which leads them to hide their emotional expression and internalize their depression (Cress & Ikeda).

Within higher education, there are some resources in place for Asian and Asian American students to further explore their own racial identity. Yeh and Wang (2000) suggested that student affairs professionals should implement support programs for Asian American students, such as research initiatives, student mentoring, and Asian American clubs.

Discussion and Conclusion

Asian American college students coming from Asian immigrant families have a high instance of depression or mental health concerns on campus due to several causes: acculturation to Western culture, pressure from parents to succeed, and pressure to embrace the model minority myth. For example, the Asian American first-year student that I mentioned at the beginning of this article struggled with his transition into UVM clearly due to pressure to acculturate to college campus norms, the inability to choose his own major, and the lack of a supportive community.

Student affairs professionals can help with transition and support for Asian American students on campus by being cognizant of the developmental hardships associated with the process of acculturation. Student affairs professionals should provide outlets for social interactions with others who hold the same traditional values. Campuses can also support Asian American parents by setting up programs specifically catering to understanding the resources in higher education. Student affairs professionals also need to ask themselves if acculturation to Western values is helpful or hindering to Asian American students. Being acculturated can lead to more comfort when utilizing services like campus-based counseling and an overall easier transition into college life, but it can also conflict with cultural values and traditional practices, such as discrepancies within the family and community relations.

Asian American students are continually changing their cultural values to fit into college climate. It is time for our higher education system to expand and deepen their knowledge of Asian culture to best serve the Asian American student population. Student affairs can begin to accommodate these students by supporting social groups and clubs that cater to Asian American culture. Not only do these clubs provide a service to the university, they also create a safe space for students to cope with their mental health concerns and provide a social community. As the Asian American student population grows in higher education, so does the demand for social support. The studies and literature have already been created; it is time for student affairs professionals to start taking action.

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Breaking the Silence: Examining Personal Preparedness for Supporting Students Living with HIV/AIDS

Christopher Purcell

Often, when an article is written, it implies a certain level of expertise on the part of the author. I do not know if one can ever be an expert on supporting friends, family members, and students living with or affected by HIV/AIDS. This article is not a declaration of finite practices of being an ally to these individuals. Rather, it draws from personal reflection, public health research, and student affairs theory to make sense of a personal journey where HIV/AIDS has touched nearly every aspect of my life: family, friends, colleagues, and students. This article asks the reader to examine their personal connections, experiences, perceptions and biases of students living with HIV/AIDS, particularly those who are newly diagnosed, in order to be better prepared and informed friends, colleagues, and student affairs practitioners to those living with the disease.

When my friend told me he was HIV-positive, I could see fear dripping from his shaking lips. His eyes were wide and subdued, and in them I could see a reluctant acceptance of a destiny he could no longer control. The unspoken fear of every gay man's mother had turned into a reality. I couldn't even imagine what he must be holding in his heart. He knew what I was thinking immediately when he saw my face. He always knows exactly what I'm thinking. "I used a condom, I always use a condom," he said. I felt guilty and ashamed immediately. So conditioned to hearing the stories of men who "do not like the feeling" of condoms, I was quick to push upon him this narrative of irresponsibility. But this did not fit that narrative. This was one man, putting his fate in his partner's hands. While it had been the condom that broke, I could not help but think what had really broken was the promise of being "disease free" they had made before their encounter. I hugged him closer than I ever had before to let him know that I was not afraid, but as this was happening a selfish moment was revealing itself in my mind. It could have been me. What if it was? Would I tell my friends or partners? Or would I just hide in silence, shame, and guilt? Would I tell my mother and hope that any sign of acceptance would

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escape her lips while disappointment lingered in her eyes and heart? I released my hug and sat down to begin what would be a long conversation.

If such conversations regarding the HIV are difficult amongst friends, imagine how difficult it could be to have conversations regarding HIV status with students. Are student affairs professionals truly ready for the challenge of responding to a student who discloses they are HIV-positive? Typically the testing social support services for students with HIV, assuming they have them, would be situated in the health services offices on college campuses. However, the challenges of living with HIV affect many other aspects of students' lives. The premise of this article is not that student affairs practitioners should take the place of or interfere with the jobs of healthcare workers. Rather, drawing upon public health research, limited student affairs research on HIV-positive students, and personal reflection, this article seeks to better prepare student affairs professionals for working with students affected by HIV. Student affairs professionals must not only have adequate knowledge of the disease and its implications but must also be prepared for status disclosure from students. By working through our fears and biases, we can strive to be more compassionate, understanding, and supportive professionals and more compassionate, understanding beings.

Knowing More

HIV is the virus that causes AIDS. HIV-disease (encompassing all HIV infection regardless of AIDS diagnosis) is a disease of the immune system, which progressively weakens the body's ability to fend off infections. Though there is no cure for the virus currently, there are treatments for both HIV infection and for many of the opportunistic infections that may arise from complications resulting from a compromised immune system. As of 2007, 33 million people in the world were estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS Report [Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS]/World Health Organization, 2009). In the United States, there are an estimated 1.2 million individuals living with HIV/AIDS (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009).

Of the individuals infected with HIV, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report that men who have sex with men (MSM) represent the largest proportion (45%). However, MSM are not the only ones affected by the disease. Those infected through heterosexual sexual activity make up 27% of infections in the United States. Additionally, individuals infected through injection drug use make up 22% of those living with HIV and those who are both MSM and use injection drugs make up approximately 5% of reported new infections in 2007 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009).

A closer look at statistics revealed that the rates of women, people of color,

and young people contracting HIV are increasing at an alarming pace. In 1992, women accounted for 14% of people living with AIDS; in 2004, that percentage had increased to over 23%. In 2004, the rate of new AIDS diagnoses for African American adults and adolescents was 10 times the rate for White individuals. Latinos comprise only 14% of the nation's population (including Puerto Ricans) but 19% of all AIDS cases. In addition, it is estimated that half of all new HIV infections are believed to occur in people under the age of 25 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009).

Given this data, the discrepancy between actual and perceived risk is shocking. Among a traditional student population (18-24 years old, full-time enrollment), respondents said they believe AIDS is a "very serious" or "serious" problem for college students. However, only about half of these students expressed personal concern about becoming infected with HIV (Opt, Loffredo, Knowles, & Fletcher, 2000). Such a discrepancy regarding personal risk should be alarming to us as educators as we seek to inform students about the prevalence and seriousness of HIV/AIDS.

Student Development Theory and the HIV-positive Student Experience

He walked into my office and looked exhausted. "Out late last night?" I asked. "Yes," he said. He closed my door and sat down. "Actually...I'm having trouble... dealing... I'm [HIV] positive, and it is all so new... I do not know what to think or how to act." I knew this student was working through many things in his life: racial identity, sexual orientation, his life goals and ambitions, drugs, and relationships. After all he had told me in his frequent visits to my office, I did not think a new story or life plot twist could phase me. This time I was stunned. I just listened for a while as he told me about being diagnosed, having to contact his past partners (and not remembering some). He told me about his initial appointments with the doctor and how he was going to attend support groups.

He had clearly done quite a bit of life reflection since his diagnosis. He did not even want to think about telling family yet. He was open to telling friends, but knew that "people talk." He acknowledged he used drugs to escape his problems, but was afraid of what he might do when under the influence. He knew he would have to tell every partner, and wondered aloud if it was even worth it "just to have a hook up." "And I will have to use condoms now," a statement which jolted me further into disbelief. After he talked for a while he paused and waited for my response. "You know I am here for you, no matter what, and I will do all I can to help, but it sounds like you know you are going to need a network of support here, so what are your next steps?"

In a qualitative study of HIV-positive college students, students reported feelings of intense loneliness, isolation, anger, anxiety, and fear (Bower & Collins, 2000). An examination of these results in the context of transition theory (Evans, For-

ney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998) provides insight into the complexity of the newly diagnosed student's transition. Schlossberg (1995) named four factors that determine an individual's effectiveness in coping with any transitional period: situation, self, support, and strategies (as cited in Evans et al.). Consider, for instance, the first two indicators of ability to cope with transition: *situation* and *self*. The permanence, timing, and life changes make the situation of being HIV-positive seem daunting. The factors related to *self* revolve around perceptions, outlook, and optimism about life. Students may report having little optimism or positive outlook on their situation (Bower & Collins, 2000).

Students with HIV struggle daily. They suffer from the physical and emotional burden of dealing with HIV. Coping with a diagnosis and the changes this disease precipitates is both physically and mentally exhausting. The students interviewed complained that they have little energy to grow intellectually or to interact with students outside the classroom. (Bower & Collins, p.441)

Support is the third determinant to a student's ability to cope with transition. Specifically, family units, networks of friends, institutions, and communities are mentioned as four systems of (social) support (Evans et al., 1998). In order to receive social support, individuals must make the difficult choice to disclose their status. "Unfortunately, the potential for rejection, abandonment, physical and emotional abuse, and other adverse consequences creates substantial barriers to disclosing HIV status" (Kalichman, Kalichman, O'Connell, Freedman, Eaton, & Cain, 2007, p. 260).

Our job is to help students find networks of *support* that will help the whole student: physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Assisting students to develop *strategies* (the fourth determinant) that "aid in managing the stress in the aftermath" may be particularly helpful for coping with transition (Evans et al., 1998, p. 115). Strategies should include: focusing on the student's physical, mental, and spiritual well-being, and should channel on-campus and community resources.

While transition theory is one way to examine the HIV-positive college experience, Bower and Collins (2000) explained this experience in the context of Kohlberg's moral development theory:

Because they must deal with a life threatening illness, these students are forced to confront a number of emotional, physical, and moral issues that do not challenge other students their age. They had developed a clearer appreciation for individual rights and responsibilities, personal standards, justice, and reciprocity. (p. 434)

Although students with HIV may develop an increased capacity to examine seri-

ous moral issues as defined by Kohlberg's (1976) theory, students with HIV were found to struggle with *managing emotions* and *finding purpose*, two of Chickering's (1979) development tasks, or vectors (as cited in Bower & Collins, 2000). Models of racial and sexual identity are also of important consideration. Developmental models for lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) students and students of color typically involve a stage of exploration and immersion in their community, such as identity pride in the model of homosexual development (Evans et al., 1998). Such progression through particular stages might be contingent upon the perception of how accepting a community is of people living with HIV, and whether or not they feel comfortable being honest about their status within identity-based support systems. Continuing to understand the complexities of the HIV-positive student experience will serve us well as a profession, but it must be coupled with a better self-understanding of our relationship with HIV/AIDS and how it affects us personally.

Examining Personal Bias and HIV-Negative Privilege

When my uncle's partner (who at the time I thought was just his friend) passed away, I did not know why. It was never explained to me until I watched the television program "The Real World: San Francisco." Pedro Zamora was a cast member, and he had AIDS. Pedro was young, gay, and dying. He lived every day like it was his last. Pedro's presence on television had a profound effect on me: he humanized the disease. In another way, he also helped to perpetuate the thought that as a gay man I was almost certainly doomed to get AIDS and meet a similar fate. It was just another reason to remain closeted (and fearful). It took me a long time to move past the fear. Every new experience talking with someone or reading something about HIV peels away a small layer of fear and anxiety about the disease and the people who have it. My uncle is now in a relationship with his second long-term partner—both were HIV-positive when he met them. If this is not inspiration to overcome fear for the sake of love, I do not know what is.

There are potentially many influences on our individual perceptions and views of HIV/AIDS and society. Portrayals of HIV-positive individuals in movies, media, and popular culture, as well as having a friend or family member living with the disease may impact our view. In addition to external influences, our individual perceptions may also be linked to misinformation, fear, and misconceptions. Furthermore, any particular experiences with but one or two individuals living with HIV will fail to represent the diversity of experiences of HIV-positive persons.

Student affairs professionals could very well be members of communities that experience a greater burden of HIV (not to mention, may be HIV-positive themselves). This could affect how they may engage with this issue. For some, their experiences with HIV will be inseparable from their identity. In addition, disclosure of HIV status from a student could lead to personal reflection on the part of the

professional. They may consider their own HIV status, their last testing date, and how they might cope with an HIV-positive diagnosis. Professionals who are HIV-negative must also examine the privileges they have that an HIV-positive student may not, and remember that they may be working with HIV-positive students on a daily basis—and may never know it.

Consider the following lists of privileges that are enjoyed by an HIV-negative individual that are not afforded to HIV-positive persons. HIV-negative individuals can engage in sexual intimacy without thinking about potentially infecting their partner. They do not have to negotiate when the right time is to disclose their status to potential intimate partners. They do not have to worry that they could be “outed” (i.e. having others learn about their HIV status through means other than the student disclosing), which could affect friendships, social perceptions, and realities, family relationships, and dating. Professionally, HIV-negative individuals may pursue careers or personal interests without having to think about disclosure to coworkers and supervisors. They will not have to talk about their HIV status with their employers as it concerns taking time off for proper care and in cases of emergency. They also may not have to consider being rejected by loved ones or stigma from mental or medical health professionals.

In essence, there may be goals that will be difficult for HIV-positive individuals to achieve, and others that will be possible only through encouragement and reassurance from support systems. As is the case in all instances of privilege and power, awareness of these differences is essential to understanding the HIV-positive student’s experience. As we examine our personal relationship with the disease and help students understand their own experiences and biases, we can begin to have the crucial conversations that can promote understanding and encourage acceptance.

Understanding Your Capabilities and Limitations

I still do not think there is any sort of “skill” to master when it comes to supporting HIV-positive students. I do, however, know what I cannot do: position myself as an expert or as someone that could ever fully understand what that student is going through. I see myself going back to the foundational principles of student affairs: challenge and support. I try to be prepared to talk about whatever the student has going on that day. Most of the time it is schoolwork, friendships, relationships, and life ambitions. Most times their concerns may not be HIV-related, though sometimes it is more directly about their HIV status. When it is, I am always open to listening. I ask where the student is finding support. When they are not fully utilizing campus or community resources, I challenge them to be self-advocates. We look together for alternative support resources. Sometimes I can see I said the right thing by the look on a student’s face—sometimes I do not know what to say.

After each conversation, I think about what I have just told the student. I ask myself, did I make assumptions? Did privilege affect how I spoke with the student? Sometimes I make mistakes. There are times I have cried. There are days where I have had to find my own networks of support. I often call my colleagues in health promotions, student health, and counseling and psychological services for advice, as I know they are the real experts and the primary caregivers. No, I am not perfect. But I know that I am looking internally at myself as well as externally at the student's needs. As I continue to do both, I know I am doing good work.

Student affairs practitioners must do more than serve as distributors of safe sex supplies and co-sponsors of awareness days, although both activities are helpful in raising awareness about HIV and may serve as a necessary first step toward prevention. Student affairs professionals have to be equal partners with campus health services by serving as educators about the prevalence and implications of HIV. In addition to providing proactive education, professionals must understand the many challenges of being HIV-positive in the college environment in order to respond to those students living with HIV. While it may not be possible for us to know and fully understand all of the support services available for students, we must be insatiable seekers of knowledge for our students and ourselves. Acquiring HIV may be the manifestation of larger underlying issues. Therefore, we must be prepared to find our students the resources and strength to tackle these related issues. We have to get past our own fear and judgment, and be present with the students in their struggles.

The institutional battles in supporting HIV-positive students will be daunting. They will need physical, emotional, and spiritual support from administrative units and individuals across campus and some will be uninformed or reluctant to engage. We must prepare ourselves first, and we will be ready for the long road ahead. Our students are finding the strength to confide in us; we in turn must find the strength within ourselves to assist them.

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The Invisibles: Reparative Forms of Scholarly Expression

Mon!que Wright

For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house -Audre Lorde

In Higher Education and Student Affairs there is often an inclusion-ary call for the underrepresented, the marginal voices of academia. We spend countless hours in training and workshops aiming to educate ourselves on issues of inclusion and diversity. However, this idea seems to be underrepresented when it pertains to our modes of writing. How do we begin to include the invisible art in writing? In the following piece, in order to break up the traditional forms of writing, I am proposing an artistic piece that would begin to bring the invisible into the light, the highly analytical to the emotional, and connect the artistic to the scholar. In order to expand the bounds in the house, we need different tools.

And When You Leave Take Your Tools With You

We sat there in silence
Thoughts raced, raged
With a quick slip of the tongue and no pretense
He asks me to remove the soul the voice that fills the pages
Cross this out, this is awkward,
What do you mean here?
My dear,
Begin again
Please remove the bones, flesh and spirit from your possessions
Please subtract the incoherent nonsense that you've created
That essence,
Does not belong here
"Your tools are wrong"
"Your tools do not belong in this space"
"Seek out better ones, go the another place"
And when you leave take your tools with you
Locked with silent doors, covered with dark paint
Shackled brains and unfettered notions
Red bleeding ink covered with intentions of misguided hate

Mon!que is originally from New York City and is a proud graduate of Wheaton College (MA). Being apart of numerous team based organizations, her experience of community building across and among marginal populations is key to her identity in students. In her spare time, Mon!que enjoys painting, live music, and hosting dinner parties.

Conform Conform, digest the norm
 If not, weather the storm
 Not concerned with your tools, or what you have to create them
 There are ones here for you
 Despite your broken hands and spirit
 Despite your eyes covered in sheaths of shit
 Despite constructing a fallacy, that is reality

And when you leave take your tools with you
 Rusted hands cemented over gray skies
 Blockaded thoughts upheld by once was
 Used to be, archaic notions of the obsolete
 No longer will the malleable make sense
 No longer will sweat be the defense
 It is clear now; my heart no longer bleeds red
 My skin no longer mimics the outside weather
 My eyes have stopped search for answers to indelible questions

And when you leave take your tools with you
 Your choice not to see renders my invisible
 My physicality lays side by you in your bed of treachery
 Grabs your sheets, muffles sounds in your pillow
 And yet there is no me
 And yet there is no you
 And yet there is no we
 I have left my emotions stained on the floor
 Only belonging to the ones above
 The clouds dance in our faces, and no smiles are to be had
 No quench to satisfy
 No sunshine to cover up, no sparkle to dull
 Your job is done, my dear

And when you leave take your tools with you
 What am I left with
 but broken pieces of you and me
 Sprayed amidst the canvas I've tried to create
 And yes I know it's me in the mirror
 Glossless, faceless, spiritless without you
 Packed up and gone
 With me
 If you leave, and take yours, you take me

And when you leave
Just leave



REFLECTIONS

As members of the UVM HESA community, past and present, we acknowledge the value in listening to one another's stories. To commemorate the 30th anniversary of *The Vermont Connection*, authors were invited to reflect on meaning-making and lessons learned from higher education and student affairs, the HESA program, and the community that unites us. We hope that you will enjoy these reflections as they chronicle the continuing journeys through HESA's past, present, and future.

A Tribute to Excellence

Jackie M. Gribbons

Greetings to one and all, and heartfelt congratulations to *The Vermont Connection* (TVC) for over 30 consecutive years of publication. And so, here I am again... and eternally grateful that I can say this. It is an honor to have been invited to share some brief reflections about the historical journey of TVC, and I am immediately thrust into a maze of memories about the evolution of this journal.

With this issue, the HESA program is entering its fourth decade of this proud and prestigious publication. Starting with the first volume, TVC was built upon a firm and strong foundation. There has always been a quest and demand for quality, if not perfection. Through the years, these principles and the highest of standards have guided several hundred Editorial Board members to seek lofty and mainly attainable goals, and readers and contributing authors have been the beneficiaries. What makes TVC so special and why was it conceived?

Through my lens, the following highlights have helped me to solidify the enduring nature of TVC:

- The HESA Journal was designed as a laboratory in its purist form using the most recent edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association for reference style and general guidelines. Involvement offered the experience of learning firsthand that contributing to the profession's body of knowledge and scholarship was a value that stemmed from the dedication to inform, strengthen, and give meaning to how we think about the work we do. Advising was paramount to cultivating student learning, and exceptionally qualified faculty and staff filled the roles of advisors, teachers, and models of published authors. It is an understatement to say that TVC was and continues to be blessed by this invaluable support. As a leader among competitive higher education graduate programs, we paved the way for our students, alumni/ae, colleagues, and friends to conduct research in multiple venues, and to learn how to write manuscripts worthy of juried publication. Determined to be on the "cutting edge," early journals invited open-ended submissions which were later replaced with a

Professor Emerita Jackie M. Gribbons retired from UVM after 41 years of service as a central administrator and faculty member. She is the co-founder of the HESA program, has five leadership and service awards that honor her name, and received a rare Honorary Doctorate degree from the University of Vermont in 2007.

focus on singular journal themes, reflected again in this current issue. We know it as “making a difference,” and every issue has strived to achieve this entity.

- As publication interns, serving on elected Editorial Boards has been one of the most coveted and regarded responsibilities and commitments to the HESA program. Serving in this capacity, board members have often faced unexpected challenges: authors missing the dreaded deadlines, boards who wanted to reach the same goals but sometimes could not achieve them, printer providers who messed up, the occasional fuzzy understanding of the roles of board members, countless hours upon hours of just plain hard work, and the “five star” stressful production weekend. But, in the end, dynamics between board members, contributing authors, advisors, and faculty served as a real life experience about how to get things done with and for others, effectively, cooperatively, and happily. In the end—professional QUALITY!—and a feeling of well-deserved accomplishments.
- Not satisfied with the annual production of a scholarly journal, through the years TVC leaders have carved out other niches in the organization’s mission. One of the most important niches is the annual phon-a-thon fundraiser, which continues to garner the necessary financial support to sustain publications and other critical activities including annual newsletters, directories, and national conference reunion events. There is just no way the HESA program could be held in distinguished national acclaim without this kind of effort to keep all of us involved in the life of our graduate program to which so many have contributed and hold so dear.

Finally, there have been hundreds of article submissions, thousands of drafts, edits, and re-edits, and “walla,” a journal stands alone among its peers. If it appears as though I have showered accolades upon the virtues of *The Vermont Connection*, it is because I have! Thank you to all who write, read, and lead, and to TVC for being a precious jewel of the HESA program and providing unique opportunities to keep us involved and engaged in the pursuit of scholarly excellence.

Looking Back at 30 years...What I Have Learned

Michael Dunn

It has been 30 years since Keith Miser, The University of Vermont's former Dean of Students, asked me to assemble *The Vermont Connection* (TVC). Beyond developing a vehicle for professional writing, it was a way for UVM HESA graduates, who were scattered all over the country and world to stay connected. From its modest beginnings—which involved begging graduate students, UVM faculty, and staff to contribute—this publication has grown into a top-notch professional journal with an extensive selection and editorial review process.

In the fall of 1979, I began the Student Development in Higher Education track at UVM with approximately 20 others. Although I have not kept tabs on all my friends over the years, my estimate is that there are only five to eight of us still working in the field. So, almost 30 years later, beyond the significant innovation in the way we interact with the world—email, iPods, Facebook, and of course, the Blackberry—I have developed the following personal and professional “truths.” One of the most important things I have learned is that your professional life will mirror your personal life. Being honest, fair, competent, and compassionate is a good way to conduct your life.

What I've learned....

1. It is always about the students—do not make it about you.
2. Listen more, talk less. As a young professional, I thought I knew more than I did.
3. Develop your team; pay attention to your relationships with colleagues, and make student leaders feel valued.
4. Be bold and take initiative, but honor campus traditions—if they are positive.
5. Lead a balanced life—work is important, but...
6. Say “what if” or “why not” instead of “we can't because.”
7. Acknowledge others, both personally and professionally; we did not get to where we are without the help of others.

Michael Dunn, Bachelor of Science from UVM in 1977 and HESA '81, is Director of New Student Programs at Radford University in Virginia where he has worked since 1985. He is married to Peggy Mahaffy-Dunn also HESA '81. They have three children, Zachary, Carly, and Adam – one a college graduate, one in college and one soon to be. His professional work with new students and raising his own family has kept him “in touch” with the way 18 year olds think.

8. Pay it forward—help others as you were helped.
9. Take the responsibility of supervision seriously. Like a good classroom teacher of young children, one bad supervisor can color one's appreciation of the profession.
10. Be intentional—adopt a plan and then adapt it.
11. Do not underestimate your impact on those you serve—colleagues, students, and alumni/ae. Remember the final scene from “Mr. Holland’s Opus”? It is a wonderful movie about a teacher’s personal and professional journey through life.
12. Keep it in perspective. Respect student affairs work, but recognize its place in higher education, the community, and the world.

I am fortunate to work with many outstanding student leaders who serve on my campus. Like many of you, my undergraduate leadership experience was the impetus for entering a graduate program in student affairs. Often when I counsel them, I let them know that I have genuinely enjoyed almost every aspect of my professional career (there were a few days I could have done without). But in the end, when I recognize that 30 years later I still look forward to each day at work, is that not a wonderful testament to my decision to enter the world of student development?

The Gift of Error

Kristi Jackson

I was troubled by my inept reaction when a coworker told me he was gay just before I left home to join the HESA program. Fear of error was the biggest culprit in my botched reaction. This fear was an undercurrent in most of my academic, professional, and personal behaviors until I attended UVM. Upon arrival in Burlington I shared my desire to learn more about the developmental issues of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender (GLBT) students on campus. Within 24 hours several graduate students offered to take me to 135 Pearl (also known as Pearl's), the only gay dance club in town. The combination of my personal connection with classmates, venturing downtown regularly to dance at 135 Pearl, and seeking out academic opportunities to explore GLBT issues taught me a great deal. In combination, these activities were personally and professionally transformative.

My collaborators on *The Vermont Connection* staff were especially gifted at educating me, laughing with me, and allowing me to stumble down this (and other) paths of learning. Our collective efforts on producing the journal changed us and the final publication, and improved our commitment to diversity. We were constantly seeing things we had not before seen in ourselves, in each other, and in our professional endeavors. In the process I worried less about being wrong or making mistakes because each misstep in my journey also brought hilarious moments, new friendships, and unpredictable intellectual growth.

I went to Togo, Africa during a break between semesters and learned that while homosexuality is taboo, men often hold hands in public. Togolese have very little privacy (by U.S.A. standards), and therefore holding hands is common among men. This gesture is not a marker of sexual attraction, but a marker of friendship. There I was, in the middle of a homophobic culture that allowed men to hold hands. A facet of diversity that never before crossed my radar was pinging loudly. I returned to UVM with a new appreciation for all the errors I make without knowing I am making them, even when I try to be open-minded. Starting then I set myself on a zigzag course to find and embrace my mistakes because

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each time I crack one open, unexpected phenomena tumble out.

Of the many gifts I received from UVM, the appreciation of error remains the most salient. Error is the rascal of learning. Error brings disruptive perks. Error is the foundation for constructing meaning. Error lives alongside a family of wonderful experiences like forgiving, diversifying, adapting, and loving. Since graduating from UVM, I founded Queri (www.queri.com), a qualitative research company. Unlike quantitative researchers, who control error and check that it is randomly distributed, qualitative researchers tend to seek out the hidden meaning to be found in error. While I cannot adequately thank all the people from UVM who helped me on this journey, I do think of you often, and I hope you bump into a really rewarding error today.

Staying Open to Transformation

Paula Myers

All of us in the academy and in the culture as a whole are called to renew our minds if we are to transform educational institutions—and society—so that the way we live, teach, and work can reflect our joy in cultural diversity, our passion for justice, and our love of freedom.

-bell hooks (U.S. educator and writer, 1952-)

The privilege of being in an environment where you can put both similar and opposing ideas on the table, consider them, discuss them, write about them, analyze them, and search for meaning in them is a wonderful, exciting opportunity. The richness of my life during my time in HESA and working with *TVC* provided this privilege and helped me to connect the acquisition of knowledge and synthesis of ideas with what I felt and believed about the world. As *TVC* Editor, I learned a great deal from my classmates who wrote for the journal. They had such a wide variety of interests and fresh perspective, and the dialogue about our writing helped us to explore difference and expression more deeply. When I look through the articles in that journal, the information and insight is clear, but I also feel the presence of those who wrote, and fondly remember their commitment and passion. Ten years later, *TVC* is still a reference point for me. Since that time, I have been working to understand under what circumstances the connection between seemingly disparate ideas is best made. I think we should simply ask our students to let go of the threat they feel when their identity, values, or ideas are challenged and encourage them to sit still with opposing ideas more often. This is not easy, as students are struggling with their identities and trying to explain who they are to themselves and each other. However, learning to be open to transformation through education is essential to our students' learning and growth. We must find ways to let them know that they can approach this process in a safe but challenging environment, both inside and outside the classroom.

To create a safe environment, we must be willing to shift our own perspectives from time to time and consider ideas that are new, opinions that push us, and thoughts that are not our own. For me, these opportunities come from my interaction with colleagues, reading, and attending professional conferences, but most

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effectively through working with international students. Every year a new group of students from around the world arrives on campus, each individual carrying his own reality with him, wrapped in his mind, eager to share. My students show remarkable courage and resolve and I marvel at their ability to transition to life in college while moving through a new set of cultural expectations and often functioning in their second, sometimes third, language.

What I've learned from them is that communication across difference is a process that takes patience and practice, openness and courage, and most importantly, willingness to engage. If we are to think globally, we must know how to get beyond our surface selves, to consider that other ways of relating and functioning may be equally as valid as our own, and that the existence of such ways does not diminish ours. Each fall, I run a seminar for some of our international student scholars on U.S. culture and intercultural communication. The group is always a mix of cultures, and very often each student is from a different country. We talk about their values as individuals and where those values come from: country, culture, family, friends, experiences, etc. We compare their personal discoveries of their own assumptions and norms and talk through blogs and in class about how our cultural assumptions are tested by living in another country. I am often challenged by our discussions, and they do lead to changing my mind, adding to my understanding, or explaining something I have had trouble focusing on. I feel very lucky to work with students in this way, learning from them and pushing them to share their differing explanations for the ways of the world so that they can continue to identify and question them outside the seminar.

In HESA, we were asked to start with ourselves and to shake our own foundations while holding on to our cores. This is central to what I strive to pass on to students. Finding strength in asking questions of our long-held opinions and beliefs, adding new knowledge to our understanding, and being flexible enough to integrate both into our worldview, is what keeps us transforming. Furthermore, it keeps us aware of the joy and educational privilege we are so lucky to have. We can learn facts about many ways of living, thinking, and doing, and these will be interesting and useful, but we must learn how to traverse difference to really dig deep and release our fears. If we continue to consider this work a lifelong process of discovery for ourselves, we will be modeling invaluable skills to our students, colleagues, and friends.



THE KENNETH P. SAURMAN 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 April 2009, the Kenneth P. Saurman Award
was proudly presented to:

Laurel Dreher

The Tao of Student Affairs: Ruminations of a First-Time Hall Director

Laurel Dreher
2009 Saurman Award Recipient

In her book *If the Buddha Got Stuck: A Handbook for Change on a Spiritual Path*, author Charlotte Kasl (2005) recounted one of my favorite philosophical tales on human beings' lifelong quest for knowledge:

In a well-known Zen story, an enthusiastic and smart university professor comes to an old Zen master for teachings. When the professor accepts the invitation to have tea, the Zen master pours the tea into his cup until it overflows. The Zen master keeps on pouring in spite of the obvious dismay of the professor. "A mind that is already full cannot take in anything new," the master explains. "Like this cup, you are full of opinions and preconceptions." To find happiness, you must first empty your cup. (p. 83)

After graduating from the University of Vermont's Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration (HESA) program, my mind was feeling particularly "full." Not full because I felt I had learned from HESA all that there was for me to know, but rather from the overwhelming number of emotions I was experiencing as I packed my life up to move (yet again). Accepting my first full-time professional position as a hall director at Roger Williams University has been both the most rewarding and the most challenging career move I have ever made. I would be lying if I said any part of this semester has been easy. Fortunately, I am blessed with having friends and mentors who continue to serve as my own personal Zen masters, especially in the moments where I lose sight of myself completely. In having the distinct honor of writing this year's Kenneth P. Saurman reflection, I would like to take a few moments to share just some of the wisdom I have gained from these incredible people in the hopes that it will help others to "empty their cups" along with me.

Since leaving the green mountains of Vermont, I have started a collection of central "truths" that seem to flow through my life experiences. So far, they are as follows: life is cyclical and imperfect, at its very best. The human condition is

Laurel Dreher is currently a Coordinator of Residence Education at Roger Williams University. She received a B.A. in Journalism from Ithaca College in 2007, and completed her master's degree in Higher Education and Student Affairs at UVM in 2009. She continues to attribute any success in her life to the amazing support and guidance provided by her mother, her friends, her students, and her colleagues.

a complex animal. As human beings, we all have a great capacity to do *good*, and though we may feel shame in acknowledging it, we all also have a great capacity to do *harm*. Inevitably, we are hurt by those who love us, and we hurt others in the same ways we have experienced pain ourselves. We lose sight of the present, get wrapped up in “big picture” thoughts, and let ourselves become absorbed by the more administrative parts of our jobs. At some point, the small educational “moments” we have with students no longer seem like “enough”; at some point, *we* feel like we are not “enough.” And in our darkest hours, when fear and doubt drown out the voices of self-care and self-worth, our inner resiliency falters.

It is during these darker moments that the importance of mindfulness and self-forgiveness truly shine. By way of being part of this “helping” profession, we must constantly challenge ourselves to role model the same kind of wellness we ask of our students. This means facing the harder parts of our work, the moments where we do not have the “right” answers, and the moments where we feel completely vulnerable due to lack of knowledge. In order to help our students understand themselves and the ways they interact with the world, we must be willing to do the same. This means confronting more than rooms that are violating “quiet hours” or students carrying “open containers.” It means confronting *ourselves*, knowing our strengths, knowing our weaknesses, and learning how to be okay with being human. Most of the time, we cannot do any of those things alone. To truly “empty our cups” of what we *think* we know, we must allow those we trust to enter our hearts at our greatest moments of weakness.

To the new professionals who are about to leave the haven of graduate school and enter the job market this spring, as well as to the professionals who have been in the field for 20 years or more, I humbly offer the following words of advice. By no means are they inclusive of all we have yet to learn in this life, nor are they brilliantly new concepts. These guiding words are simply an accumulation of heartfelt conversations, painful moments of self-analytical thought, and the compassion of friends who sometimes are quicker to offer me forgiveness than I am in offering it to myself.

Find Your Voice

Entering the “real” world of student affairs can be somewhat intimidating. Sitting through staff meetings with seasoned professionals can unintentionally leave one feeling like a “rookie” rather than a qualified member of the office team. Deep-seated campus traditions can make a new practitioner feel like fresh ideas and perspectives might not be welcome or worthwhile. Do not let yourself feel silenced. At the end of the day, you were hired over other candidates for a specific reason. Speak up, even if you are afraid. Say what is on your mind. Ask questions, even if you think they are simple. Pay attention, be mentally present,

and learn how to add your voice to the table, for it is probably more valuable than you might think.

Do Not Fear Self-Doubt

Despite graduating from one of the nation's top master's programs in our field and having a few years experience working with students under my belt, I continue to feel moments of insecurity and uncertainty. Similar to the guilt that some of us may feel in acknowledging our inherent privileges, self-doubt can be a crippling professional virus. Sit with it, struggle with it, but do not let it paralyze you. At the end of the day, self-doubt is a good thing. If you are questioning how well you are serving your students and your colleagues, then you are on a continuous quest towards self-awareness and self-improvement. With self-doubt comes humility, and with humility comes a mind (and heart) that is open to growth.

Take Time to Reflect

Coming to a deeper understanding of ourselves means making mistakes along the way. If we were born having already achieved self-actualization, life would be absolutely bereft of surprises and we would cease to grow. Make time in your life for introspection. Learn what you can from your past, then let it go. The knowledge you gain should lead you to a stronger sense of self and the ability to minimize harm to others in the future. Take care to act once you have reflected on lessons learned. It is one thing to grow from our mistakes, but it is another to never allow ourselves the opportunity to make mistakes again.

Give Thanks

If you have love in your life, then you have much to give thanks for. Beyond the menial paperwork and the never-ending list of phone calls you have to return, there exists a colleague who is grateful to have you working alongside them. For every judicial meeting you have with a student who is unable to see beyond their own anger and entitlement, there is a student who desperately needs someone to reach out and help. For every student who does not want to be held accountable, there is a student leader who grows professionally because of your direct supervision. Focus on the positives, show appreciation for those who help you, and never forget to pay attention to the "light bulb" moments you *do* get to witness along the way.

Hold on to the Center

This line from Stephen Mitchell's (1988) *The Tao Te Ching* will remain my personal mantra for 2010. Each day brings opportunities for growth, curiosity, and

introspection. Each new generation of students (and professionals) brings new challenges, new needs, and new adaptations we, as practitioners, need to make in order to simply keep pace. To exist amidst this flurry of constant change provides numerous exercises in flexibility and patience. However, it can also lead to feeling lost, overwhelmed, and out of control. In his book *Awareness*, spiritual philosopher Osho (2001) taught us to allow emotions and challenges to only exist on our periphery, to detach ourselves from reality, and let thoughts and feelings pass through us like mental clouds. Despite the organized chaos that may be happening all around you, there will always be a core piece of your identity that remains constant. A redeeming peace can be found in taking the time to be still and re-center yourself there.

There is a great Zen saying that goes something like this: the beginner can know everything; the expert has no room to learn. As you navigate the figurative obstacles of everyday life, accept the master's invitation to tea. Empty your mind of the preconceived notions you hold about yourself, your work, or the path your life appears to be on. Let go of all you know and seek out the beauty of uncertainty. For it is only through a lifetime of learning that we break through the complications of humanity and ever truly discover who we really are.

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THE FINAL WORD

Each year, we invite a member of our community to write The Final Word. This 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

Deborah E. Hunter,
Associate Professor
and HESA Program Coordinator

TVC: Getting Older and Getting Better

Deborah E. Hunter

It is not cool to be old on a college campus. Novelty abounds: new students, fresh thinking, cutting edge technology, and ground breaking research. Even the birth of the student affairs profession is marked by a shift from old to young. Old ladies serving as House Moms in campus residence halls stepped aside for a younger cadre of new professionals believed to connect better with college students. Like it or not, valuing youth over experience is at the root of our profession's growth.

The truth is, as we age we need to work very, very hard to be relevant amid an energetic and fast-paced campus culture. We must continually strive to "get it," to "stay in touch," and not become stuck in our ways. Still echoing in my ears is the popular refrain from my Vietnam-era college days: "Don't trust anyone over 30." Being 30 signaled being "over the hill" and slipping slowly toward old age and old thinking.

So what does it mean that our HESA program now marks the rite of passage into middle age for one we all hold dear? Our beloved "Vermont Connection" is now 30 years old. The publication of the 2010 volume of *TVC* gives us reason to celebrate and contemplate the growth of one we have all played a part in raising.

The Vermont Connection (TVC) was conceived by UVM's former Dean of Students Dr. Keith Miser and birthed in 1980 along with the efforts of his graduate assistant Michael Dunn. Together they hoped their publication would grow into a professional journal, produced by a student-run editorial board and supported by money pieced together from several sources. They envisioned a journal that would entice members of the UVM HESA community to write articles and share ideas with others in the field.

These past 30 years have witnessed the maturation of *The Vermont Connection* into a prestigious professional publication that surely exceeds the hopes of its creators. And, while other graduate HESA programs publish journals, the quality of *The Vermont Connection* is without compare. The guardians of *TVC* are a committed Board of first and second-year HESA students carefully mentored by

Deborah Hunter is a product of the New Jersey public schools and received her B.A. from Muhlenberg College in 1970, M.S. from Indiana University in 1976 and Ph.D. from Indiana University in 1985. After six years as a student affairs administrator at the University of Indianapolis and the University of Louisville, she joined the UVM faculty in 1985.

a HESA graduate employed at UVM. HESA students garner financial support by soliciting funds from our hundreds of generous graduates and friends. All members of UVM's HESA community are welcome to contribute manuscripts exploring timely topics and raising haunting questions. The TVC Board edits tirelessly, improving not only manuscript drafts, but through the process, their own scholarly skills. Each year's finished product, *The Vermont Connection*, is a source of pride, joy, and inspiration for us all.

In recent years, the generosity of our growing number of alumni/ae has allowed the Board to reach beyond their previous scope of activities. Publishing the journal remains the primary goal, but their efforts now extend to offering welcoming activities for new HESA students, sponsoring professional development opportunities, and organizing lively exchanges between HESA students and campus leaders. TVC members assist with the annual Legal Issues in Higher Education conference and are gracious hosts at our NASPA and ACPA receptions. They maintain the online HESA Directory, making it easier for graduates to connect. Each year, these committed and savvy students function as ambassadors for the HESA program and as such, they embody the true spirit of a "Vermont Connection," linking us all.

I was not present 30 years ago for the birth of *The Vermont Connection*, as I arrived on campus five years later when *TVC* was already thriving in a healthy, stable environment. But I, and the 12 others who have served as advisors and co-advisors to the TVC Board these past 30 years have been honored to lend a hand to the 30 Editors and their Boards in shaping the developmental path of *TVC*. Each of these years marked subtle and sure signs of maturation as the journal developed new identifying traits and emerged as unique among graduate program journals across the country.

The Vermont Connection has grown both in size and stature. I am heartened by the efforts *TVC* has taken to promote scholarship advancing the importance of caring communities and social justice. The theme of this 30th Anniversary volume calling us to "think globally and act locally" could not be more current and compelling. Time and time again *The Vermont Connection* spurs us to seek ways to craft a healthier future while bonding us as a community. No "old thinking" can be found within its pages.

So how do we pay homage to one who has joined so many of us together in a noble purpose over the course of 30 years? What words might capture all that *The Vermont Connection* has meant to our HESA community and all that we want it to mean to our profession? I almost think UVM's most famous alumnus John Dewey was saluting *The Vermont Connection* when he asserted:

The things we most prize are not of ourselves. They exist by the grace and doings of the continuous human community in which we are a link. Ours is the responsibility of conserving, transmitting, rectifying and expanding the heritage of values we have received that those who come after us may receive it more solid and secure, more widely accessible and more generously shared than we received it. (A Common Faith, 1934)

Well done, *TVC*! Happy 30th and many, many more!



NEW CONNECTIONS

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 2009, along with the “New Connections” they have made following their graduation. What follows is the current placement of members of the Class of 2009, 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.



Travis Annameier

Mentoring Coordinator/Recruitment Specialist
Colorado State University

4,000 Jumps Later: Lessons for Student Affairs Professionals and Graduate Students on Surviving Skydiving and the Student Affairs Profession

Administrators and graduate students in the field of higher education and student affairs face challenges on a daily basis that require much emotional, physical, and mental energy. In order to provide the most effective learning environment for students, administrators and graduate students must possess a certain level of passion, calm, and humility in their work and personal lives. Written in the Scholarly Personal Narrative style, I utilize a selection of my experiences as a professional skydiver to make the case for the importance of these three virtues for student affairs administrators and emerging professionals.



Nicole Beaudoin

Graffiti Removal Coordinator
Community & Economic Development Office, The City of Burlington

*Reflections on the Road to Recovery:
How Scholarly Personal Narrative Can Help Victims of Sexual Assault Reclaim Voice*

On August 11, 2008 at 3 AM, in my own apartment, I awoke to an unwelcoming experience that would change my entire world. I became part of the percentage of women who have been sexually assaulted by an acquaintance. Like many victims, all aspects of my life were negatively impacted. One of the most important pieces of support for a victim is the need to be believed. Without this, the recovery process is severely hindered.

Academically, I struggled to be in the same class with my perpetrator. Professionally, I was crushed when my department chose sides. Emotionally, I was numb and had no control over the retaliation that would ensue from my decision to move forward with my case. Additionally, being a member of the LGBT community has created multiple barriers in my ability to seek and receive support.

Like many victims of rape and sexual assault, I lost my safety and trust. Most of all, I lost my voice. I have compiled reflections documenting my experience over the past seven months. This is my story on being

silenced, re-victimized, and retaliated against. This is my story on seeking help, reclaiming my voice, and moving on. I believe that everyone has a story to tell. This is my story.



Meagan Burton-Krieger

Assistant Director of Development and Alumni Relations
Vanderbilt University Library and Divinity School

Bright Leaders for Tight Times: Lessons of Leadership in the Face of Economic Crisis

Colleges and universities are struggling to come to terms with the stark new realities of how to deliver education in a time of deep economic recession. This situation is demanding that leaders of institutions reduce budgets and think strategically by involving various constituencies in the process. I have examined how 21 presidents have responded to their communities about the challenges they face for clues to effective leadership practices in times of crisis and transition. This research points to strategies and principles that presidents are employing to instill a sense of confidence in their stakeholders while laying the foundation for the future success of their institutions.



Laurel Dreher

Coordinator of Residence Education
Roger Williams University

*This is What a Feminist Looks Like:
How Living in a Single-Sex Environment Influenced My Journey Toward a
Feminist Identity*

The pervasive influence of the mass media threatens to dilute the definition of feminism by reinforcing negative stereotypes, or (worse yet) eradicate the word from young women's vocabulary all together by claiming the movement is "dead." Ultimately, the continued survival and success of the women's rights charge to end sexism everywhere rests on how upcoming generations of women seek to explore and define their own feminist identities. Through autoethnography, I sought to deepen my understanding of how I interpret a male-dominated world as a woman still self-defining her feminist identity. I used the fraternity where I have lived for the past two years as a microcosm for the world-at-large, a world still steeped in patriarchal expectations of both men and women.



Joshua Gonzalez

Residence Hall Director
University of New Hampshire

Father and Son: A Reflection on Promise Making and Promise Breaking the Importance of Promise Keeping for Student Affairs Professionals



Grant Hoover

Emotional Intelligence and the Resident Advisor Position: What's the Connection

While emotional intelligence (EI) is not a novel concept, its application within the context of higher education is still rather new. Jaeger and Caison (2006) explored the impact of EI in the academy when they quantitatively assessed the relationship between EI and performance as a Resident Advisor (RA). The mixed methods pilot study summarized in this paper adds depth to this understanding by incorporating the voices of seven current RAs. The study included an analysis of an individual interview, a fall semester RA performance evaluation, and an online EI instrument. Using the information collected from the individual interviews, I put forth a series of themes that reflect the interconnectedness of EI and RA performance. Triangulating the data from all three sources provides a snapshot of the sorts of relationships found between the three data sets for these seven participants.



Clinton Jasperson

Community Liaison and Health Coach
WINhealth Partners

Suffering and Meaning Making: Tools for Student Affairs Practitioners Invested in Cultivating More Effective and Inclusive Social Justice Pedagogy

Student affairs practitioners encounter significant opportunity to assist students and colleagues with making meaning of their lives. In particular, exploring the meaning of suffering and identity in social justice are particularly promising venues to explore when our aims are directed at fostering a healthy and educational experience. In order to accurately facilitate the process of engaging the meaning and it's making for students, faculty, and staff, student affairs practitioners need to be familiar with and utilize the frameworks of Moral Conversation, Logotherapy, Narrative Self-therapy, and confiding in others as tools for sustaining this process. Written with an Epistolary Scholarly Personal Narrative

methodology, I will explore and examine pieces of my own narrative containing suffering and social justice, to advocate for the practice of meaning making to be incorporated in social justice pedagogy.



Julie Kirschner

Assistant Director of Student Activities for Equality and Inclusion Programs
Northeastern University

Never Going Home Again:

A Qualitative Study of the Experiences of College Students Coping with Late-Life Parental Divorce

This study explored the experiences of individuals whose parents divorced while they were attending a college or university. Six individuals meeting this criterion were interviewed, although one was identified as an outlier and was not used in this study. Analysis revealed themes in two major categories: home life and coping at school. These two categories included the following subcategories: anxiety around going home; emotional upheaval; keeping the family together; the meaning of home; changing sibling relationships; positive and negative interactions with university faculty and staff; difficulties “opening up” about parents’ divorce; and possible intervention points. Implications for the field of student affairs are discussed.



Jessica M. Lein

Administrative Assistant, Center for Health and Wellbeing
The University of Vermont

Prose and Prozac: A Student Affairs Practitioner’s Journey through Anxiety and Depression

Over the past few decades, college student mental health has emerged as an issue that has significant implications for campus communities throughout the country. In this Scholarly Personal Narrative (SPN), the author chronicles her lifelong journey through anxiety and depression, both within and outside of the realm of higher education. Through a series of vignettes and other narrative techniques, the author reflects on her mental health identity and the ways in which it has shaped her educational, personal, and professional aspirations. The piece concludes with implications for student affairs practitioners, as well as suggestions for mental health awareness-raising efforts in the field of student affairs.



Hung Mai

Residence Life Coordinator
Queen's University

All Signs Point South:

A Qualitative Study of the Experiences of Canadian-Educated Students in American Student Affairs Graduate Programs

This study explores the intercultural experiences of Canadian-educated students who completed their Master's degrees in student affairs at an American college or university. Phenomenological interviews were conducted with six student affairs practitioners currently employed at American and Canadian post-secondary institutions. The research revealed common themes regarding how these individuals were introduced to the field, how and why they decided to attend an American graduate program, and what they experienced while living, studying, and working in the U.S. The study explores implications for the field of student affairs in Canada as well as for Canadian and American graduate programs.



Frank Michael Muñoz

Event Coordinator
The University of Vermont

Towards Place-Consciousness in Higher Education

This work introduces educators to an expanded vision of the relationships between campus communities and the places they occupy. Drawing from an interdisciplinary canon of spatial literature, it presents a nuanced interpretation of collegiate places. This project advocates for place-consciousness in higher education and is guided by the five categories of place theorized by Gruenewald (2003). Further, it suggests that place-based pedagogy can support the social justice and environmental stewardship movements that have become increasingly important to American higher education.



Marnie Owen

Academic/Student Services Advisor
The University of Vermont

Post 9/11 Visa Procedures: The Challenge of Maintaining Secure Borders and Open Doors

The 9/11 terrorist attacks significantly altered the landscape of U.S. higher education for international students and scholars. Post 9/11 legislation led to several new visa requirements and an in-country monitoring system. The data indicate that in the aftermath of the attacks, the number of students and scholars coming to the U.S. leveled off and ultimately declined. The relationship between new visa and tracking processes and the downward trend in international study and scholarship are strong. Government has recently made some efforts to improve visa processes with mixed success. A more streamlined process is necessary for U.S. to remain a premier destination for international students and scholars. This analysis explores the challenges inherent in maintaining both secure borders and open doors.



Domonic Rollins

Resident Director
Loyola University Chicago

Black Gayness Revisited: Reflective Identity Work for the Multi-Identified Professional

This paper attempts to use multiple identity frameworks to understand the impact of marginalized identities on student affairs work. Through Scholarly Personal Narrative the author cites events and stories that crystallized moments in time that deeply influence the development of identities. After which, these moments are summarized and applied to student affairs work. Readers will glean insight and information about the impact of holistic development on multi-identified professionals.



Colleen Toomey

Hall Director

University of Northern Colorado

Help Oneself to Help Others:

Learning the Importance of Self-Care in a Helping Profession

In the helping profession of student affairs, there is much focus on the concept of self-care, but little practice. Mental health has become one of the largest issues on college campuses over the past several years, but is rarely spoken about by students, student affairs professionals, faculty, and staff. Many professionals hold negative perceptions of mental illness and mental health identities and need a more comprehensive framework from which to work in order to most effectively help students. Ironically, many student affairs professionals internalize these stigmas as opposed to seeking out the help they themselves may need. In the Scholarly Personal Narrative that follows, I provide such a framework by chronicling my journey with realizations around depression and self-care, many of which came in just the last year. Finally, I discuss implications for student affairs practitioners in regards to mental health identity, in working to heal stigmas for the students they work with and themselves.



Iesha Valencia

Residence Hall Director

Seattle University

Hesa is Hard Shit:

Thank You for Helping Me Make Meaning through Disappointment

New Student Affairs professionals will encounter moments in their career faced by challenges that have the potential for disappointment within the institution they work at, with their colleagues, students, staff, the faculty, administration, in themselves, or with other spheres of influence in a college or university setting. This comprehensive paper will give you a perspective of the relationship between personal meaning making when faced with disappointment and the implications it has in our practice. An honest and intimate insight into the personal and professional meaning made from the disappointment experienced by one young graduate student in a Higher Education and Student Affairs (HESA) graduate program at the University of Vermont (UVM) will be used as the framework to explain disappointment and the concept of resilience. Through the challenging of assumptions, expecta-

tions and personal growth, this graduate student was able to re-evaluate and renegotiate the personal commitment held to UVM, a future in Higher Education, and the ability to be an authentic Student Affairs practitioner.



Jesse Wingate

Career Advisor

Howard Center

Responding to Students' Deeper, Existential Questions: What a New Student Affairs Professional Learned from His Own Quarterlife Quest for Meaning and Purpose

Students in colleges and universities experience many life experiences which bring them into reflection upon their goals, aspirations, dreams, purpose, and meaning. This reflection may overflow into their post-collegiate years where they may begin to ask deeper existential questions which are not easily reconcilable. As a new student affairs professional, I incorporate an interpretative response to some of the quarterlife questions that students are asking while in college. In turn, I provide contextual support from personal experiences which offer student affairs professionals an understanding of how lessons are derived from beyond the classroom. By utilizing a story-like framework, this piece offers implications and suggestions for student affairs professionals faced with students embarking on quests for existential meaning and purpose.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dear colleagues and friends of TVC,

We hope that this letter finds you well. As we were deciding what to write “home” about, our thoughts were drawn to the tremendous support and significant connections that HESA alumni/ae, students, and colleagues have offered over the last year.

This year, many of our campuses and organizations experienced significant financial setbacks and challenges. While the amount of work we were asked to accomplish may have stayed the same or even increased, we strove to find creative ways to serve our communities with fewer resources available to us. We also know that many of us carry additional titles outside of our offices, such as mentor, advisor, volunteer, parent, family, or community member. These commitments have their own sets of demands and rewards, but they do not exist independently from our role as educators.

In juggling these aspects of our personal and professional lives, we like to think of The Vermont Connection as a consistent support network. Knowing how many of our colleagues may have faced challenges this year reminds us of our common relationship as members of the UVM HESA community. For example, making calls during our annual Phone-a-Thon was an exciting way to reconnect and remember how members of our community – though scattered throughout the U.S. and the globe – reach beyond their individual locations and come together every year to support a common purpose.

Tricia Rascon graduated from the Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration program in 2006 and is currently the Assistant Director for New Student Orientation at the University of Vermont.

Alissa B. Strong is a HESA 2007 graduate and is currently Career Counselor and Alumni Career Programs Coordinator within Career Services at UVM. She has enjoyed co-advising of The Vermont Connection this year and staying connected to the HESA community. She hopes to continue her learning and involvement around social justice issues, civic engagement and international service.

For those of us who will experience significant change or transition in our lives, the role of support networks and community inevitably become a factor in our success. Just as we help students locate resources, become involved, and establish community, we can also assist our own colleagues in the same way. We can be proactive in our efforts to serve as resources to our colleagues. From a coffee date to sending job opportunities over the HESA listserv, sharing experiences and “aha” moments, or exchanging ideas, many of you continue to strengthen our network and deepen the intention of The Vermont Connection. We work very hard to keep our doors open to our students. Being a part of the HESA community reminds us that our doors are open to each other as well.

Recognizing each other as resources and tapping into our UVM community can be one of our strongest tools during both good and challenging times. The Vermont Connection serves as a strong network of fellow professionals and, for many of us, meaningful relationships. Those of us in the HESA community represent a range of skills, a diversity of experiences, a breadth of expertise. We encourage each of us to offer our skills, knowledge, and community connections to assist a colleague, especially when circumstances are testing our resilience.

We look forward to reconnecting with each of you through conversations at conferences, future Phone-a-Thons, and our common efforts to create communities of support and collaboration.

All the best,

Tricia Rascon (HESA '06) and Alissa B. Strong (HESA '07)
The University of Vermont

This year's Editorial and Full Boards would like to thank the following individuals who contributed to our successful fundraising over the past calendar year. Our alumni and friends are responsible for the continued vitality and success of our efforts.



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GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

The Vermont Connection publishes articles dealing with student development, professional development, administrative concerns, and creative programs to improve student services. Manuscripts should focus on: original research; replication of research; reviews of research/literature; essays on theoretical, organizational, or professional issues; reviews of current literature relevant to the field; or practical reports of experiences from the field.

Style Guidelines

Manuscripts must be clear, concise, and interesting with a well-organized development of ideas. The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition* (2009) 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, Sixth 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.
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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.
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