

THE VERMONT  
CONNECTION



THE STUDENT  
A F F A I R S  
JOURNAL OF  
THE UNIVERSITY  
OF VERMONT

Volume 32 • 2011  
BURLINGTON, VT

## EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS:

The Executive Board of *The Vermont Connection* is elected by members of the Full Board, consisting of all students in the Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration (HESA) graduate program at the University of Vermont (UVM). The Executive Board is responsible for coordinating all editorial functions for the journal and to ensure the continuity of future publications, as well as serving as a link between current students, alumni/ae, and faculty.

**Executive Editor**

**Managing Editor**

**Co-Content Editors**

**Alumni/ae & Public Relations Chair**

**Membership Chair**

**Social & Professional Development Co-Chairs**

Cait Bjellquist

Jimmy Doan

Amanda Flores

Viraj S. Patel

Nydia M. Santana

Christine P. Nguyen

Jilliene M. Johnson

Kristin Lang

## FULL BOARD MEMBERS:

Lilu Barbosa '11

Cait Bjellquist '11

Leah Charpentier '11

Betsy Crouch '12

Xavier DeFreitas '11

Kristine A. Din '12

Jude Paul Matias Dizon '12

Jimmy Doan '11

Rachelle Emard '12

W. Dustin Evatt '11

Alicia Ferrell '11

Amanda Flores '11

Jesenia Gervacio '12

Michael Griffith '12

Jennifer "JJ." Jang '11

Jilliene M. Johnson '12

Katie Julian '12

Kristin Lang '12

Danielle L'Esperance '12

Heather C. Lou '12

Ray Mattila '12

Christine P. Nguyen '11

Nicole Palmer '12

Viraj S. Patel '11

Salomón (Salo) Antonio

Rodezno '11

Katelyn Sadler '11

Nydia M. Santana '11

Kim Stabile '12

Mae Stephenson '12

Sarah Surgala '11

Vay Van '11

Beth R. Walsh '12

## SPECIAL THANKS TO:

ALANA Student Center

Department of Student Life

Development & Alumni

Relations

Division of Student &

Campus Life

Queen City Printers

Diana Dubuque

Jean Evans

Alicia Ferrell '11

Jackie M. Gribbons

Deborah E. Hunter

Kathleen Manning

Dorian L. McCoy

Robert J. Nash

**Cover Design:** Lester J.

Manzano '99

**Advisors:**

Deborah Hunter

Nick Negrete '06

Tricia Rascon '06

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

Copyright © 2011 by *The Vermont Connection*

*The Vermont Connection*

The University of Vermont

208 Mann Hall, 208 Colchester Ave.

Burlington, VT 05405 USA

<http://www.uvm.edu/~vtconn>

Higher Education & Student Affairs Administration

The University of Vermont

208 Mann Hall, 208 Colchester Ave.

Burlington, VT 05405 USA

Printed at Queen City Printers, Inc.

- 5 Editor's Note  
Trusting the Process – Building Community  
*Cait Bjellquist*

### Articles

- 8 Casual Conversations in Communicating the Value and  
Worth of Historically Black Colleges and Universities  
*Lilu Barbosa*
- 21 Lessons on Ethnic Data Disaggregation from the “Count Me  
In” Campaign  
*Jude Paul Matias Dizon*
- 32 The Impact of Campus Climate and Student Involvement on  
Students of Color  
*Jimmy Doan*
- 40 Survivors, College, and the Law: Challenges in Rewriting  
Campus Sexual Misconduct Policy  
*Kristin Lang*
- 46 Multiracial Student Acquiescence to Empowerment  
*Heather C. Lou*
- 58 Challenges of Student Engagement in Community Colleges  
*Christine P. Nguyen*
- 67 Humane Liberation: Incorporating Animal Rights into  
Critical Pedagogy  
*Adam Ortiz*
- 78 Moving Toward an Inclusive Model of Allyship for Racial  
Justice  
*Viraj S. Patel*

- 89 Culture Through Sculpture: Carving New  
Understandings and Uses of Campus Sculptures  
*Salomón (Salo) Antonio Rodezno*

- 101 Dominant Scholarship: White Neocolonialism  
and Academic Integrity  
*Katelyn Sadler*

### Reflections

- 112 Embracing the Artist and Discovering the Scholar  
Practitioner  
*Lacretia Johnson Flash*
- 118 The Kenneth P. Saurman Award  
The Truth About Legacies: Three Salient Moments in the  
Life of a Young Professional  
*Matthew J. Van Jura*
- 127 The Final Word  
Critical Voices in Higher Education Disconnected  
*Mike Segawa*
- 131 New Connections
- 138 Acknowledgements  
*Nick Negrete & Tricia Rascon*
- 140 Donors
- 143 Guidelines for Authors



## EDITOR'S NOTE

### Trusting the Process – Building Community

This year in higher education was like many others. We gained personal, professional, and national victories that lifted our spirits and gave us hope. We suffered terrible personal, professional and national losses that took away our hope and brought our purpose into question. Perhaps because I am relatively new to the field as a second year graduate student, these victories and losses feel all the more palpable. As I sit and write this Editor's Note and take stock of all the lessons I've learned in HESA, "trusting the process" remains the most salient. Through the exhilarating highs, and the heart-wrenching lows, trusting the process has helped steady the course.

When I consider this year's theme, "Critical Truths, Empowered Voices, Changing the Landscape of Higher Education," I am reminded that with every reflection made, "A-ha" moment realized, and voice raised we all contribute to shaping our common reality. Our community is the sum of our individual thoughts, feelings, and actions. In trusting the process, trusting my cohort, and trusting myself, I am filled with something akin to an eternal spring of hope. Trust has given me faith in the power of community, and it would not be possible without the unending support of HESA and the student affairs field.

My critical truth is that, for better and worse, I would not be who I am without the people in my life. I am both honored and humbled to be surrounded by engaging professors and practitioners alike, and inspiring peers. My empowered voice tells me to carry that eternal spring of hope born of trust and community to students. And finally, that through the power of my HESA experience, my actions can help shape higher education and our world. There is no doubt in my mind that TVC is more than a journal, a current graduate student support system, or an alumni network. TVC is a living being that exists by the virtue of our shared commitment to improving the lives of our students, our coworkers, our peers, and our field.

The following articles in the 32<sup>nd</sup> Volume of The Vermont Connection are another year's testament to the passion and dedication felt for student affairs by our current students and alumni/ae. I want to thank every author for sharing their voice in our journal this year; your work better informs our practice and keeps us tapped into the HESA experience.

I also cannot go without expressing the most sincere and heartfelt thank you to our Executive Board who has taken each challenge in stride, and yet again come together for another successful year. Our fundraising efforts, journal production, reception events, and community support programs would not be possible without your hard work and team effort. To our incredible staff advisors, Tricia Rascon '06 and Nick Negrete '06, thank you for sharing thoughts without reservation and your positive energy. To Deb Hunter, thank you for your continued support as our Faculty Advisor. To our donors and alumni/ae, our program and journal would not have the stellar reputation it does without you. To our current students, thank you for your time, energy, and late nights to produce this volume, and your willingness to trust in the HESA process.

Cheers and Happy Reading!

Cait Bjellquist



## ARTICLES

## Casual Conversations in Communicating the Value and Worth of Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Lilu Barbosa

*In my experience, knowledge and awareness of the worth of the United States (US) Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) seems to be transferred primarily through informal venues: conversations and interactions with friends and colleagues who have experienced them first-hand. In retrospect, it seems that prior to enrolling in higher education I was left in the dark about the academic institutions originally created to serve my particular demographic. Progressive thinkers, politicians and the academic elite espouse values such as diversity and equity. While the country has made large strides, students and professionals alike continue to fuel the misconception that education at HBCUs is sub-par. I have witnessed the manifestation of these internalized messages numerous times. The pervasive nature of this oppressive thinking can be startling. The remarks and attitudes are present in a variety of settings. In my mind, it translates to the notion that to be Black is inferior. This message has been emphasized in personal encounters, academic settings, and in the offices of high school guidance counselors. In response to this phenomenon, I ponder ways to be proactive improving this perception and do away with negative imagery that has been assigned to some of the US' most historic institutions – the HBCUs. This article is intended to be a reflection of those challenging moments as well as a starting point for exploring potential ways to initiate change with the current perceptions.*

I am a first generation college student. No other relative has preceded me in my academic endeavors. As I speed along the highway of upward mobility propelled by education, I am frequently reminded of the feeling of having to learn as I go. I am the first of my mother's children to enroll in an institution of higher education. My parents never had the opportunity to get an education beyond high school in the Cape Verde Islands, but they always encouraged us to put forth our best effort

---

*Lilu Barbosa is a second year HESA student who received a B.S. in Business Administration from the University of Vermont in 2006. Much of his motivation stems from his identities as a Cape Verdean and Black first generation college student in the United States. He hopes to one day merge his experience in student affairs with some of his other career aspirations to contribute to the ongoing development of higher education, health care, and social programs in the Cape Verde Islands.*



in academics. Education was always valued in my home.

I acquired most of the knowledge needed to navigate the various stages of the college search process on my own. Although my family provided an abundance of insight to the best of their abilities, there were items that I took on by myself such as learning the specifics of course registration, campus involvement, and potential career tracks. I happily embraced these tasks. My undergraduate experience could be characterized as learning by doing. In hindsight, if I had more *social capital* (Baum & Zeirsch, 2003) with regards to the norms of the dominant White culture that existed outside of my community, my transition to college may have been smoother. Social capital can be viewed as a feature of social organizations. The networks that exist in a particular setting and the norms associated with that setting, as well as the social trust involved, allows people to navigate societal structures for various intended purposes (Baum & Zeirsch, 2003). For me, the lack of social capital only existed in a US context and in predominantly White settings. My identities as a Black urban man and Cape Verdean, entrenched in a Luso-African culture, formed the context in which I possessed a wealth of social capital. My lack of social capital with respect to higher education in the US is a primary reason why it never occurred to me to apply to a Historically Black College or University (HBCU).

What was an HBCU to me back in 1997? Not only was I a first generation college student, but I was also the second of my siblings to be born in the US. Considering our Cape Verdean cultural background, the notion of an HBCU was an entirely foreign concept. It was only until after my enrollment in college that I learned more about HBCUs. I learned about the origins, the history, the achievements, and the successful network of alumni. I wonder why I did not know these things sooner? How did my surroundings prevent me from being informed?

After acquiring knowledge of HBCUs over a period of years, I felt the urge to re-examine my lack of exposure to this information growing up. What was it about my experience that kept me from learning about an entire collegiate experience? It became apparent that I was not informed about HBCUs through the venues where one might typically learn about higher education: the high school guidance counselor's office. My high school provided all students with an advisor. Only eight students would share an advisor during the academic year. In addition, every senior was assigned a college advisor. These were the settings where an individual was supposed to gain insight, advice, and new perspectives on colleges prior to the application process. Advisors would also support each student throughout their senior year as they applied for admission and took college entrance exams. Although this was the designated setting for access to information on colleges, there was very little offered on HBCUs. As I reflect on these experiences, I wonder why that was the case. It is difficult to pinpoint the reason, especially now,

so many years later.

As time went on, it seems that there has always existed another venue to learn about HBCUs. This is not about merely learning the names, locations and history. This was about learning the true nature of the empowering experience one can have at a predominantly Black university. I can only imagine what it would have been like to be a Black man in the presence of Black professors, administrators, and counselors. As a young man, I rarely, or never, saw a Black man in such a role. How can the young Black men of today break the stereotypes about themselves if they never interact with positive male figures of their own race? There was much to be gained in going to an HBCU. It was about learning the value and worth of Black institutions of higher education in the United States. The reality is that HBCUs have done much for the Black community. Today's HBCUs confer more than 25% of all bachelor's degrees awarded to Black people in the United States (Brown, 2004). The significance of the HBCU's role tends to go unnoticed, in an era that has promoted stigmas, misconceptions, and negative connotations about Black colleges, more than providing a balanced truth. I found that this balanced truth is communicated and passed down through casual conversations in informal settings. It is an oral history rich with stories and experiences.

### The Right Setting for Oral History

How does one come to know the worth of Black institutions of higher education? For me it was in family settings. I attended a Predominantly White Institution (PWI), and wonder what it would have been like to study at Howard University or Morehouse College. My younger cousins who attended HBCUs would come back and share stories with my family. Their tales lit a fire within me burning with intrigue and curiosity. There were stories they told and retold that I simply could not relate to because of the demographics of the institution I attended. I wondered if I was missing out and, if I was, if I would ever be able to make up for lost time?

Black students I went to school with put their curiosity about attending HBCUs to rest by saying, "Well, at least we are getting a better education." Those moments showed me how messages of inferiority had been deeply internalized by young Black people of today. This internalized oppressive thinking is pervasive in the places I went to school. I heard it throughout my entire life- in high school, college, graduate school, and professional settings. On most occasions, those words were expressed by those who have never attended an HBCU, do not know, or are only echoing the sentiments of others. Why did I encounter such broad sweeping generalizations of historic and once prized institutions? Once great symbols of hope upon their inception, I cannot help but notice the overwhelming criticism and disregard of HBCUs I hear from time to time.

My friends and family who graduated from HBCUs gave me honest depictions of their schools. They provided a balanced perspective. They never placed any emphasis on the perceived bad qualities of the school which I heard often. There is a saying that bad news travels faster than good news – this is true in many respects. For example, there is a common critique that HBCUs are limited in the federal aid that they can provide, and that they are financially unstable (Powell, 2004). In response to some of these concerns, it is important to understand the financial challenges faced by HBCUs arise out of a unique context. This has been continuously overlooked. I feel there is a disparity among racial and ethnic groups with regard to those who possess a more complete knowledge of the advantages and disadvantages of HBCUs. The acknowledgement of the positive attributes and actual status of the financial well-being of HBCUs only happen in small Black circles, where there existed some connection to an HBCU. At the same time, biased perspectives on HBCUs also exist in Black communities. Not all Black people have the same perspective on HBCUs. To say that all Black people support HBCUs would be inaccurate, and to say the contrary would also be inaccurate. I emphasize that this is my experience in my environment: just one city in the northeast US.

Over time, many stories lingered in my mind regarding what it must have been like to be a student on the campus of an HBCU. My cousins expressed an absence of racial tension that I experienced regularly at my PWI. It is difficult to imagine being in the US and not feeling those tensions. It is a difficult thought to comprehend. The only time in my life I can recall being free of the racial tensions I became accustomed to while growing up in Massachusetts was during my time in the Cape Verde Islands. The feeling is one that I have yet to put into words. It is almost a feeling of liberation knowing that I will not encounter certain stressors, when I wake up every day in the US with their weight on my shoulders. I can remember the flight back to the US and how a strong feeling of stress and anxiety overtook me as I sat in the middle row. I was upset that I was returning to the US, a challenging place while still a land of many opportunities. Does the experience of an HBCU alleviate some of this stress? I am not quite sure. Nothing can be so simple and no solution can be that apparent. As my mind wandered and considered all the possibilities of what could have been, I am left with the mystique of the HBCU embedded in my mind.

### Overlooking the Value and Worth

My entire life I expected to go to college because, if I did not, my options in life would be severely limited. My parents came to the US looking to create a better life. Growing up, I began to romanticize certain aspects of what could be my life's story. I always played sports and expected that one day I would utilize my talents at the collegiate level. As we got older, my friends and I were in search of

a collegiate scholarship: athletic, academic, or financial. Coming from Dorchester, a low-income and gang-ridden neighborhood of Boston, Massachusetts, there was no guarantee that we would even get to college. The motivation to succeed came from mentors, family, and me. My parents gave me all the tools and encouragement to pursue college and graduating with a degree would be a major accomplishment for all of us. However, applying to college immediately after high school and enrolling in my first semester of classes was not a seamless transition.

My college plans were entrusted to an individual at my high school who was paid to guide young individuals into the world of higher education. At home no one had any advice for me as to which school may provide me the best opportunity to excel. This responsibility lay in the hands of a stranger. She did not know me; she did not know any of my frustrations, challenges, or desires. At the time, I was also unable to articulate my needs. As I revisit those times, I see how much power she truly had over the situation that many refer to as the most important decision in your life, which in retrospect is a short sighted view in life.

The high school I attended is a small New England preparatory school. Reminiscent of an old English higher education setting, my campus is on par with that of Dartmouth, Harvard, or Yale. The school grounds are outfitted with ivy-covered brick buildings that had been standing for more than a hundred years. We were often reminded by administrators that our high school was originally a feeder school for Harvard University upon its creation (Logan, 2006). During my time there, the students tended to be the offspring of corporate executives and government officials, but there were always a few others, like me, who hailed from immigrant families and urban settings. The college advisor lived on campus and was expected to provide continuous support for students throughout their senior year. After our initial introductory meeting, we scheduled another to assess my progress on my personal statement and supplemental essays. As we approached application deadlines, the frequency of our meetings increased. Soon, they were held regularly, at times even weekly or twice a week. Our conversations started off with two things: The Fiske College Guide (Fiske Guide, 2011) and a question, “So where do you want to go to school?” I was lost. We began by thumbing through sections of the college guide, flipping through countless pages in search of what *seemed* like a good fit for me. As we discussed the different schools, I remember phrases like “You would like this,” “You can’t get in,” or “Maybe you should think about this school.” At the time, I felt like she was deciding my future. In the end, I remember applying to several schools which I had no true desire to attend. By the end, I felt apathy toward the whole process. I wondered if that is what the college process is supposed to feel like? Should identifying the right school feel like a game of *roulette*? Is finding the right school the luck of the draw? These were my lingering questions through my senior year of high school.

In the conversations between my college advisor and I, we never discussed the possibility of an HBCU. There was never mention of resources related to the Black college experience, such as the Black College Tour, Black scholarship searches, United Negro College Fund, or any other programs aimed at helping Black youth (United Negro College Fund, 2010; Caring For Young Minds, 2010). The process felt sterile: we were going through the motions like workers on an assembly line moving from one step to the next. I wonder why we failed to touch upon the resources and options that were created for young Black students. Did my advisor feel like she would be marginalizing me by presenting the option of an HBCU? Perhaps she did not possess significant knowledge of the HBCUs. I do not know these answers, and so I am left to wonder. I feel I can conclude with certainty that my advisor did not see the degree to which a Black college experience can be empowering for a young Black man from an urban environment. I say this because she does not know what it is to be a Black man from the inner city.

My advisor and I never talked about what mattered to me in my life. Our conversations never progressed beyond being superficial. If what was meaningful to me was never discussed, how could I find the right fit? The right fit was a place that would have given me the best opportunities to develop and excel. While she did not know the extent to which an HBCU experience could be valuable to the confidence of so many Black men, neither did I. A few of my friends who attended Morehouse, Hampton, and Howard speak to the fact that their overall experience boosted their confidence. In addition to being individuals who naturally aspired to something better, their surroundings helped them conceive of the fact that the possibilities were limitless. Seeing large numbers of Black people with master's degrees, doctorates, and in faculty positions was inspiring for them and eradicated all of the messages that have been clogging our eyes and ears, implying that the Black community is inferior, less than, criminal and can do no good. It was a refreshing — a glimpse into what education could do to empower and uplift a historically oppressed group of people.

We glossed over the premier Black institutions in our search. It seemed that the perennial critiques were uttered in between breaths. "Little financial aid," she would say, or "Not that strong academically." Before I even knew the term HBCU, they were introduced to me in the context of negativity. I imagine that for others, this negativity is their only context for HBCUs. In my four years of high school, only two men pursued a college degree at an HBCU. They were seniors when I was a first-year student who graduated together and enrolled at Howard University. The following year, they returned to school to visit. We sat in the dining hall in a group of about twelve students at the Black table. Our designated table was located in a corner of the dining hall, a vantage point from where you could see everyone else. It was known to all students, staff, and faculty that this is where students of color, mostly Black, would congregate. I remember listening to their

stories of college life. At the time I did not know that they had gone to a *Black* college. I recall the smile on their faces as they recounted past events. They talked about good times, laughing, getting involved on campus, and meeting new people. When they were in high school, people would say that these young men had a chip on their shoulder. They had been labeled angry and intimidating by others outside of the Black community. The truth was that their frustrations stemmed from race matters on campus. Less than a year later, they looked as though a weight had been lifted from those same shoulders. They went from one extreme racial environment to another, and it seemed they were better for doing it.

### Perceptions of the HBCU

A first impression is very important, but so is a second, third, fourth and fifth. How does repeated exposure to negative commentary surrounding HBCUs impact people's perceptions of the institutions? In my life, these dynamics were presented through an internalized oppressive view of HBCUs among people of color and by stereotypes of Black people imposed on the institutions. Through interactions with classmates, colleagues, and professors I got the impression that others do not perceive HBCUs to be on the same tier of higher education institutions as PWIs.

Today's Black colleges have been lambasted with a number of stereotypes and generalizations which conversations over a twelve-year span made clear. The media is also a major contributor of perpetuating stereotypes about Black colleges. There are several examples of the context in which HBCUs are often discussed negatively. Television helped build the myth that Black colleges are party zones. Programming such as *Spring Bling*, broadcasted by MTV-owned Black Entertainment Television (BET) (Black Entertainment Television, 2010), recorded Black students on Spring Break and perpetuated stereotypes of Black people: that we are only concerned with partying and *bling*. I never saw HBCUs depicted in the media as honorable institutions of higher education that focused on academics.

An interesting development in the last decade is the broadcasting of television advertisements by higher education institutions aimed at recruiting new students (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2008). PWIs appear quite frequently on television. Interestingly, it is not uncommon to find a PWI advertisement for one institution televised at another PWI. Black colleges get very little or no exposure in this regard. I have yet to see any form of promotion for a Black college on a PWI campus. Programming revolving around marching bands at HBCUs is one of the few times that the schools are actually depicted on television, which usually is on BET. Again, as was the case with *Spring Bling*, the focus is on entertainment, not on educational opportunities.

So far, I have shared some of the imagery from my youth, but as a graduate stu-

dent and young professional, I encounter other generalizations. One of the most alarming issues in the midst of all the stereotypes and generalizations is that some of the same stereotypes used in the past to discriminate against Black people have now been imposed on Black colleges. For example, I often hear “HBCUs are homophobic.” Black institutions are often described in such a fashion (Harper & Gasman, 2008). The most recent example is the media coverage of Morehouse College and their dress code policy which prohibits men on campus from wearing women’s clothing (Mungin, 2009; Simon, 2009). Morehouse College is not representative of all HBCUs, and, as such, it is inappropriate to generalize all HBCUs as hindering progressive efforts aiming towards social justice and inclusivity.

It is easier to talk about the institution and be void of any responsibility about their primary stakeholders: Black people. In any statement that is a broad generalization, which discredits all the individuals that are working to positively impact HBCUs today (Wormely, 2010).

### My Work Moving Forward

I served as a college advisor during my time at a community and youth resource center located in my hometown. My neighborhood is characterized by the media as being gang infested and crime ridden. I remember an article published in The Boston Globe and its prominently displayed title in bold letters: *Many youths fearful in their city: Death weighs heavily in Dorchester* (Badkhen, 2007). A sense of urgency guided our efforts at the community center because the reality was that every year members of our community would be lost to crime, prison, or gang violence. As Malcolm X stated, “education is our passport to the future” (Malcolm X, 1964), and so when I began my work with high school students, I set out to be the guidance counselor that I never had. My work was primarily with Cape Verdean youth who had just arrived in the United States. These students typically arrived in Boston and entered the ninth grade at local public high schools. One of my objectives was to present them with opportunities for success and give them all the information they would need to be successful. In doing so, I did not want to impose on them any beliefs that were not their own. My own biases and opinions were subject to this rule as well. I was not trying to convince students to apply to HBCUs. My goal was to try and find the best situation for them. It was critical that they used their growing pool of knowledge to formulate their own ideas, opinions and passions. This meant that I had the responsibility of creating access to information that would help guide their futures.

As I worked with students through the college search process, I did not want to gloss over any potential options in regards to colleges they could attend, thus repeating the past experiences I had with my advisor. The list of colleges and universities in the US is extensive and growing. With the development of junior



and online colleges, educational opportunities for higher education are at an all-time high. With abundant options, conversations to clarify students' needs and aspirations are extremely important in gauging how I can be useful to a particular student. Not having a conversation at all would leave too much uncertainty in deciding on the best approach to serving a student's needs. I felt as though this is what happened to me. Recalling my high school experience, I feel that I was not given complete access to information in the college search process. At the time, I was not even aware that such shortcomings were taking place. My advisors felt that financial aid was a major area of concern for me, which it was. Ironically, as I was told, one reason for bypassing the HBCU option was because of my need for federal aid. A conversation would have been a great vehicle for clarifying my needs at the time. But again, as I look back on my youth, I did not have the language to articulate what my needs might have been. For those who struggle as I did, the role of the advisor is crucial.

As I gained knowledge and experience in the field of higher education, I became effective at advising, guiding and supporting students by understanding their needs. I made an earnest attempt to help them gain admission to an institution that would give them the best opportunity to succeed. The term "best opportunity to succeed" is often used, but I want to place special emphasis on this concept. The best environment for a particular individual's success involves support systems and customized attention to detail. What works for one individual will not work for all the rest; therefore, there is no universal formula for working with any particular demographic of students. Student needs vary in all communities and their subgroups.

Since most of my students were new to the US, and did not have any context for higher education, I did not contribute to the culture of perpetuating misconceptions of HBCUs. I was prepared to give my students a balanced view of what HBCUs could offer in addition to other institutions. A balanced perspective meant that I could discuss the benefits and disadvantages of each institution. In examining the disadvantages, it was clear that some were real while others were perceived. The decision was left for the students and their families. I did not make the decision for them. Even to this day, I approach conversations with students in the same manner. I do not tell others what to do; I only help provide clarity as they engage in a decision making process. The word *guide* has been defined as having *to accompany; to show points of interest; to explain meaning or significance* (Dictionary.com, 2010). The last segment of this definition, *to explain meaning or significance*, resonates most with the work I aspire to do. As a society, we make meaning in our lives in different ways. One experience will impact and empower various individuals to different degrees. I hope that the work I did with these students assisted them in such a process. Talking to students, allowing them to share their stories, and sharing my stories illuminates what is important to them and most salient, down



to their inner core. Such conversations will lead me, and hopefully other student affairs practitioners, to take the right steps.

### Final Thoughts

In closing, as we student affairs practitioners think about our interactions with students, it is important to examine the power we hold in the moments when advising or mentoring students. At times our words or actions will impact a student beyond our expectations. I think about the mentors in my life and how in many instances they were unaware of the degree to which they positively impacted my life. The same is true for those who profoundly caused me pain. As a student, I sought out certain individuals for guidance and support. In my role as a mentor, advisor, and educator, part of my job is to listen. In some instances my responsibility is to provide clarity for others with respect to dilemmas they are facing. Equally as important is the need for a student to feel valued. I believe that for young Black men in the inner city, this is especially important. Every day as we student affairs professionals go about our work it is beneficial to keep in mind that we have the ability to empower our students and to help them realize their worth. One aspect of empowerment means letting students do, learn and experience for themselves.

Our nation's HBCUs need support. The reality is that some Black colleges have been faced with a variety of challenges, many of which – though not for all – stem from financial difficulties. It is important to keep in mind that there are people— students, staff, and professionals— working to revitalize, and in some cases even save, these historic institutions from losing accreditation and/or closing their doors. Negative commentary only contributes to the misconceptions and negative imagery often propagated in society. We are tarnishing what many died to create. At times, we become prisoners of the moment and forget to reflect on our past and even our recent past. Many individuals have endured a lifelong fight to create equity in a society where certain individuals were bound to encounter social obstacles. Access to education has been one form of equity. In some cases, such individuals were catalysts for what resulted in today's HBCUs.

Perhaps the most important message one can take away is that we, as student affairs professionals, must be wary of the collective message we send when colluding in over-criticism and generalizations of HBCUs. As higher education professionals, every time we speak negatively of Black colleges and emphasize their shortcomings, we send a message to all communities. The message I heard as a young teenager was that Black institutions are not good enough— not even for a Black man. Past conversations with people have led me to feel as though many have given up on Black colleges. In conversation, their very existence is questioned. A painful reality is that those entrusted in working with students, providing support and guidance are at times contributing to the widely held negative perceptions

about HBCUs. The message to our students should be to learn the truth. There are multiple truths in life, and one valuable truth is to not agree blindly with the ignorance of others.

## References

- Badkhen, A. (2007, November 7). Many youths fearful in their city: Deaths weigh heavily in Dorchester. *The Boston Globe*. Retrieved from [http://www.boston.com/news/local/articles/2007/11/07/many\\_youths\\_fearful\\_in\\_their\\_city/](http://www.boston.com/news/local/articles/2007/11/07/many_youths_fearful_in_their_city/)
- Baum, F. E. & Zeirsch, A. M. (2003). Social capital. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 57, 320-323. Retrieved from <http://jech.bmj.com/content/57/5/320.full>
- Black Entertainment Television. (2010). *Spring Bling*. Retrieved from <http://www.bet.com/specials/springbling10>
- Brown, M. C. (2004). Gathering at the river: What Black colleges should do now. *Black Issues in Higher Education*, 21(14), 82.
- Caring For Young Minds. (2010). *Black College Tour 2011*. Retrieved from <http://www.caringforyoungminds.com/tour.php>
- Guide (2010). In Dictionary.com online dictionary. Retrieved from <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/guide>
- Fiske Guide. (2011). *Titles*. The Fiske Guide. Retrieved from [http://www.fiskeguide.com/?page\\_id=40](http://www.fiskeguide.com/?page_id=40)
- Harper, S., & Gasman, M.B. (2008). Consequences of conservatism: Black male undergraduates and the politics of historically Black colleges and universities. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 77(4), 336-351.
- Logan, H. (January 10, 2006). Milton Academy in Milton, Massachusetts: One of the nation's top prep schools. *Associated Content*. Retrieved from [http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/16109/milton\\_academy\\_in\\_milton\\_massachusetts.html?cat=4](http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/16109/milton_academy_in_milton_massachusetts.html?cat=4)
- Malcolm X. (1964). *Founding Rally of the Organization of Afro-American Unity*. Retrieved on January 20, 2011 from <http://www.blackpast.org/?q=1964-malcolm-x-s-speech-founding-rally-organization-afro-american-unity>
- Mungin, L. (October 17, 2009). *All-male college cracks down on cross-dressing*. CNN. Retrieved from [http://articles.cnn.com/2009-10-17/us/college.dress.code\\_1\\_dress-morehouse-college-all-male-college?s=PM:US](http://articles.cnn.com/2009-10-17/us/college.dress.code_1_dress-morehouse-college-all-male-college?s=PM:US)
- Powell, T. (2004). Surviving tough times: From administrative reorganizations to finding new streams of revenue, some Historically Black Colleges and Universities are determined to stay afloat. *Black Issues in Higher Education*, 34.
- Simon, M.D. (October 16, 2009). *Morehouse dress code seeks to "get back the legacy"*. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution. Retrieved from <http://www.ajc.com/news/morehouse-dress-code-seeks-164132.html>
- The Chronicle of Higher Education. (March 24, 2008). University television ads depict white dominance, study finds. Retrieved from <http://chronicle.com/article/University-Television-Ads/40681>
- United Negro College Fund. (2010). *For students: Scholarships programs*. Retrieved

from <http://www.uncf.org/forstudents/scholarship.asp>

Wormely, W.M. (2010). Steps for bold change at HBCUs: Rewriting the narrative of HBCUs requires a transformation in the behaviors and culture of many institutions. *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*, 27(16), 20.

## Lessons on Ethnic Data Disaggregation from the “Count Me In” Campaign

Jude Paul Matias Dizon

*This article supports the need to re-evaluate current models of racial/ethnic data collection in order to accurately assess and improve efforts of inclusion for Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) students. Through highlighting the efforts of students in the 2007 “Count Me In” campaign at the University of California, I argue that the campaign serves as an exemplar of AAPIs’ desire to disaggregate. Contrary to the often-referenced depiction of being a monolithic “model minority,” this article discusses the diverse experiences of the various AAPI sub-communities and the ways in which the larger label masks inequalities between AAPI sub-groups and across other communities of color. Additionally, it suggests how more precise data collection may improve recruitment efforts and how universities may be able to enhance and create new student services to address the needs of emergent AAPI ethnic communities.*

In November 2007, the University of California (UC) revised its data collection systems, including admissions applications and institutional research functions, effectively disaggregating the “Asian American and Pacific Islander” category. University data forms now include 23 options for Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) students to select for self-identification.<sup>1</sup> Extending upon the work of recent scholarship, highlighting the urgency to acknowledge the diverse array of experiences lived by AAPI students in higher education (Chang, Park, Lin, Poon, & Nakanishi, 2007; McEuwien, Kodama, Alvarez, Lee, & Liang, 2002;

<sup>1</sup> AAPIs represent a multitude of cultures and ethnic groups. No uniform category has existed to describe AAPIs. Rather, history shows multiple ways AAPIs have been described by others and how they have described themselves. For the purposes of this article, I use “AAPI” as it was used in the “Count Me In” campaign to be inclusive of the various ethnic identities students advocated on behalf of.

---

Jude Paul Matias Dizon is a first-year HESA student. He received his B.A. in Development Studies with a minor in Asian American Studies from UC Berkeley in 2009. Jude’s experiences in community organizing greatly shape his interests in higher education. He would like to especially acknowledge and thank Erin Pangilinan and Oiyen Poon for their support and feedback on this article. Jude is inspired by the student leaders involved in the “Count Me In” campaign for their work to increase the visibility of Asian American and Pacific Islander students.

Museus, 2009; Teranishi, 2010), this article demonstrates the significance of ethnic data disaggregation for AAPI sub-groups through a student-led political organizing project: the 2007 “Count Me In” (CMI) campaign for disaggregation. Given the persistence of stereotypes and misconceptions surrounding AAPI communities, such as the model minority myth, I argue that the “Count Me In” campaign serves as an exemplar of AAPIs’ desire to disaggregate and respond to the prevailing racialization of AAPIs as a homogenous group.

### Why Disaggregate?

The classification of racial and ethnic groups in the United States has long been arbitrary and inconsistent. Examination of the historical categorization of AAPIs clearly demonstrates a shifting pattern of imposed racial identity on this diverse community. How various AAPI sub-groups have been identified—or subsumed into a vague “Other” category—varies at all levels of government. The linkages between these multiple levels are significant to understand the context for CMI and the conditions under which ethnic and pan-ethnic goals became complementary.

At the federal level, the US Census Bureau has enacted multiple changes in the categorization of AAPIs over the last five census counts. The 1980 Census reflected an increase from five to nine listed AAPI ethnicities. The 1990 Census kept the nine groups with two significant changes. First, the summary category “Asian or Pacific Islander” was introduced, and second, “Other API” also appeared on the census for the first time. Previously, AAPIs not specifically listed shared “Other” with all other racial and ethnic identities not specified on the census (Espiritu, 1992). Wright and Spickard (2002) point to US racial logic for providing the grounds upon which to include Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders together. As a group that “did not fit the system neatly”, Pacific Islanders “got to be Asians” (Wright & Spickard, 2002, p. 106). In 1997, due in part to action by Pacific Islander community organizations, the Office of Management and Budget passed Directive 15, which resulted in the separate categories “Asian” and “Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander” on the 2000 Census (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004).

Not surprisingly, reporting on AAPIs is largely done in the aggregate. Such homogenization means ignoring the ways in which AAPI sub-groups are distinct. Equally problematic is the difficulty for researchers seeking data on specific AAPI sub-groups. Consequently, there is a lack of understanding and awareness of the many unique AAPI sub-populations. The diversity within the AAPI community has been repeatedly documented (College Board, 2008; Hune, 2002; Nakanishi, 1995). Examination of factors such as ethnicity, languages spoken at home, immigration histories, and economic and social capital reveals that there are stark differences between AAPI subpopulations as there are commonly perceived similarities.

Alongside the historical trajectory of AAPI data classification has been the emergence and persistence of the model minority myth. Defined as the belief that AAPIs experience “universal and unparalleled academic and occupational success,” this stereotype works in tandem with simple data collection to homogenize the AAPI community (Museus & Kiang, 2009, p. 6). Notions such as “AAPI students are taking over US higher education” pervade popular images of communities that are anything but uniform, especially in regards to educational attainment (College Board, 2008). According to the 2000 Census, about 80% of Asian Americans have high school diplomas, which roughly match the nation as a whole. In higher education, 44% of Asian Americans have a bachelor’s degree or more compared to only 24% of the nation. Reported in the aggregate, these figures are misleading. A 2010 report by the National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education (CARE) presents current statistics of educational attainment. Hidden by aggregate data reporting are the 65% of Cambodians and Laotians with a high school education or less, which also holds true for about 50% of Vietnamese. Among Pacific Islanders, close to 55% of Samoans and Tongans have a high school education or less. Beyond high school, almost 70% of Asian Indians, 55% of Pakistanis, about 52% of Chinese, and a little under 50% of Filipinos have a bachelor’s degree or higher. In contrast, higher education attainment is about 12% for Cambodians, Laotians, and Hmong. Fewer than 10% of Samoans have a bachelor’s degree compared to around 15% for Guamanians and native Hawaiians.

When looking at such data, it is impossible to think of AAPIs as a monolithic group. Disparities among AAPI sub-groups can be extremely wide as the above information shows. Although some AAPI communities do experience high levels of success in higher education attainment, there are those that do not and whose lack of access parallels that of other communities of color. Despite over two decades of research challenging the model minority image (Lee, 1996; Suzuki, 1977; Teranishi, 2010), the myth remains and educational institutions continue to “construct and assume monolithic, racialized images about Asian Americans” (Chang & Kiang, 2002, p. 138).

CMI student organizers sought to deconstruct the model minority image and other misconceptions through disaggregation. As I will later discuss, the policy developed by student organizers for the UC system was influenced by legislative action statewide. Before fully describing CMI, it is important to conceptually frame the relationship between AAPI sub-populations and the pan-ethnic AAPI identity. Because some scholars view pan-ethnic organizing within a racial formation paradigm (Omi & Winant, 1994), it is important to understand CMI as a means to challenge the dominant racial ideology through policy change.

### Pan-ethnicity and Racial Formation

Scholar Yen Le Espiritu (2008) posed the question of how to build pan-ethnic solidarity among AAPIs given the increasing diversity of AAPI ethnic sub-groups in the US as the nation progresses further into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. CMI provides an example of pan-ethnic organizing for the present. Initially begun at UCLA, CMI was a project of the Asian Pacific Coalition (APC), a group consisting of 21 AAPI student organizations. Eventually becoming a statewide campaign, with UC Berkeley as a second focal point, CMI counted among its leaders and supporters students with different AAPI backgrounds and other racial/ethnic identities. The movement was characterized by a pan-AAPI front advocating for recognition of 15 sub-populations on the UC application.

Following other instances in which pan-AAPI organizing led to wider recognition of ethnic sub-groups, the campaign responded to an issue in which ethnic and pan-ethnic goals were complementary. Espiritu identified AAPI pan-ethnicity as a phenomenon strongly dependent on context. The call to disaggregate ethnic data arose in a situation in which conditions favored an inclusive AAPI identity under which to mobilize and promote common interests (Espiritu, 1992). Although the goals of CMI were to increase the number of sub-listed ethnicities included under “Asian” and “Pacific Islander” in the UC application, it should be noted that the campaign was a protest against the absence of sub-groups, not against the presence of a larger identity.

To understand CMI as a movement to redefine the meaning of AAPI and who is included in this term, Omi and Winant’s (1994) concept of racial formation provides a useful framework. Racial formation refers to the “sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed” (Omi & Winant, 1994, p. 55). In this paradigm, CMI was an effort to rearticulate the meaning of race for AAPIs and, based on this new meaning, change the relationship of AAPI students to UC. The campaign challenged the prevailing racialized view of AAPIs and through a policy recommendation provided an alternative perspective inclusive of the diverse identities and experiences of AAPI sub-groups.

### The “Count Me In” Campaign

Students in APC at UCLA initiated and led the “Count Me In” campaign in Spring 2007. Following student protests over the lack of diversity on campus, CMI took off alongside the momentum of Assembly Bill (AB) 295. Authored by state legislator Ted Lieu, AB 295 was meant to disaggregate AAPI data for various state agencies (not including UC). CMI was seen as a complement to this bill. Although AB 295 passed the assembly and the senate, it was ultimately vetoed by then Governor Schwarzenegger. In some ways, CMI was a response



to the veto; despite the rejection of AB 295, students pursued an alternative plan to accomplish their goals.

CMI had a clear-cut mission of disaggregating “Asian American and Pacific Islander” on UC applications. The campaign was organized around three goals:

1. Enhance UC admission policy to include data collection on students of Bangladeshi, Cambodian, Hmong, Indonesian, Laotian, Malaysian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Taiwanese, and Thai backgrounds.
2. Separate Pacific Islander into a new racial category within admissions.
3. Provide financial support for outreach projects that specifically target AAPI groups facing severe educational inequity (Count Me In-Berkeley Facebook page).

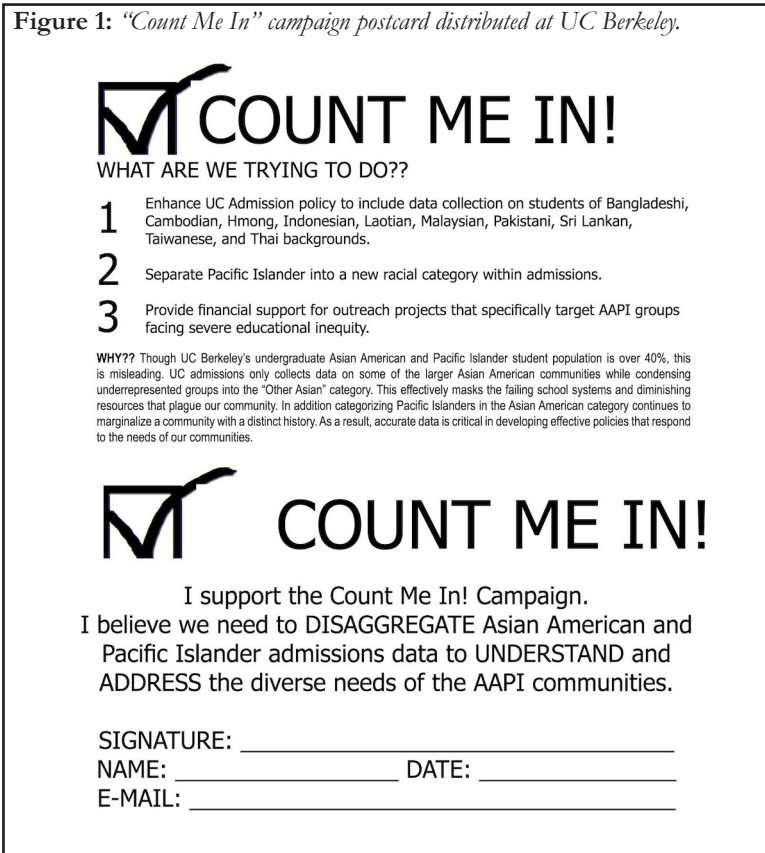
Through press releases, students shared their experiences with lack of data. A member of the Association of Hmong Students stated that there were only 26 Hmong students at UCLA, a number estimated by the organization due to the absence of official data. For leaders in the Pacific Islander Student Association, conducting their outreach programs had been difficult without being able to identify Pacific Islander students. One student expressed having to “resort to guessing through last names” (Truong, 2007, para. 18). A Guamanian student was frustrated when she applied and had to check “Other Asian.” “But we aren’t even Asian. We are not being heard in the higher education system. They don’t even know our identity” (Brown, 2007, para.13).


In order to achieve the campaign goals, targets and tactics had to be identified and formed. The target of the campaign shifted throughout 2007. Originally, the Board of Regents was the main focus, but that changed following the appointment of Judy Sakaki as Vice President of Student Affairs at the UC Office of the President (UCOP). Receiving advice from university staff members, including a liaison at UCOP, CMI organizers shifted their target to Sakaki and avoided having to convince the Regents of their proposed data change. A push for regential action would most likely have resulted in a politically and emotionally charged public campaign. With Sakaki as the target, the process was more expedient as disaggregation became an issue of internal administrative change rather than an act of the Regents.

Campaign tactics were primarily educational. Beginning at UCLA in Spring 2007, student organizers talked to their peers about the campaign goals with the intent of having them sign a postcard supporting CMI. Over the summer, contact was made with students from other UC campuses. CMI spread to UC Irvine, UC San Diego, and UC Berkeley, which became the focal point for student organizing in the northern half of the state. All campuses participated in getting postcards signed (Figure 1). At UC Berkeley, student organizers also held a week of teach-

ins about disaggregation and held a rally in November 2007. That same month, UCLA hosted the “Out of the Margins” Conference organized by the newly established UC AAPI Policy Multi-campus Research Program—a coalition of more than 50 UC faculty whose research addressed questions of policy and AAPIs. Judy Sakaki attended this event and there made the announcement on November 16<sup>th</sup> that the following year’s application would include 23 ethnicities for AAPI students to choose from. “Pacific Islander” became its own racial category and was further disaggregated to Native Hawaiian, Guamanian/Chamorro, Samoan, Tongan, Fijian and Other Pacific Islander (Vazquez, 2007).

**Figure 1:** “Count Me In” campaign postcard distributed at UC Berkeley.


The image shows a campaign postcard for "COUNT ME IN!". At the top left is a logo consisting of a stylized checkmark inside a square frame. To the right of the logo, the text "COUNT ME IN!" is written in large, bold, black capital letters. Below this, the text "WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO DO??" is written in a smaller font. A numbered list follows, with three items: 1. Enhance UC Admission policy to include data collection on students of Bangladeshi, Cambodian, Hmong, Indonesian, Laotian, Malaysian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Taiwanese, and Thai backgrounds. 2. Separate Pacific Islander into a new racial category within admissions. 3. Provide financial support for outreach projects that specifically target AAPI groups facing severe educational inequity. Below the list, a paragraph of text explains the "WHY??": "Though UC Berkeley's undergraduate Asian American and Pacific Islander student population is over 40%, this is misleading. UC admissions only collects data on some of the larger Asian American communities while condensing underrepresented groups into the 'Other Asian' category. This effectively masks the failing school systems and diminishing resources that plague our community. In addition categorizing Pacific Islanders in the Asian American category continues to marginalize a community with a distinct history. As a result, accurate data is critical in developing effective policies that respond to the needs of our communities." Below this text is another instance of the "COUNT ME IN!" logo and text. Underneath, there is a statement: "I support the Count Me In! Campaign. I believe we need to DISAGGREGATE Asian American and Pacific Islander admissions data to UNDERSTAND and ADDRESS the diverse needs of the AAPI communities." At the bottom, there are three lines for personal information: "SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_", "NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_", and "E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_".

 **COUNT ME IN!**

WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO DO??

- 1 Enhance UC Admission policy to include data collection on students of Bangladeshi, Cambodian, Hmong, Indonesian, Laotian, Malaysian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Taiwanese, and Thai backgrounds.
- 2 Separate Pacific Islander into a new racial category within admissions.
- 3 Provide financial support for outreach projects that specifically target AAPI groups facing severe educational inequity.

**WHY??** Though UC Berkeley's undergraduate Asian American and Pacific Islander student population is over 40%, this is misleading. UC admissions only collects data on some of the larger Asian American communities while condensing underrepresented groups into the "Other Asian" category. This effectively masks the failing school systems and diminishing resources that plague our community. In addition categorizing Pacific Islanders in the Asian American category continues to marginalize a community with a distinct history. As a result, accurate data is critical in developing effective policies that respond to the needs of our communities.

 **COUNT ME IN!**

I support the Count Me In! Campaign.  
I believe we need to DISAGGREGATE Asian American and Pacific Islander admissions data to UNDERSTAND and ADDRESS the diverse needs of the AAPI communities.

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_  
NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

A press release from UC Berkeley CMI organizers quotes a Cambodian American student who aptly summarizes the campaign’s significance for all communities of color:

When I talk about diversity, I mean beyond race, ethnicity, and culture. I mean experiences, immigration history, refugee-hood, language—this list of what constitutes diversity could go on forever. This campaign

exists beyond just yellow, brown, black, and white. It exists in the issues and experiences of our communities, something that continues to be hidden and overlooked. (Count Me In-Berkeley, 2007)

### Implications

Through simplified data collection, the complexity of AAPI student experiences has been hidden and vital services and resources have been diverted away from this demographic. In sharing the efforts of students in the “Count Me In” campaign, the connections between AAPI sub-communities and other communities of color become apparent. Understanding that AAPIs are underrepresented minorities, disaggregated data may improve recruitment and retention services.

The third objective of the “Count Me In” campaign was to use disaggregated data to provide financial support for outreach and retention projects that specifically target AAPI groups facing severe educational inequity. This is particularly promising in the student-initiated recruitment and retention sector. At UCLA, Pacific Islander students are currently served by the “Retention of American Indians Now” program due to lack of capacity for a program solely focused on Pacific Islander students. UC Berkeley has been home to five ethnic-specific student-initiated recruitment and retention centers since 1996. Currently, two centers have a Filipino-focus and a broader AAPI-focus, respectively. Disaggregated data may increase the amount of funding, which could be used to support a Pacific Islander retention program at UCLA or supplement the funds of an existing UC Berkeley Southeast Asian education and outreach organization.

In addition to funding recruitment and retention programs at UC, another promising initiative for AAPI students is the Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-serving institution (AANAPISI) program. The newest among the minority-serving institutions (MSIs), funding for AANAPISIs was included in the 2007 College Cost Reduction and Access Act. Institutions with at least a 10% enrollment of AAPI students, a certain threshold of low-income students, and lower than average educational and general expenditures per student are eligible to participate in the yearly competitive grant process for funds that will contribute to the recruitment and retention of AAPI students, particularly communities of students who have been traditionally underserved by higher education (Park & Chang, 2008). Given the reality of the diverse experiences AAPI students face, which include encountering educational barriers, the AANAPISI program funds services to reach students who would be easily overlooked due to the misconceptions stemming from the model minority myth.

The 2010 report by CARE advocates for AAPI student success through AANA-PISIs. These institutions may use funding for

1. Curriculum development and academic instruction.
2. Purchase of educational materials, such as books and films.
3. Academic tutoring, counseling programs, and student support services.
4. Establishing community outreach programs.
5. Conducting research and data collection on AAPI communities.
6. Partnering with AAPI-serving community-based organizations.

The CARE report documents some of the creative and innovative programs higher education institutions have created with AANAPISI funding. For example, De Anza Community College has expanded its First Year Experience program to include students from targeted AAPI groups. The University of Maryland at College Park supports its Asian American Studies program with AANAPISI funding while the University of Hawaii at Hilo has established a speaker series to encourage participation in the Pacific Islander Studies certificate program.

Disaggregated AAPI data will only serve to increase the effectiveness of AANAPISIs. Documented research on specific ethnic groups will facilitate the use of funds to improve student retention through enhancing existing services and creating new programs that are inclusive of the diverse range of AAPI student experiences alongside the experiences of their peers. Additionally, disaggregated data may potentially be used by institutions without the 10% enrollment requirement but do serve underrepresented AAPI ethnic groups. For instance, universities in Wisconsin and Minnesota are in close proximity to large Hmong American populations, but fail to have 10% or higher of AAPI enrollments. Disaggregated data may be used to show that an institution is well positioned to serve an underrepresented AAPI group and apply for AANAPISI funding (Park & Chang, 2009). The AANAPISI program is an effective policy mechanism to help increase AAPI college participation and degree attainment.

CMI and the significance of disaggregated ethnic data re-position AAPIs in discussions surrounding the disparate impact of race in college access. Given the ways in which AAPIs have been pitted against other racial and ethnic minorities to overturn affirmative action as a “model minority,” the pan-AAPI coalition leading CMI truly stands out as an exemplar of how common interests may be met through an inclusive process bringing communities together in solidarity. CMI was a call against the continued absence of AAPI sub-group representation and not a rejection of overarching labels. Only by working as a coalition were the goals of the campaign achieved.

The disaggregation of the AAPI category and the current momentum of recognizing the needs of AAPIs in higher education may prove to be a shift in racial perspectives towards this demographic. Disaggregation disrupts the notion of a monolithic AAPI identity. The ability to identify marginalized ethnic sub-groups

and advocate for more resources on their behalf changes how these groups engage with larger social structures. By being seen as more than “Other,” AAPI students can now tell their stories and be counted among those in the movement for educational equity and access.

## References

- Brown, C. (2007, November 18). Ethnic category list to be updated. *The Daily Bruin*. Retrieved from <http://www.dailybruin.com/index.php/article/2007/11/ethniccategory-list-be-updated>.
- Chang, M.J. & Kiang, P.N. (2002). New challenges of representing Asian American students in US higher education. In W.A. Smith, P.G. Altbach, & K. Lomotey (Eds.), *The racial crisis in American higher education: Continuing challenges for the twenty-first century* (pp. 137-158). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Chang, M. J., Park, J. J., Lin, M. H., Poon, O. A., & Nakanishi, D. T. (2007). *Beyond myths: The growth and diversity of Asian American college freshmen, 1971-2005*. Los Angeles, CA: Higher Education Research Institute, University of California, Los Angeles.
- College Board. (2008). *Facts, not fiction: Setting the records straight*. New York, NY: College Board.
- Count Me In-Berkeley. (2007, November 16). Disaggregation to appear on 2008 UC applications, result of student-led actions. Retrieved <http://www.facebook.com/topic.php?uid=6934010543&topic=3850>.
- Count Me In-Berkeley. "Count Me In" campaign. Retrieved from <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=6934010543>.
- Espiritu, Y.L. (2008). Asian American panethnicity: Challenges and possibilities. In P.M. Ong & LEAP Asian Pacific American Public Policy Institute, *The state of Asian America: trajectory of civic and political engagement: A public policy report* (pp. 119-136). Los Angeles, CA: LEAP Asian Pacific American Public Policy Institute.
- Espiritu, Y. L. (1992). *Asian American panethnicity: Bridging institutions and identities*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Hune, S. (2002). Demographics and diversity of Asian American college students. In M.K. McEuwen, C.M. Kodama, A.N. Alvarez, S. Lee, & C.T.H. Liang (Eds.), *Working with Asian American college students: New directions for student services* (pp. 11-20). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Lee, S.J. (1996). *Unraveling the "model minority" stereotype: Listening to Asian American youth*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- McEuwen, M.K., Kodama, C.M., Alvarez, A.N., Lee, S., & Liang, C.T.H. (2002). *Working with Asian American college students: New directions for student services*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Museum, S. D. (2009). *Conducting research on Asian Americans in higher education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Museum, S. D. & Kiang, P.N. (2009). Deconstructing the model minority myth and how it contributes to the invisible minority reality in higher education. In S.D. Museum (Ed.), *Conducting research on Asian Americans in higher education* (pp. 5-15). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Nakanishi, D.T. (1995). A quota on excellence? The Asian American admissions debate. In D.T. Nakanishi & T.Y. Nishida (Eds.), *The Asian American educational experience* (pp. 273-284). New York, NY: Routledge.
- National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education. (2010). *Federal Higher Education Priorities and the Asian American and Pacific Islander community*. New York, NY: Fed Ex.
- Omi, M., & Winant, H. (1994). *Racial formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Park, J.J. & Chang, M.J. (2008). Policy brief: Asian American & Pacific Islander serving institutions. University of California Asian American & Pacific Islander Policy MRP. Retrieved from <http://www.aasc.ucla.edu/policy/brief.htm>.
- Park, J.J. & Chang, M.J. (2009). Asian American and Pacific Islander serving institutions: The motivations and challenges behind seeking a federal designation. *AAPINexus*, 7(2), 107-125.
- Suzuki, B.H. (1977). Education and the socialization of Asian Americans: A revisionist analysis of the "model minority" thesis. *Amerasia Journal*, 4, 23-51.
- Teranishi, R. T. (2010). *Asians in the ivory tower: Dilemmas of racial inequality in American higher education*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Truong, E. (2007, May 31). Groups rally for admissions data to 'Count Me In.' *The Daily Bruin*. Retrieved from [http://www.dailybruin.com/index.php/article/2007/05/groups\\_rally\\_admissions\\_data\\_count\\_me\\_in](http://www.dailybruin.com/index.php/article/2007/05/groups_rally_admissions_data_count_me_in).
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2004). *We the people: Asians in the United States*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.
- Vazquez, R. (2007, November 16). Asian American, Pacific Islander data collection launches. *UC Newsroom*. Retrieved from <http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news/article/16826>.
- Wright, D.H. & Spickard, P. (2002). Pacific Islander Americans and Asian American identity. In L.T. Vo & R. Bonus (Eds.), *Contemporary Asian American communities: Intersections and divergences* (pp. 105-120). Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

## The Impact of Campus Climate and Student Involvement on Students of Color

Jimmy Doan

*Historically disenfranchised populations have had struggles in higher education ranging from access to academic achievement to retention rates. Research indicates that over half of all students of color who matriculate to four-year college careers fail to complete their degrees within six years. As the number of people of color who enroll in post-secondary education increases (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010), these issues remain pertinent concerns for college administrators and educators. One factor that contributes to this trend is the campus climate, especially for students of color. A second factor that affects the success of students of color in higher education is their involvement in student organizations, specifically ethnic student organizations. This paper examines these factors and their implication on the success of students of color. Factors are supported by qualitative and quantitative research examining racial-minority students, particularly at predominately White institutions (PWIs). In addition, suggestions for future research are discussed to develop the understanding of performance and perception of college experiences for students of color.*

The 2000 Census indicated approximately one quarter of the United States' population self-identify as a race other than White (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). This percentage increased with the collection of the 2010 Census data (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). As the population of people of color in the United States increases, colleges and universities will begin to see an increase in enrollment of racially diverse students. This projection, coupled with the statistic that more than half of racial and ethnic minority students will fail to graduate within six years, requires colleges and universities to examine factors within the institution that influence the achievement of students of color (Museus, 2008).

Enrollment of students of color in higher education institutions has increased

---

*Jimmy Doan is a 2009 alumnus of the College of the Holy Cross, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in economics. He works in the Department of Student Life as the Graduate Assistant for Campus Programs. His identities as a gay, Asian, male contribute to his passion and interest in exploring campus climate and environments for students of color and gay, lesbian, and bisexual students. As a second-year HESA graduate student, he looks forward to whatever adventures lie ahead of him.*



significantly over the past 30 years, specifically among African American and Hispanic/Latino students. A majority of these students are enrolled at predominantly White institutions (PWIs) (Fischer, 2007). Since then, attention has been required from college administrators to ensure that students of color are provided with services to ensure their success in higher education. Research has explored factors that affect the success of students in historically disenfranchised populations. This article examines two specific factors that contribute to achievement and attitude of the campus environment among students of color: campus climate and culture, and student involvement in student organizations, particularly ethnic student organizations.

This article compiles a wide range of scholarship on factors that affect the achievement of students of color in higher education. It is important to note that specific racial identities will be discussed throughout the article and it is not intended to generalize to all racial minority groups.

### Problematic Trends

The achievement gap between students of color and White students is present in the classroom before students step foot on the college campus. Standardized test scores, such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and American College Testing (ACT) test, which students traditionally take to gain admission into college, indicate that White students are scoring higher than their peers of color (Jaschik, 2009). This performance gap continues into college and is perpetuated in the higher education system.

Baccalaureate degree completion rates are a significant concern for higher education administrators in the United States. This issue is more relevant for students of color, who “exhibit extremely low degree completion rates relative to the overall college student population” (Museus, Nichols, & Lambert, 2008, p. 1). A study at a four-year institution showed White students earn their bachelor’s degree within six years at a rate higher than their Black and Hispanic peers. Asian students, in the same study, earned bachelor’s degrees at rates equal or greater than White students (Keller & Silverman, 2002).

Beyond the perpetuated achievement gap, stressors also contribute to students’ of color achievement and attitudes toward their college experiences. An epidemiological study by Silverman, Meyer, Sloane, Raffel, and Pratt (1997) concluded that the rate of suicide among college students was approximately 7.5 per 100,000 (as cited in Choi, Rogers, & Werth Jr., 2009). Furthermore, the results of the 2000 National College Health Assessment (NCHA) Survey indicated that Asian American students were 1.6 times more likely to have seriously considered attempting suicide than their White peers. The report indicated that Asian and Hispanic

students are at a high risk for suicide ideation and attempts on college campuses. These stressors, which can develop from the climate that students of color find themselves in, are important to consider in order to create environments that will allow all students to succeed.

Using a campus climate assessment tool developed by Susan Rankin in 1998, students were surveyed about their experiences on campus. The results indicated that students of color experienced harassment at higher rates than White students. Also, students of color perceived the campus climate to be more racist and less accepting than their White peers (Rankin & Reason, 2005).

As data from the 2010 US Census shows, the number of people of color has increased. As a result, it is evident that the number of racially diverse students in higher education will continue to increase. The aforementioned problems must be considered to ensure that all students, White students, and students of color are obtaining a quality higher education experience that prepares them for the diverse world they will enter after graduation.

### Campus Culture and Climate

Campus culture and climate are significant factors that affect student of color achievement and attitudes during their collegiate experience. While institutions such as historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and tribal colleges and universities (TCUs) exist to serve disenfranchised racial populations who have historically been excluded from higher education, most students of color enroll at PWIs (Carter & Wilson, 1993). Therefore, creating inclusive campus environments for students of color to ensure their academic achievement and success is an issue for higher education and not solely the responsibility of particular institutions within higher education.

#### *Multicultural Student Centers*

Institutional climate or physical environmental conditions also play a significant role in the attitudes among students of color toward their institution and their academic achievement. Many institutions provide services such as multicultural student unions and student centers for students of color. These offices were created with the purpose of offering “safe havens in an alien environment” (Young, 1986, as cited in Palmer & Shuford, 2004). Professionals within these offices provide academic advising, leadership development opportunities, and social support for students of color. In addition, many offices also provide additional services such as student leadership development and diversity trainings.

Some colleges and universities take multicultural student centers a step further by

creating safe spaces for specific racial identity groups. During the Black Student Movement of the 1960s “Black students wanted their culture recognized and integrated into the academic, social, and administrative functions of their universities” (Patton, 2006, p. 628). From this, Black cultural centers were created as a safe space for Black students who had been immersed into the predominately White higher education system at the time (Patton, 2006). In a study that was conducted to attain student attitudes toward Black cultural centers, one student described the space by saying, “It’s good to be together and actually feel like you’re wanted somewhere ... because there are so many things for everyone else. It’s good to just feel like you have something that you belong to, something for yourself” (Patton, 2006, p. 637).

While resources such as Black cultural centers are essential for increasing the positive attitudes of students of color on their respective college campuses, the placement and location of these buildings also contributes to the campus climate and institutional commitment to inclusion. In the same study at the University of Florida, one student described the institution’s Black cultural center as,

A wonderful home away from home for Black students, but I thought it was just very small and was very shocked. That’s the first thing that came to mind, why was it so small? Why was it so far away from the actual campus? Like, it’s on the other side of campus. (Patton, 2006, p. 637)

To prevent such opinions from students, it is important for campus leaders to consider the placement of such offices and their proximity to other buildings on campus. As Kuh (2000) mentioned in *Understanding Campus Environments*, the non-strategic placement of buildings on campuses can contribute to the perception that the university discourages intermingling between various groups.

### *Institutional Diversity*

Perceptions of climate and culture are assessed prior to student enrollment at post-secondary institutions. Racial diversity is a significant factor of campus culture and climate when students are considering undergraduate institutions. Beyond the current percentage of students of color that are enrolled at the institution, “a college’s historical legacy of [racial] exclusion can determine the prevailing climate and influence current practices” (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen, 1998, p. 283).

Recalling the history of higher education in the United States requires evoking the unpleasant struggles of racial minority groups as they worked to achieve equity and equality. Universities and colleges have their respective histories of exclusion and barring access to historically underrepresented student groups. In order to create inclusive environments that positively influence the success of students of color, institutions need to realize that they cannot change or deny

their history. Campus leaders should use their institution's history of exclusion as an opportunity to educate the campus and to ensure that diversity becomes a core value for the community.

Institutional diversity spans beyond the racial demographics of undergraduate students. Campus culture is also influenced by the representation of diverse staff and faculty. As Hurtado et al. (1998) explained, structural diversity, as it relates to representation of various racial groups in leadership positions, is a significant factor that contributes to the perception of campus culture. The presence of faculty and professionals of color creates a more comfortable and trusting environment for students of color. This comfort is due to "homophily" (Park, 2008, p. 116); a concept that explains how individuals seek to associate with those who share similar backgrounds.

### Student Involvement

Park (2008) explains that, "Humans desire a sense of belonging, and an easy way to foster such community is to create groups with strong in-group bonds where participants share similar traits" (p. 116). Student organizations evolved to provide students with an avenue to meet over common interests. Ethnic student organizations developed from such clubs, with the additional purpose of providing a safe space for students to establish connections with racial and ethnic peers and for students who have the desire to learn more about different cultures. Similar to the role that multicultural student centers play in providing a safe space for students, ethnic student organizations positively contribute to the adjustment and attitude of students of color.

Tinto's Theory of Student Integration (1993) explained that students must detach from their own culture when they attend college where a culture exists that does not align with their own. Ethnic student organizations exist to allow students who come from disenfranchised backgrounds to establish a community of their own, rather than assimilate to a dominant culture. Students of color experience the stress of foregoing a subordinate culture and assimilating to a dominant culture. Creating environments where students of color can embrace their own culture, without needing to shield it, enhances the opportunity for the institution to embrace diversity and increase student success.

Ethnic student organizations offer a crucial venue for the social integration of students of color at PWIs. Harper and Quayle's (2007) research concluded that racial-minority students join ethnic student organizations to express their cultural and racial identities. Missions of such student organizations vary from campus to campus. Common practices and organized events within ethnic student organizations are discussions centered on race, home-cooked meals, and reenactments of

traditional ceremonies. Research shows that beyond providing an opportunity for students to connect with their peers and familiar traditions, participation in these student organizations also provides students with the chance to connect with faculty and staff and give back to their community (Museus, 2008).

Astin (1999) posed that “the amount of student learning and personal development associated with any educational program is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement in that program” (p. 519). The research further explained the significance that particular programs have on student academic achievement and attitude; specifically honors programs, academic clubs, and student government.

A significant component of the college experience for students is connecting with peers of diverse backgrounds. These interactions enhance student learning, both in and outside of the classroom. In a study conducted by Guiffrida (2003), one student explained his involvement in a Black student organization as rewarding; “I met a lot of my friends through the organizations so they are usually there. My classes do not have a lot of African Americans to meet people, I met them through the organizations” (p. 309). While it is important to have groups on campus that allow for students to connect through common interests, it is equally as important to create space for students who “look alike” to connect as well.

### Suggested Future Research

According to Tinto (1993), college retention can be attributed to fit between a student and the institution. To enhance student learning and welcome students from different backgrounds it is important for institutions that serve diverse students to create inclusive environments. In 1994, the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) discussed the role of student affairs professionals as educators who are responsible for creating conditions and experiences to enhance student learning in *The Student Learning Imperative*. As the United States higher education system becomes more diverse, it is important for institutions to remain intentional when considering environments for all students, especially students of color. Creating inclusive environments for all students enhances student learning and, ultimately, success and achievement in the academy.

While there is abundant scholarship on the effect that campus climate and student involvement have on the achievement of students of color in higher education, the approach to research among scholars has been very similar. Research in this field could be expanded by examining more quantitative data, specifically grades and retention rates for students of color, in correlation with qualitative data suggesting attitudes each student has towards their campus climate. It is significant to note that this research cannot be conducted across various institutions as climates vary from one campus to another.

## References

- Astin, A. W. (1999). Student involvement: A developmental theory for higher education. *Journal of College Student Development*, 40(5), 518-529.
- Carter, D. J., & Wilson, R. (1993). *Minorities in higher education: Eleventh annual status report*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education.
- Choi, J. L., Rogers, J. R., & Werth, Jr., J. L. (2009). Suicide risk assessment with Asian American college students: A culturally informed perspective. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 37(2), 186-218.
- Fischer, M. J. (2007). Settling into campus life: Differences by race/ethnicity in college involvement and outcomes. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 78(2), 125-161.
- Guiffrida, D. A. (2003). African American student organizations as agents of social integration. *Journal of College Student Development*, 44(3), 304-319.
- Harper, S. R., & Quayle, S. J. (2007). Student organizations as venues for Black identifying expression and development among African American male student leaders. *Journal of College Student Development*, 48(2), 127-144.
- Hurtado, S., Milem, J. F., Clayton-Pedersen, A. R., & Allen, W. R. (1998). Enhancing campus climates for racial/ethnic diversity: Educational policy and practice. *The Review of Higher Education*, 21(3), 279-302.
- Jaschik, S. (2009, November 3). The power of race. *Inside Higher Ed*. Retrieved November 4, 2009, from <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2009/11/03/elite>
- Keller, M., & Silverman, M. (2002). *Safeguarding your students against suicide – Expanding the safety net*. Retrieved October 29, 2008, from <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net>
- Kuh, G.D. (2000). Understanding campus environments. In M.J. Barr, K.M. Desler & Associates (Eds.), *The handbook of student affairs administration* (pp. 50-72).
- Museum, S. D. (2008). The role of ethnic student organizations in fostering African American and Asian American students' cultural adjustment and membership at predominately White institutions. *Journal of College Student Development*, 49(6), 568-586.
- Museum, S. D., Nichols, A. H., & Lambert, A. D. (2008). Racial differences in the effects of campus racial climate on degree completion: A structural equation model. *The Review of Higher Education*, 32(1), 107-134.
- Palmer, C. J., & Shuford, B. C. (2004). Multicultural affairs. In F.J.D., MacKinnon & Associates, *Retz's student affairs practice in higher education* (pp. 218-238). Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas.
- Park, J. (2008). Race and the Greek system in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: Centering the voices of Asian American women. *NASPA Journal*, 45(1), 103-132.

- Patton, L. D. (2006). The voice of reason: A qualitative examination of Black student perceptions of Black culture centers. *Journal of College Student Development*, 47(6), 628-646.
- Rankin, S. R., & Reason, R. D. (2005). Differing perceptions: How students of color and White students perceive campus climate for underrepresented groups. *Journal of College Student Development*, 46(1), 43-61.
- Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition* (2nd ed.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2000). *State & country quickfacts: Allegany County, N.Y.* Retrieved October 20, 2009, from <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/00000.html>
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2010). *State & country quickfacts: Allegany County, N.Y.* Retrieved January 19, 2011, from <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/00000.html>

## Survivors, College, and the Law: Challenges in Rewriting Campus Sexual Misconduct Policy

Kristin Lang

*In September 2008, two top University of Iowa officials were fired as a result of the university's mishandling of a 2007 sexual assault case. A review conducted by an external law firm found many significant flaws in the university's response and its sexual assault policy. Colleges are rewriting their sexual assault policies to include more precise and/or legal definitions of terms such as sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, consent, and incapacitation. This article examines why it is necessary to have inclusive language in sexual misconduct policies and how campus officials are incorporating victim's bill of rights, responsibilities, and confidential resources, in order to educate students, staff, and faculty. Looking to recently updated sexual misconduct and assault policies deemed "model" as a basis for reference, this article aims to explore the challenges university officials face in rewriting policy.*

In 2007, an undergraduate athlete at the University of Iowa accused two other athletes of sexual assault. The incident occurred in their shared residence hall and the survivor asked the university to relocate the alleged perpetrators to no immediate avail. The university was not quick to act in its investigation of this incident. Adequate services were not provided to the survivor regarding information about medical and legal options, and in turn, the survivor's family sued the university (Jordan & Rood, 2008).

The Vice President of Student Services and Vice President for Legal Affairs and General Counsel were terminated after an external law firm reviewed the university's handling of the case and found flaws ranging from the language of the sexual assault policy in place at the time to the university's response. In the wake of high-profile sexual assault and harassment cases, colleges and universities across the country are responding to the urgent need to update and clarify their sexual misconduct policies to not only prevent future terminations and lawsuits

---

*Kristin Lang is a first-year HESA student. She received a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Arts and English, with a minor in Women's Studies, from the University of Iowa in 2008. Kristin currently works as the Graduate Assistant for Greek Life. Prior to coming to UVM, she worked in Admissions at the University of Iowa and volunteered as an in-person advocate at a center serving survivors of sexual violence. Her interests include survivor advocacy on college campuses and gender issues in fraternity/sorority culture.*



but to provide services for student survivors as well.

### Clery Act

The way in which universities viewed sexual assault policies shifted with the Crime Awareness and Campus Security Act of 1990. Now known as the Clery Act, this law requires colleges and universities to collect, retain, and disclose information about crime on or near their campus in a timely manner. Universities participating in federal financial aid programs are subject to fines if this information is not collected and disseminated (Lombardi, 2009). In 1992, the Clery Act was amended to add provisions for sexual assault survivors, now called the Campus Assault Victims' Bill of Rights. These supporting documents, according to federal law, are to include the following information:

- Accuser and accused must have the same opportunity to have others present at all steps of the process.
- Both parties shall be informed of the outcome of any disciplinary proceeding.
- Survivors shall be notified of options for counseling services.
- Survivors shall be informed of their options to notify law enforcement.
- Survivors shall be notified of options for changing academic and living situations.

(Public Law: 102-325, section 486(c))

Despite this recommendation, not all universities have clear victims bill of rights in their sexual assault policies. The information may be included within the policy but not as a separate listing of rights, making it difficult to access.

### Title IX

Students' Title IX rights are not often discussed in sexual assault policies. Under Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, gender equity is guaranteed in education (Kelderman, 2006). Title IX is most often utilized in situations regarding athletics, but a 1999 Supreme Court decision declared that universities can be held legally responsible for failing to address student-on-student harassment throughout campus, including sexual assault (Jones, 2010).

In cases regarding sexual misconduct, the Supreme Court has developed a four-part legal test to determine if universities are in violation of Title IX. The first part of this test can find a university liable if a university official was aware of an act of sexual harassment or assault, was in an authority role over the accused, and acted indifferent in taking steps to stop the crime (Kelderman, 2006). Only a handful of institutions have been charged with violating Title IX in instances of sexual

assault. What remains unknown is if universities are addressing harmful behaviors and passing the Supreme Court's legal test, or if they have not been charged to pass the legal test because students are unaware of the university's responsibility to stop any harmful behavior brought to their attention.

### Definitions

Definitions of terms have become integral parts of campus sexual assault policies. *Sexual misconduct* is an umbrella term adopted by campuses to encompass all forms of non-consensual contact. Types of sexual misconduct vary in severity and situation, but range from non-consensual or forced sexual intercourse to sexual harassment. Institutional policies must define the language they use to achieve clarity. If an institution chooses to have a sexual misconduct policy as opposed to a sexual assault policy, it is their responsibility to the campus population to define what exactly these broad terms entail, as well as providing examples of behaviors that fit into each definition.

Title 13 in the State of Vermont Statutes (1977) defines consent as "words or actions by a person indicating a voluntary agreement to engage in a sexual act." The University of Vermont (2006) goes further in its current sexual assault policy statement to define consent as an "informed agreement" that is "not achieved through manipulation, intimidation, or coercion of any kind or given by one who is mentally or physically able of giving clear consent." The National Center for Risk Education Management (NCHERM) (2010) goes as far as to mention "effective consent" as "informed; freely and actively given; mutually understandable words or actions; which indicate a willingness to engage in mutually agreed upon sexual activity" (p. 25). According to NCHERM, effective consent is informed, but also indicates a mutual agreement by two parties able to give consent. Who is unable to give consent? Someone incapacitated by alcohol is unable to give consent. Alcohol incapacitation is dependent on many factors, such as tolerance, body weight and type or amount of alcohol consumed (Sokolow & Koesthor, 2010). In many cases, incapacitation cannot be assessed until after the incident takes place. There are signs of incapacitation, such as vomiting and slurred speech, but the reality of reviewing incapacitation in a student conduct hearing, according to NCHERM, comes down to the fact that "if the complainant is incapacitated and the respondent knows or should reasonably have known of the incapacity, the indications of consent are irrelevant" (Sokolow & Koesthor, 2010, p. 32). In other words, incapacitation equals an inability to give effective consent.

However, what ramifications are involved if that student is underage or using illegal drugs? This becomes a grey area for university officials to define in a victims' bill of rights. When universities states students will not be held in violation with any student conduct policies if they were drinking or using drugs, they cannot act on

a repeated violation. Some law enforcement agencies work with universities, such as the University of Iowa (2010), to resolve charges for improper use of alcohol and will not be pursued in any sexual assault cases.

### Reporting and Judicial Procedures

According to a 2005 U.S. Department of Justice study, between 80-90% of surveyed college women identifying as survivors of sexual assault knew their attacker prior to the assault. Through this study, the researchers inferred that “non-stranger rapists are rarely convicted of their crimes” (U.S. Department of Justice, 2005, p. 8). These statistics can discourage survivors from reporting, especially if reporting options are not clearly laid out in a sexual assault policy. Administrators surveyed also believed students’ anonymity and use of confidential resources promotes reporting. Each institution has to work with their local and university police force to decide if anonymous reporting is an option on their campus (U.S. Department of Justice, 2005).

The convictions of the accused that take place through disciplinary or student conduct boards often lead to expulsion, probation, or a loss of privileges (Karjane et al., 2005). Some institutions are turning to restorative, or healing, proceedings instead of relying solely on expulsion or suspension. In one example, it was shared that a dean found the accused to have “gotten it,” acknowledging and accepting his actions and the impact on his partner, and was able to continue as a student serving his sanction through volunteering at a rape crisis center and writing about the impact of sexual assault (Lewis, Schuster, & Sokolow, 2010, p. 4).

Although conduct procedures are not necessarily covered in an average campus sexual misconduct policy, certain items are to be included to protect liability. In order to follow the Clery Act, campuses must include in their policy that survivors will be notified on the outcome of a judicial proceeding against the accused in a timely manner (Lombardi, 2009). Policies should include equitable rights between the accused and the accuser in access to legal resources.

### Model Policies

Brett Sokolow (2004) and NCHERM emphasized people and protocol as two essential elements in a model for campus sexual assault response. People include trained university officials survivors can turn to, from resident advisors to counselors, to women’s center staff members, and student affairs administrators. Protocol is a written list of guidelines for trained parties to follow. The goal of establishing a set protocol is survivor-based. By providing confidential resources, services, and choices, survivors have the autonomy to make important decisions within the set protocol (Sokolow, 2004). NCHERM also recommended establishing a sexual assault response coordinator to train and organize this group of people

around the protocol (Sokolow, 2004, p. 9).

In response to a worst case scenario regarding sexual assault response, the University of Iowa hired the first Sexual Misconduct Response Coordinator for their Women's Resource and Action Center in 2008. The university's policy now reads, "No employee is authorized to investigate or resolve student complaints without the involvement of the Sexual Misconduct Response Coordinator" (University of Iowa Sexual Misconduct Policy, 2010). Having this type of position in place as an employee of a university also incorporates another aspect of Title IX: confidentiality. A Sexual Misconduct Response Coordinator would be considered to "have the authority to provide a remedy" (Sokolow et al., 2010, p. 10). A remedy in this situation means giving a survivor appropriate information concerning medical and legal resources and campus sanction policy. Title IX requires a complete investigation and appropriate action taken when a college official such as this is notified of an incident (Sokolow & Koesther, 2010, p. 10).

Notifying survivors and the accused of confidential resources is another aspect of a model sexual assault policy. Confidential on-campus and community resources are to be included in a policy, often in line with a victims bill of rights. Sharing resources that are not confidential is as important as sharing non-confidential resources. In many cases, a campus victims' advocate or sexual assault response coordinator is one of the only confidential campus officials, outside of a counseling center. Equipping university employees with information about the limits of their own confidentiality and mandatory reporting rights can save a campus from future headaches concerning lack of knowledge.

### Conclusion

The reality is that many universities today are understaffed and underfunded. A challenge to adopting model sexual misconduct policies and procedures is finding the time to employ a committee of skilled and knowledgeable officials to draft a new policy. Universities may think that their policy is fine as is because they have not been sued for a mishandled case. Having an outside legal consultant, such as a lawyer from NCHERM, come to review a policy can prove beneficial in the long run.

The end result of having a clear, concise sexual misconduct policy is to afford the best services to survivors. No university wants to address a sexual misconduct incident without having policies, people, and protocol in place. Education is the key. The more informed university community members are of their rights and responsibilities, the smoother the process. In a perfect world, non-consensual sexual contact would never take place, but we are far from this ideal. Therefore, universities owe their students, through advocacy and counseling to remove the bureaucracy that inevitably comes with policy and offer the best services available.

## References

- Jones, K. (2010, February 25). *Lax enforcement of title IX in campus sexual assault cases*. Retrieved from Center for Public Integrity website: <http://www.publicintegrity.org>
- Jordan, E., & Rood, L. (2008, September 28). Mason fires two top U of I officials. *The Des Moines Register*. Retrieved from <http://www.desmoinesregister.com>
- Kelderman, E. (2009, June 26). Sexual harassment cases may now hinge on what colleges could have prevented. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <http://chronicle.com/article/Sexual-Harassment-Cases-May/47340/>
- Lewis, W., Schuster, S., & Sokolow, B. (2010). *Gamechangers: reshaping campus sexual misconduct through litigation*. Retrieved from National Center for Higher Education Risk Management website: <http://www.ncherp.org>
- Lombardi, K. (2009, December 1). *Sexual assault on campus shrouded in secrecy*. Retrieved from Center for Public Integrity website: <http://www.publicintegrity.org>
- Sokolow, B. (2010). *NCHERM Model Sexual Assault Policy*. Retrieved from <http://www.ncherp.org>
- Sokolow, B. (2010) *Sanctioning sexual misconduct*. Retrieved from National Center for Higher Education Risk Management website: <http://www.ncherp.org>
- Sokolow, B., & Koestner, K. (2010). *Eliminating force from campus sexual misconduct policies: the rise of the consent construct*. Retrieved from National Center for Higher Education Risk Management website: <http://www.ncherp.org>
- University of Iowa Sexual Misconduct Policy IV.2.2, (2010).
- University of Vermont Sexual Assault Policy V. 3.4.6.1., (2006).
- U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs. (2005). *Sexual assault on campus: what colleges and universities are doing about it* (NCJ Publication No. 205521).
- Vermont Statutes, ch. 72, § 3251 (1977)

## Multiracial Student Acquiescence to Empowerment

Heather C. Lou

*The increased presence of multiracial students has led the academy to face the challenge of creating inclusive educational environments and support services for this identity group. Complex identity development and ambiguous features contribute to multiracial students' "struggle for inclusion in traditional racial/ethnic communities" (Renn, 2004, p. 9). Current campus settings permit multiracial students to acquiesce, or silently submit, to monoracial identity groups. This literature review and scholarly personal narrative will explore the visibility of multiracial students, identity development models, acquiescence to racial ascriptions to find support, and ways student affairs administrators can empower these marginalized students to find space for their growing population in postsecondary education.*

"Where's the Loving?"

I sat in social justice triggers management training this morning and the facilitator instructed attendees to break into racial and ethnic affinity groups. In these groups, we were to discuss ways to work through words, phrases, and situations that may incite upsetting physical reactions. As a newcomer to student affairs, I immediately began to panic as I contemplated my choices for racial identity: (1) White, (2) Chinese, or (3) multiracial, a way to honor all of these identities at once. I became hot, short of breath, and felt an overwhelming "pressure to choose between races" to find support from my peers, supervisors, and the facilitator (Jones, Renn, & Torres, 2009, p. 595). Needless to say, I was experiencing the exact reaction the group was about to discuss: a trigger.

Without a racial or ethnic group to work with, and unable to pass as monoracial, I stopped to examine the group. Everyone started settling into circles while I remained standing, an obvious outsider. In my frenzy and anger from being abandoned, I could not help but exclaim, "Is there *anyone* that is multiracial here?"

Conversations halted and eyes rose to meet mine. I stood out: flustered and without

---

*Heather C. Lou is a first-year HESA student who received her B.S. in public relations with a minor in humanities from San José State University in 2009. Her fluid multiracial identity and passion for social justice, diversity, and equity are key influences in her practice as an educator. She hopes to integrate cross-cultural affairs and advocacy work in postsecondary education in the years to come.*

a racial homeland. Then, two other professionals rose from their seats and created the space for conversation about the multiracial experience in our college setting. Although only one of the two identified as multiracial, I had found a monoracial ally to support my need to be heard by my peers. For the first time in training, I felt safe, included, and affirmed as a person with a fluid racial identity. When I asked the facilitator why there was purposely not an affinity space for multiracial people, they replied, “I just didn’t know it affected you to have to choose a racial group.” In fact, they admitted that with my ambiguous physical features, they assumed I was “just Asian”.

If the 18-year-old version of myself had sat in the training, I would have silently acquiesced to people’s racial labeling. As a 22-year-old graduate student and part-time administrator who completed a journey from acquiescence to empowerment, I have to ask student affairs administrators and faculty that influence racial climate and inclusion at postsecondary institutions: “Where’s the Loving” for multiracial students when the 1967 *Loving v. Virginia* Supreme Court case declared us legal products of an interracial union?

In a society where “blood quantum was the primary method for classifying multiracials” and antisegregation was legal until the 1967 Supreme Court case *Loving v. Virginia*, the lingering effects of monoracial social construction still affect the inclusion of multiracial students (Doyle & Kao, 2008, p. 2). According to the 2000 Census, 42% of the 6.8 million people who self-identified as two or more races were under 18 years of age. Jackson and Wijeyesinghe (2001) believed that “as the number of multiracial people increases over time and the nation achieves even greater racial diversity, society’s ability to assign racial group membership based on appearance may become increasingly difficult” (p. 146). Student affairs administrators and other members of college campuses may take note of the increasing demographics and complexity of incoming students. Programming, policies, services, and social justice work can become more inclusive to multiracial students and others with a fluid identity so that racial labeling such as what happened to me may become a habit of the past.

As a growing number of multiracial people apply to college, their presence at postsecondary institutions will increase. Although multiracial students may be increasing, visible members of this group may be questionable or questioned because of their perceived external identity, or race, may be ambiguous and indecipherable to those with a monoracial lens. Multiracial student services and academic inclusion may empower and increase the visibility of this marginalized group of students. For administrators working with multiracial students, “the most difficult challenge seems to be helping individuals who identify themselves as monoracial to understand the importance and power of ‘border crossings’ for individuals” (Talbot, 2008, p. 30). In addition, monoracial administrators

may have difficulty understanding the multiracial border crossings, or fluidly straddling between races, of their students and colleagues. An examination of identity models and multiracial student acquiescence to groups outside their racial self-identification serves to inform student affairs administrators and reexamine support for multiracial students in postsecondary education.

### Literature Review

#### *Mapping the Borderlands*

Cooper, Howard-Hamilton, and Torres (2003) define multiracial students as people who “can identify with two or more cultures with which they claim membership” (p. 63). Identity can also be defined as “one’s personally held beliefs about the self in relation to social groups and ways one expresses that relationship...[by how one] organizes experiences within the environment that revolves around oneself” (Jones, Renn, & Torres, 2009, p. 577). A multiracial person’s identity may result from the process of organizing experiences from childhood, adolescence, postsecondary institutions, and external factors such as media, literature, and education. Experiences and messages affect the level of awareness of internal, external, and expressed identities, where engagement in ‘border crossings’, straddling between two or more racial identities allows the multiracial person to hold situational identity. Hyman (2010) describes the hybrid of internal, external, and expressed identities as relative to environment and situation, determined by moving through the series of identity development stages of Maria Root’s Biracial Identity Model (1990). The relationship between a person and their environment may determine the actualization of an integrated multiracial identity (Renn, 2004). Student affairs administrators should explore monoracial attitudes embedded in campus climate so that the environment does not hinder multiracial student development, but empowers these students and their fluid identities. The approaches of Root (1990), Wijeyasinghe (2001), and Renn (2001) to multiracial identity development in relation to self, environment, and societal context will provide a basis for discussion.

#### *Root’s Biracial Identity Model*

Root’s Biracial Identity Model (1990) describes the process of racial group adoption. The multiracial individual’s dualistic and fluid identity may create the tension of not fitting in one racial peer group. Four resolutions to identity tension are: (1) acceptance of the identity society assigns, (2) identification with both or all racial identity groups, (3) identification with a single racial group, and (4) identification of a new racial group (Renn, 2008). An individual may work through these tensions in a fluid process, or never actualize multiracial identity because it was not presented in a campus environment. Tensions may occur if the multiracial individual chooses to accept the identity society perceives and assigns according to



physical appearance. Multiracial students “must also negotiate the campus racial landscape with an appearance that is not always recognizable to others, unwittingly provoking some discomfort until they can answer, “*What are you?*”” (Renn, 2008, p. 18). This question, asked by peers, family, faculty, and student affairs administrators, may create tension for a multiracial student to prove his or her true racial identity. Situations of perceived racial identity may become enraging or tiring for multiracial students, allowing for acquiescence to be the most attractive solution to avoid racial labeling conversations or inquiries from others. The identification as a new racial group may come from self-labeling, which may empower the creation of new ways to address perceived racial identity (Talbot, 2008). Through scholarly personal narrative, this article will apply theory to practice for student affairs administrators through the discussion of Root’s Biracial Identity Model (1990).

### *Discussion of Root’s Biracial Identity Model: Critical Truth*

Torrance, California is a special place to me - the ultimate White suburbia with sprinkles of diversity distributed throughout the socioeconomic bliss of my hometown. It was assumed everyone had a decent trust fund and finances were not discussed. *Everyone* was supposed to be well off. “Diversity” was nothing more than some people of color in the classroom and some new students sent to ESL (English as a Second Language) classes because they couldn’t speak English well enough, and were consequently punished for the pigment in their skin.

I never went hungry and got to do everything that I wanted. I had toys, laughter, friends, and recreation as needed. I had Barbies. Their blonde hair shimmered in the California sunlight in all the clothes and accessories I could fathom. One day, my mother’s friend gave me a very special present. It was a “special” doll in the Barbie collection. She was Chinese. “Like me.” This doll never had a name and I accepted her with an uneasy smile. She was accepted and put up in the corner of a closet, never to be released from her prison sentence in a cardboard box, and her jet black hair would never shine in the sunlight like all of her lighter haired, wide eyed clones. Sitting in her box, laying in her red silk robe, and collecting dust, my “special” doll and my own Chinese identity remained compartmentalized and never brought into the light until my own emancipation from home.

Growing up, I was taught many things, including that being multiracial was pretty and coveted. All I understood was that Mom was White and Dad was Asian, but mostly Chinese. Sometimes I was White. Sometimes I was Chinese. This was, and still is, confusing for a multiracial child. I was taught that I talk like Mom, so I must be White. I must be White for so many reasons: Money. Suburbia. Education. The way I talk. And as for the bronze skin covering my body? It was exotic. Everyone in California wished they had it. Sunscreen? *No. You don’t need it. That is for White people.* But I thought I was White, too? *No way. You are*

*Chinese so you can get into college. Diversity. Your almond shaped eyes.* Like my identity, I compartmentalized portions of my own life. I spoke of my parents as if they were completely separate, rarely speaking as if we functioned as a unit.

I was taught many things growing up: to put away the Chinese girl who faced me in the mirror. Box her up, put her in the closet to collect dust and never speak of her again. I internalized the general perceived racial identities and passed silently from one group to another. “*What are you? Filipina? Latina?*” Sure. I can be any or all of those things if that means I will be left alone.

At seventeen, the college application process sparked the beginning of my empowerment. The computer screen in front of me was full of applications asking, “*What are you?*” again and again. In 2006, there was not an option to be two or more races, so I chose Asian as my race and Jewish as my religion. Hereafter began the initiation of honoring both sides of my identity as a whole person. My college career was full of unlearning internalized oppression lived throughout the compartmentalization of my racial and ethnic identities. 2005 marked the beginning of my life as a multiracial individual negotiating with society’s constructions, and embracing the *hapa’ self identification*. Hapa became my answer to “*What are you?*” No longer could I be confined to boxes; I found a way to escape the prescribed constructions.

In light of moving through phases of multiracial identity and finding empowerment, racial ascriptions by peers, professionals, and faculty have resulted in acquiescence. These ascriptions combined with submitting to racial labeling have been influenced by a variety of factors, best described by Wijeyesinghe’s Factor Model of Multiracial Identity (FMMI, 2001). Student affairs administrators can use my example as a narrative of empowerment and that of the stripping of power due to repeated assaults to my racial identity. The lack of knowledge about racial ancestry, ambiguous appearance, and social and historical context of multiracial identities leads to these assaults. San José State University (SJSU) is known for its diversity and social justice emphasis, but I was unsure if people with similar racial identities were represented at my institution. As “numerous institutions are designated minority recruiters to attract different racial groups on campus... educators need to consider if policies and other recruitment strategies to portray diversity only in terms of monoracial categories” (Kellogg & Niskode, 2008, p. 97). The FMMI (2001) serves to explain the need for multiple factors in multiracial identity development that may improve student affairs practice when applied to student services, recruitment and admissions, and most importantly for a more successful classroom experience in postsecondary curriculum.

<sup>1</sup>A person who racially identifies with a mixed racial heritage with partial roots in Asian and/ or Pacific Islander ancestry.

*Wijeyesinghe's Factor Model of Multiracial Identity (FMMI): Empowered Voices*

Wijeyesinghe's FMMI identifies factors that affect multiracial identity development: racial ancestry, cultural attachment, early experience and socialization, political awareness and orientation, spirituality, other social identities, social and historical context, and physical appearance (Jackson & Wijeyesinghe, 2001). Understanding these factors allows people with a multiracial identity to make meaning of experiences from different periods of their lives. Racial ancestry, social and historical context, and physical appearance are four factors student affairs administrators should be particularly aware of in order to find ways to empower multiracial students beyond acquiescence.

Multiracial students may question their racial ancestry, identity, and interracial encounters as they enter college. One's racial ancestry may reveal information about physical appearance that may cause tension, as discussed in Root's Developmental Model for Biracial Identity (1990). If a multiracial student has not been exposed to information about racial identity, it is common for the person to take courses, study abroad, or find co-curricular activities to gain knowledge to find ways to assert their identity (Renn, 2008, p. 19). One setback of the self-discovery phase of identity development is the resistance from external sources such as peers, media, and administrators, which may deter the individual from claiming a fluid multiracial identity.

Social and historical context allows for multiracial people to explore the meaning of ancestry according to their environment. Understanding the history of racial construction may allow multiracial students to move beyond monoracial minority ancestry and begin to "increase public awareness of [multiracial] issues and [have] an emerging multiracial rights movement" (Jackson & Wijeyesinghe, 2001, p. 141). Student affairs administrators may create space for inclusion by changing the context and discussion in order to become better mentors for multiracial students. The pressure to choose between private and public definitions of identity, justifying identity choices, lack of role models, forced-choice dilemmas, rejection by peer groups, and conflict in messages are prevalent issues in multiracial student experience and contribute to the practice of acquiescence.

Physical appearance is a leading contributor to multiracial student acquiescence. According to Jackson and Wijeyesinghe (2001),

Physical appearance can often facilitate multiracial people's acceptance within particular racial communities, especially when their chosen racial identities are inconsistent with the racial groups ascribed to them by others based on physical appearance. While appearance can result in acceptance, it can also cause rejection or frustration when physical characteristics restrict choice of racial identity. (p. 141)

It is important for student affairs administrators to avoid ascribing racial group memberships to students because of the complexity of multiracial identity. The physical appearance of ambiguous models, actors, and others reflected in the media only reinforce acquiescence. Even with empowerment to claim multiracial identity internally or as ascribed by others, multiracial students may still be labeled by physical appearance (Talbot, 2008). To encourage multiracial students to overcome tensions of perceived identity and border crossings as discussed in previous models, student affairs administrators can help students understand their multiple racial identities and existing multiracial development models. Renn's *Patterns of Multiracial Identity* (2001) takes Wijeyesinghe's FMMI (2001) and identifies how students make meaning of racial climate and engage in border crossings according to environment.

### *Discussion of Wijeyesinghe's FMMI*

Growing up, I did not see many multiracial people in the media. In fact, aside from several of my peers, multiracial identity was never addressed. Asserting my chosen identity in college was exhausting between the "*What are you?*" question and the "*I knew you were some kind of mix!*" response. Most of the time, the people I interacted with assumed I was the same race or ethnicity because of my ambiguous features. I joined the Filipino Cultural Organization and attended affinity events not because I identified, I just figured I should know about the people I was mistaken for on a regular basis. In some ways, these cultures have contributed to the appreciation of my multiracial identity. In others, they have hurt my development as a multiracial individual. I hid behind groups of people that looked like me so that I could find a racial homeland and avoid border crossings. I was filled with shame when trying to assert my fluid identity because there was nowhere to retreat. As Hyman (2010) states, "The more one resemble[s] a specific race, the more likely that individual will feel comfortable claiming the identity due to the perceived acceptance of the group" (p. 130). All I wanted was to feel accepted.

I chose my mentors because they understood my fluid identity. One woman identified as Burmese and Pakistani. Another identified within the LGBT community with American Indian and Jewish ancestry. The other was White and Asian like me. The composition of my supportive dream team of mentors was an interdisciplinary approach - I would pick and choose parts of their narratives to help me understand my own. Some of their struggles were, and are, mine. Some of them I will never understand, but they have taken root as questions in my own narrative. The three referred me to various multiracial professionals to speak with and to non-profit organizations to learn about the history of people similar to (and sometimes vastly different from) myself. There was no programming or support specifically for multiracial students on our campus, so after learning about my own racial ancestries, social and historical context of race relations with humanities

courses, and struggling with my physical appearance, I decided to question the racial landscape of SJSU.

Several student affairs administrators and I began looking at racial and ethnic identifying questions on documents and whether multiracial students were included. As a group, we started informing students of the options to identify as two or more races on documents. A silent group of students started to develop a sense of community through peer education programs about the history of multiracial identity. In the sharing of histories, both group and personal, acquiescence was common. As empowered students, we created a gallery of our identities and broke the silence as out multiracial people. Conversations started. Taking into account the factors of multiracial identity, we empowered students to tell their truths as marginalized students in postsecondary education. Renn's *Patterns of Multiracial Identity* (2001) best describes the process each student negotiated as they moved across borders, according to the aspect of multiracial identity suited to each racial situation in their academic and co-curricular setting and will be expanded below.

#### *Renn's Patterns of Multiracial Identity*

Renn considers previous models above in her 2001 study of how 56 multiracial students made meaning of their identity by establishing five patterns of identity. A student may hold a (1) monoracial identity, (2) multiple monoracial identities, (3) multiracial identity, (4) extraracial identity, or (5) situational identity (Renn, 2004). Renn defines how multiracial identity development is a result of a person's interactions with time in his or her environment. Of all the factors, Renn's findings show how peer group culture and campus environment may contribute to consistent patterns of multiracial identity. A person may move throughout the pattern depending on time, place, and manner of an environment, "finding ways of constructing and reconstructing identity in shifting contexts of face to face and cyber encounters with others" (Renn, 2004, p. 49).

The peer context and student affairs practice contribute to the multiracial student's ability to make meaning of their identity in a campus setting. Renn builds from biracial and multiracial identity models and describes how multiracial students adopt an identity with encounters, immersions, and integrations. The encounters with peer culture and administrators "may play a number of roles in this realization and exploration of identity" (Renn, 2004, p. 51). Ultimately, student encounters with people of the same multiracial group may enhance the immersion into a racial group. A negative encounter with "subtle and not-so-subtle racism for the first time... could be a developmental force as the student accommodates a new understanding of race and racial identity" (Renn, 2004, p. 51).

The environment student affairs administrators create with programs and policies

may enhance or inhibit multiracial student development. More intentional educational opportunities about how multiracial students' development can be offered to provide support for this marginalized population. Focusing on diversity and social justice, which includes conversations about multiracial student identity, is "often good for all... in assisting students to understand racial and cultural diversity and to be comfortable in heterogeneous environments that are necessary for achieving success" (Renn, 2004, p. 10). Until services, policies, and programs adapt to changing populations, such as multiracial students, the postsecondary educational environment will exclude a dynamic and growing group of students.

*Discussion of Renn's Patterns of Multiracial Identity: Changing the Landscape*

I mean it when I say, "I am a product of my environment." Until the beginning of my second year of college, I had several ways of expressing my racial identity. On paper I was "Asian." If someone asked me to my face, most often, I was "White." Sometimes I declined to state my racial identity on paper, in person, or in passing. Other times I was "Other," "Native Alaskan/Eskimo," or even "Latina." And then there was Hapa. Until I was challenged to think critically about my racial identity by my mentor, I had no way of navigating the multiracial experience on a college campus.

One day my mentor asked how I identified. I replied, "White."

She asked me again, "How do you identify?"

I replied, "White."

This time, she stopped and looked at me. "No. You are a person of color. You are White, but also a person of color. Multiracial. Did you know that?"

I did not really know it mattered. I did not want to talk about race. Or class. Or gender. Or privilege. Then the wheels started turning. Yes. I am multiracial. But if the person you are talking to does not understand what it is like to hold flexible, complex, fluid identities, why bother elaborating? I dodged the rest of the conversation and went to class.

That day a visitor made an announcement in the classroom. She said, "The University is holding affinity focus groups to try to understand the student experience around race." She proceeded to announce the times of each group. I sat in my chair, half listening. The woman said many racial identities, but there was nothing for students who identified as more than one group. I looked at the White students writing down their times. I looked at the Asian students. For someone who identified as both, I did not know where to go. Then it clicked. Finally. It clicked.

I do not belong just with the White students. I do not just belong with the Asian students. Then, I surprised myself with a "Well. What about the multiracial students?" The woman was almost surprised by my question and perhaps boldness.

“You can just go to the group that you think suits you best.” I got up and walked out. No space for me. I could not breathe. I did not understand why I did not belong. At one time, I held a monoracial identity, several monoracial identities, a multiracial identity, an extraracial identity, and a situational identity. I fell into patterns of how I would identify. It was to find support. I affiliated with whichever group I could go to feeling like I could actually fit in, which mostly depended on ascriptions from my peers.

I found myself back in my mentor’s office, angry, proud, and unknowing of what to do next with my salient multiracial identity. She was sitting in her chair waiting for me, as if knowing, and then, we talked. Sometimes the conversations lasted for days. Realization after realization, question after question, she was there to debrief. When she could not answer the questions with me, she referred me to another person who could help me understand more. If my mentor had not been there to answer questions, be patient in my process, or embrace my patterns of multiracial identity development, I would not have moved past acquiescence to empowerment. I would not be who I am today without her support, or want to be a professional who could consistently support a student with fluid identity development and be willing to find others to help in the process. Time spent in the environment and the tone set for me at my undergraduate university helped me question my racial identity and the systems that created or affected it.

### Conclusion

I have moved from the role of a student, to graduate, to professional in student affairs, and I have faced challenges I could not have foreseen. I advise a multiracial student group on campus and find myself moving into a new chapter where I not only observe multiracial student identity development, but also play a role in it. The students I work with are strong, intelligent, and willing to challenge others and me to try to understand their process of coming in to the world of postsecondary education as not only students of color, but also as multiracials. I celebrate the hardships and triumphs of each of these students as they navigate an experience that is somewhat unpaved and uncharted. The border crossings these students encounter are daunting for some, encouraging for others, and second nature for most.

Brilliant and innovative work has been done and continues to happen in order to create space and inclusion for multiracial students: explanations and application of the multiracial identity development models, allowing students to check more than one racial or ethnic box on identification paperwork, and multiracial groups growing on campus every year. As professionals working with an emerging population of multiracial students, we can continue to ask, “Where’s the Loving?” for our students with fluid identity development and patterns. How can we continue

to empower our students to move beyond acquiescence and passing? Are our services, programs, and activities including or excluding multiracial students? It is not until our emerging and influential field gains more knowledge about this group of students that we can encourage all to move beyond multiracial student acquiescence to full empowerment.



## References

- Cooper, D., Howard-Hamilton, M., & Torres, V. (2003). *Identity development of diverse populations: Implications for teaching and administration in higher education*. 29(6). San Francisco, CA: Wiley Periodicals, Inc.
- Doyle, J. M. & Kao, G. (2007). Are racial identities of multiracials stable? Changing self-identification among single and multiple race individuals. *Social psychology quarterly*. 70(4). (pp. 405-423).
- Hyman, J. (2010). The new multiracial student: Where do we start? *The Vermont Connection: the student affairs journal of the University of Vermont*. 31. (pp. 128-135).
- Jackson, B. & Wijeyesinghe, C. (2001). *New perspectives on racial identity development: A theoretical and practical anthology*. New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Jones, S., Renn, K., & Torres, V. (2009). Identity development theories in student affairs: Origins, current status, and new approaches. *ACPA journal of college student development*. 50(6). (pp. 577-593).
- Kellogg, A. & Niskode, A. (2008). Student affairs and higher education policy issues related to multiracial students. Renn, K. & Shang, P. (Eds.). *New directions for student services: Biracial and multiracial students*. (pp. 93-102). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Renn, K. (2004). *Mixed race students in college: The ecology of race, identity, and community on campus*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Renn, K. (2008). Research on biracial and multicultural identity development. Renn, K. & Shang, P. (Eds.). *New directions for student services: Biracial and multiracial students*. (pp. 13-21). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Talbot, D. (2008). Exploring the experience and self-labeling of mixed-race individuals with two minority parents. Renn, K. & Shang, P. (Eds.). *New directions for student services: Biracial and multiracial students*. (pp. 23-32). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

## Challenges of Student Engagement in Community Colleges

Christine P. Nguyen

*Student engagement is a major challenge faced by community college administrators. The impact of low student engagement on retention and graduation rates means community colleges across the nation have the opportunity to re-evaluate policies and practices that contribute to or hinder a student culture of engagement (Greene, Marti, & McClenney, 2008; McClenney, 2007). Community colleges are host to a diverse student population including commuter students, non-traditional students, and students with a wide range of academic goals and academic preparedness. The diversity of this population provides a challenging environment in which to foster student engagement. The function and value of student affairs are often diminished on community college campuses with less emphasis on co-curricular student development. This article will review existing literature of challenges faced by community colleges and the role of student affairs in the unique environment of community colleges. The article will conclude with recommendations for developing institution-wide efforts to support student engagement and topics for further research.*

Community colleges have often been viewed as educational pathways for students who would not otherwise have access to post-secondary education. Women, students of color, students from low-income households, single parents, displaced workers, adult learners, and students with disabilities have all been granted access to higher education through an open admission policy that has traditionally been the hallmark of the community college. Nearly half of all undergraduate students in the United States are enrolled at community colleges (American Association of Community Colleges, 2009). However, community colleges are frequently overlooked in discussions about higher education institutions. Most student affairs

---

*Christine P. Nguyen is a second-year graduate student in the Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration (HESA) program at the University of Vermont. She graduated from Western Washington University in 2006, where she received her B.A. in French and English with a literature emphasis.*

*She currently holds an assistantship in the Department of Residential Life and previously worked in international programs at a community college in Seattle, WA. Her scholarly and professional interests range from issues affecting community colleges, international education/student services, students of color, and critical pedagogy.*

literature on student engagement issues has been primarily limited to research on traditional undergraduate students at four-year institutions and “minimal student engagement research has been conducted in community colleges” (Greene, Marti, & McClenney, 2008, p. 514). President Obama unveiled plans in July 2009 for the American Graduation Initiative, a 10-year plan to invest in community colleges as worker-retraining sites for laid-off workers searching to learn new skills during the economic recession (Brandon, 2009). However, the renewed interest in community colleges for their potential to boost the economy has not translated to greater interest or research on student engagement at these institutions.

Lack of student engagement is a persistent cause for concern on community college campuses. Higher levels of student engagement are positively correlated with higher student retention and graduation rates (Astin, 1999), which have been identified as two additional concerns for community colleges. Kuh (2003) defined student engagement as “the time and energy students devote to educationally sound activities inside and outside of the classroom, and the policies and practices that institutions use to induce students to take part in these activities” (p. 25). By Kuh’s definition, not only are students invested in the process of engagement, but institutions are also held accountable to implement policies and practices to “induce” (p. 25) students to engage. The lack of student engagement in community colleges is a problem that should be addressed on an institutional level as well as within the student culture. Community college leaders, administrators, and student affairs professionals can begin by considering the student populations they serve and the institutional structures that contribute to or hinder student engagement. Once these factors have been identified, colleges can begin to examine ways to develop practices that encourage student engagement, retention, and academic success. Levine et al. (2004) stated:

The biggest challenge community colleges face is fragmentation in our programs and isolation and divisiveness among both faculty members and administrators. We need to overcome those obstacles to give our students the liberal-arts education they deserve. None of the missions of community colleges, whether job training or a gentle transition to a higher degree, precludes the need to educate the whole person. (p. B10)

This sentiment echoes a struggle that most institutions continually face. However, in the community college context, the rift between faculty members and administrators may hinder successful implementation of policies and practices that are meant to enrich the student experience. Without joint support from faculty members and administrators, community colleges are unable to effectively educate the whole student. Stebleton and Schmidt, L. (2010) found that lack of institutional support for retention programs was a contributing factor to high attrition rates in community colleges. Bushong (2009) cited “annual attrition rates of nearly 50 percent, according to national data. Nearly 30 percent of students fail to make it to even their second semester” (para. 4). These alarming statistics demonstrate

the need for community colleges nationwide to re-evaluate practices to encourage student engagement, which in turn fosters student persistence.

### Institutional Struggles with Student Engagement

Community colleges are convenient and accessible for students with a wide range of educational goals. Part-time students are particularly attracted to community colleges because they are more accessible to those who hold full-time jobs by offering night courses. But “[s]tudents who enroll part time are less engaged than their full-time peers, and more likely to drop out of college. This likelihood is high at community colleges, where close to two-thirds of students attend part time [sic]” (Gonzalez, 2009, para. 2). If two-thirds of the student population is at risk for being less engaged, that fraction of students is also at higher risk of not completing academic goals or remaining enrolled at all.

Students are not the only part-time population on community college campuses; part-time faculty are also prevalent at these institutions and “[t]he reality is that both part-time faculty and part-time students are less engaged with the college,” (McClenney, as cited in Schmidt, P., 2008, p. A1). Part-time faculty also account for about two-thirds of the teaching staff at community colleges and students who took courses taught by part-time faculty “were less likely to return for their sophomore years” (Schmidt, P., 2008, p. A1). Umbach [as cited in Schmidt, P., 2008] found that “compared with full-time faculty members, part-timers advised students less frequently, used active teaching techniques less often, spent less time preparing for class, and were less likely to participate in teaching workshops” (p. A1). Community college administrators will struggle to engage students when they are taking classes with disengaged faculty. Students may have trouble seeking out a part-time faculty member for help outside of the class if they do not have an office on campus or are on other campuses. Students may also be less inclined to engage with an institution if they perceive that a faculty member does not spend adequate time to prepare for or facilitate class using engaging practices. Student focus groups showed that out of the students who did remain enrolled, “a relationship with an instructor or staff member was the main reason many students had chosen to stay in college” (Gonzalez, 2009, para. 8). With community colleges so dependent on part-time instructors who are less engaged, students have fewer opportunities to connect with instructors and develop key relationships that could result in increased levels of persistence or engagement in college.

### The Role of Student Affairs in the Community College

Along with reports of low levels of student engagement, consideration of student populations and the lack of visible institutional support could easily lead to diminished roles for student affairs practitioners at community colleges. Community

college students “expressed the most dissatisfaction with student services such as career counseling, job placement, financial-aid advising, and credit-transfer assistance” (Evelyn, 2003, p. A36). Also, “[r]esearchers found that most students... identified faculty members as the best source of academic advising, with friends, family, and other students coming in second.... Only 10 percent of students relied on academic advisers who were not faculty members” (Ashburn, 2006, p. A1). However, Ashburn (2007) stated: “[S]tudents have consistently rated academic advising as the most important service community colleges can provide. Yet a third of students continue to say that they rarely or never use advising” (p. A30). One explanation for this discrepancy is recognizing that academic advising offices might not function on timelines that are accessible for part-time or students enrolled in evening classes. As noted earlier, two-thirds of community college students are part-time; half of those part-time students are also employed full-time (American Association of Community Colleges, 2009). Academic advising offices are only open during the day, as is the case with most student services offices, so students who are unable to come to campus until the evening have little opportunity to use their services. These students might see faculty members as better sources of academic advising because they have more personal contact with faculty members in class than they do with staff academic advisors. The gap between perceived need of services and use of services could also be attributed to the culture of the institution when serving students. One student stated that academic advisors at her institution “don’t seem like they are there to help the students, they’re there to do a job” (Evelyn, 2003, p. A36). Staff members can visibly demonstrate they have the desire to assist students by creating a positive and welcoming atmosphere in their office to increase students’ comfort level in seeking academic advising or other student services offices.

Whitt et al. [as cited in Stebleton & Schmidt, L., 2010] stated that “practitioners can act as a vital bridge between student affairs and academic affairs to promote student persistence and retention in a community college setting” (p. 79). Research shows that students have identified faculty members as those they turn to for academic advising; therefore, student affairs practitioners must work to navigate the differences between administration and faculty. Creating a functional professional relationship across student and academic affairs is essential to creating a campus environment that encourages student engagement and student success. Stebleton and Schmidt, L. (2010) recognized that “[s]tudent affairs practitioners who work directly with community college students face a range of ongoing challenges, including how to engage and retain students” (p. 79). Two surprisingly positive findings from the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) were that students of color “reported higher levels of interaction with their professors and better use of academic advising and other student services than did white students” (Evelyn, 2003, p. A36), and that “students who are academically underprepared are generally more engaged than academically prepared

ones. Underprepared students are much more likely to take advantage of student services like tutoring, skills-development labs, and computer labs” (Ashburn, 2007, p. A30). The use of student services by students of color and academically underprepared students is a positive sign that some community college campuses have motivated employees who provide appropriate services and resources for students. This level of engagement with campus services allows these students to build connections with student affairs professionals.

### Suggestions for Developing a Connected Community College: An Institution-Wide Effort

The Center for Community College Student Engagement (CCCSE, 2009) defined “connected colleges” as institutions that “effectively connect with their students and encourage them to build the relationships – with faculty, staff, other students – that are essential to student success” (p. 3). These “connected colleges” are able to communicate through their policies and practices that they believe in student success and “demonstrate that everyone on campus is committed to facilitating that success” (CCCSE, 2009, p. 3). Community colleges need to foster what McClenney and Greene (2005) called a “culture of engagement” where faculty, staff, and students alike are committed to connect with each other and the educational experience so that students are presented with an environment that is conducive to learning (p. 5).

“Community college leaders need to be aware of who they are serving, and must make meaningful efforts to continuously define their student markets and to make certain that their programs are in alignment with those being demanded” (Miller, Pope, & Steinmann, 2005, Implications for Practice, para. 1). In order to facilitate this vision of collaborative efforts in and out of the classroom, institutions must recognize the unique characteristics of community colleges that can be challenging to navigate when building a culture of engagement. “Theories and applications developed in a four-year university context are typically not an ideal match for retention comparisons at the community college” (Stebbleton & Schmidt, L., 2010, p. 79). There are several major community colleges characteristics that hinder the ability to apply theories or models developed for four-year institutions. Most community colleges are non-residential based communities. Community college students also often fulfill multiple roles in their lives (e.g., parent, caretaker, and/or employee) in addition to their student role and therefore have less time on campus to engage in building community or attend events outside of class time. Lastly, the scope of the community college mission encompasses students who meet one or more of the generally accepted common factors contributing to students who are “at risk” for attrition, such as part-time students, first-generation students, and students of color. By taking these characteristics into consideration, administrators can become equipped to face the challenge of finding alternative

and creative ways to engage students.

There are several straightforward ways that institutions could work toward closing the gap between perceived need for services and actual need of services. One option suggested by the CCCSE report (2009) is to incorporate the use of some student services into coursework or making their use mandatory for all first-time students to: attend orientation and advising sessions prior to registration, career counseling appointments, and class assignments that involve résumé writing. Additionally, “[c]olleges can provide support services at times convenient to part-time students or integrate services into required course work. They can also link study-skills courses with developmental courses so that part-time students who need remediation will be more likely to succeed” (Gonzalez, 2009, para. 5). All of these approaches would aid in bridging the gap and encourage students to engage with the student affairs offices that could be pivotal in their success at the community college. Although some institutional groups may initially resist change, altering the operational hours of student services offices to better support student needs could have a great impact on the engagement and success of part-time students. Stebleton and Schmidt, L. (2010) acknowledged the need for an existing foundation of commitment before engagement or retention programs can succeed. “Program success entails identifying a select group of faculty members and student affairs practitioners willing to invest extra time and energy into new ways to connect with students” (Stebleton & Schmidt, L., 2010, p. 92). If key players at the institution are unwilling to make the commitment and fully support these programs, they are likely to fail.

Community colleges could also look into newer forms of engagement such as online tutoring. As opposed to online orientation, which has been criticized by students in focus groups, “[o]nline tutoring...is simply another mechanism for delivering the same service provided by face-to-face tutoring; it involves a one-on-one connection with a real person, facilitated by technology” (CCCSE, 2009, p. 10). Using a variety of new technology to engage students could be both innovative and effective for certain populations. However, institutions should be aware of their demographic by employing online strategies or other engagement programs that require a certain amount of tech-savvy to navigate. They cannot use these media exclusively or they risk alienating core groups of students who may not have access to or knowledge of these technologies.

Collaboration and support across the institution, as previously stated, could be the most important factor in developing sustainable programs to engage students at community colleges. For example, at Invers Hill Community College, where administrators are making great strides to further engage the student population, “[c]ounselors, instructional faculty from a variety of disciplines, and several student affairs practitioners each teach a section of OC [an orientation course]” (Stebleton

& Schmidt, L., 2010, p. 92). By integrating different facets of the educational system into one cohesive team, this institution made it possible to open up dialogue across differences and reframe student engagement as the priority. The commitment to nurturing student engagement needs to be reflected from the top down, in the “day-to-day culture, lexicon, and mission of the institution” (Stebbleton & Schmidt, L., 2010, p. 93). Financial support from senior administration is also essential in establishing these programs. “Educational leaders recognize that it is cost effective in the long run to spend money on retention efforts that will help students meet their goals” (Stebbleton & Schmidt, L., 2010, p. 92). If students are succeeding in accomplishing their educational goals due to the effort and money spent to develop engagement and retention programs, community college leaders need to be transparent about their costs and benefits so the rest of the institution’s community will be able to support those decisions.

### Future Research and Scholarship

Considering the evolving landscape of the community college mission and the current economy, community college administrators are constantly faced with the challenge of finding new ways to efficiently adapt to a rapidly changing environment. They have seen student engagement, retention, and success as persistent areas of concern for their institutions. Student affairs divisions at community colleges have the opportunity to collaborate with faculty members to serve student needs. Future research or scholarship on student engagement in community colleges would raise greater awareness of the need to develop sustainable practices to engage a diverse population of students in their academic environment. Continued implementation and careful analysis of the CCSSE results could reveal trends and additional points of concern for community college leaders to address when considering student engagement and retention. Scholars and researchers can also begin to adapt student engagement theories based on community college students and redefine student engagement from its exclusive grounding in traditional, four-year institutional context to the community college environment. By building a foundation of literature and research on community college students, student affairs practitioners and faculty members can learn more about the students they serve and implement better practices to ensure student engagement and success.



## References

- American Association of Community Colleges. (2009). 2009 fast facts. Retrieved April 3, 2010, from <http://www.aacc.nche.edu/AboutCC/Pages/fastfacts.aspx>
- Ashburn, E. (2006). 2-year-college students rarely use advisers, survey shows [Electronic version]. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 53(15), A1.
- Ashburn, E. (2007). Some community-college students fall through the cracks in their first month [Electronic version]. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 54(12), A30.
- Astin, A. (1999). Student involvement: A developmental theory for higher education. *Journal of College Student Development*, 40(5), 518-529.
- Brandon, K. (2009). Investing in education: The American graduation initiative. Retrieved from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/Investing-in-Education-The-American-Graduation-Initiative/>
- Bushong, S. (2009). Researchers propose 6 ways to keep community-college students beyond the first few weeks. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved April 2, 2010, from <http://chronicle.com/article/Researchers-Propose-6-Ways-/47121/>
- Center for Community College Student Engagement. (2009). Making connections: Dimensions of student engagement (2009 CCCSE Findings). Retrieved April 2, 2010, from [http://www.ccsse.org/publications/national\\_report\\_2009/CCSSE09\\_nationalreport.pdf](http://www.ccsse.org/publications/national_report_2009/CCSSE09_nationalreport.pdf)
- Evelyn, J. (2003). How community colleges measure up [Electronic version]. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 50(14), A36.
- Gonzalez, J. (2009). Connecting with part-timers is key challenge for community colleges, survey finds. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved April 2, 2010, from <http://chronicle.com/article/Connecting-With-Part-Timers/49139/>
- Greene, T. J., Marti, C. N., & McClenney, K. (2008). The effort-outcome gap: Differences for African American and Hispanic community college students in student engagement and academic achievement. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 79(5), 513-539.
- Hornak, A. (2009). Ethical issues for community college student affairs professionals. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 148, 53-62. doi: 10.1002/cc.386
- June, A. W. (2009). At Howard Community College, inclusiveness goes a long way. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved April 2, 2010, from <http://chronicle.com/article/At-Howard-Community-College/47009/>
- Kuh, G. D. (2003). What we're learning about student engagement from NSSE *Change*, 35(2), 24-32.
- Levine, A., Templin Jr., R. G., McPhail, C., Roueche, J. E., Shannon, H. D., & Omundson, B. (2004). The biggest challenge for community colleges: 6 views [Electronic version]. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 51(10), B10.

- McClenney, K. (2007). Research update: The community college survey of student engagement. *Community College Review*, 35(2), 137-146.
- McClenney, K. & Greene, T. (2005). A tale of two students: Building a culture of engagement in the community college. *About Campus*, 10(3), 2-7.
- Miller, M. T., Pope, M. L., & Steinmann, T. D. (2005). A profile of contemporary community college student involvement, technology use, and reliance on selected college life skills. *College Student Journal*, 39(3), 596-603.
- Schmidt, P. (2008). Use of part-time instructors tied to lower student success [Electronic version]. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 55(12), A1.
- Stebbleton, M. J. & Schmidt, L. (2010). Building bridges: Community college practitioners as retention leaders. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 47(1), 78-98. doi: 10.2202/1949-6605.6018

## Humane Liberation: Incorporating Animal Rights into Critical Pedagogy

Adam Ortiz

*The field of higher education is one in which, historically, acts of progressive social change have been both initiated and supported. At the moment, many academics and student affairs professionals in colleges and universities across the United States are using their resources to help students understand social justice concepts utilizing the practice of Critical Pedagogy.*

*While exploring power, privilege, and oppression related to human identities has resulted in overwhelming positive social change, there is a population that continues to suffer, largely without attention from scholars or other members of the academic community: animals. Some educators have asserted that the goal of Critical Pedagogy, which is to “help students develop consciousness of freedom, recognize authoritarian tendencies, and connect knowledge to power and the ability to take constructive action,” (Giroux, 2010, para. 1) is most effective when incorporating animal rights into educational curricula. This article is an exploration of animal rights issues, how animal exploitation affects humans, animals, and the environment, and how learning about animal rights can contribute positively to the goals of Critical Pedagogy.*

Animal rights and student affairs are rarely seen as related topics. Since entering the University of Vermont's (UVM) Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration (HESA) program in 2008, I have found that discussions of animal rights in the context of student affairs have been virtually non-existent. This is understandable, given that the primary goal of student affairs is supporting students through their personal and professional development – not liberating animals from laboratories and factory farms. Yet, one crucial aspect of supporting student development is understanding how social identity functions, which allows us to engage students in social justice issues such as privilege and marginalization. By understanding our social identities and the social identities of others through

---

*Adam Ortiz is a House Director at Hampshire College. He earned his bachelor's degree from Wheaton College (MA) in 2005 with a major in English and his master's degree from the University of Vermont's HESA program in 2010. Adam's main focuses are economic class, maleness and masculinity, multiracial student development, and animal rights. He is the advisor for the campus group Men Against Patriarchy, facilitates conversations on economic class at Hampshire, and is the Publications Coordinator for the Multiracial Network.*

the practice of Critical Pedagogy, we can learn how best to navigate the world in a manner that helps us counter established systems of oppression.

As student affairs practitioners invested in Critical Pedagogy, many of us in the field of student affairs feel an obligation to consistently search for ways to address oppression both in the context of our institutions and in United States (US) culture. However, through my personal experience, I have learned that the majority of people I know have little understanding of the extreme brutalities inherent in animal exploitation. Given the overwhelming amount of misinformation produced by groups that exploit animals, the normalization of animal cruelty, and the ways in which violence towards animals is oftentimes hidden from public view, this lack of information is understandable. Yet, copious evidence demonstrates that animal exploitation has a devastating effect on the animals themselves, human beings, and the environment. As a result, I believe that incorporating animal rights into Critical Pedagogy curricula would improve the quality of education, helping students further foster critical thinking skills, compassion, and respect for people, animals, and the environment.

### My Animal Rights Journey

When I process animal rights from an academic vantage point, the first person I think of is Peter Singer, who published the influential text *Animal Liberation* in 1975. In the text, Singer offered a cogent philosophical argument that the oppression of animals is the result of “speciesism,” which is every bit as tangible as any other form of discrimination. In his estimation, denying animals the basic rights of freedom and welfare by virtue of their species is just as oppressive as denying people the same rights because of their social identities. According to Singer, the reason all humans and animals deserve the rights of freedom and welfare is the shared ability to suffer and experience commensurate levels of pain. While Singer’s work was no doubt met with controversy, it has influenced many people to take the issue of animal rights seriously and explore systemic animal oppression.

My introduction to both animal rights and Singer’s philosophy took place on an evening when I was 14 years old and casually browsing websites. Fortuitously, I found myself on the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) website and was intrigued by the bold statement, “Animals Are Not Ours to Eat, Wear, Experiment On, Use for Entertainment, or Abuse in Any Way.” Like many people, I was raised within a family that ate meat, went to zoos and circuses, and had plenty of clothes made of wool and leather. My mother taught my siblings and me to be compassionate to other people, but because of my own innate humanity, I never thought about the world from the perspective of the animals.

The night I found the PETA website, my perspective changed. The content of

the site was horrifying, detailing the very real ways in which animals suffer for the benefit of humankind. We do in fact wear them, eat them, use them for entertainment, experiment on them, and, in doing so, abuse them in ways that I found so egregious that I was jolted to tears. For hours, I clicked through hundreds of photographs and stories about factory farms, animal testing laboratories, circuses and zoos, and fur farms, which enlightened me to the fact that my life was made more pleasurable because of the enslavement and suffering of billions of animals (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals [PETA], n.d.). I went to bed that night convinced that the only way I could alleviate even a small portion of the guilt I endured was through a pledge to both become a vegan and disseminate the details of animal exploitation to others.

When I enrolled in the HESA program at UVM, I started to think about animal rights in the context of Critical Pedagogy and social justice. Where social justice is concerned, I cannot speak more highly about my experience in the HESA program. UVM was the place where I learned how to name and articulate the concepts of privilege and oppression, as well as how to support students by understanding their complex social identities. It was also the first place where I heard people speak candidly about the pain of oppression they experience on a daily basis. This sharing of stories and practical application of theory all made me feel more deeply connected with people around me than I ever had before. Still, I could not stop thinking about the animals' role in all of the identity work that I engaged in. The more I learned about social justice, the more I started to believe that learning about animal rights may help students further understand the concept of oppression and ways it can be challenged by praxis. My own history of animal rights activism helped me understand how and why hierarchical systems function, the history and context of hierarchical beliefs, the interconnectedness of all life forms, and how one's actions have a direct impact on other humans, animals, and the environment. I also learned about ways in which the desire for profit can trump human welfare. As a result, I have never been able to view animal rights and social justice as wholly separate. Exploring ways in which animal exploitation impacts humans, the environment, and the animals themselves will help students understand the consequences of activities to which most of us contribute.

### Impact of Animal Exploitation on Animals

Incontestably, the group most affected by animal exploitation is the animal population itself. Instead of having the freedom to pursue their own interests and exist in a manner conducive to their natural instincts, exploited animals live under the control of humans (McGee, 2005, p. 9). According to Dunayer (2001), more than nine billion animals are killed each year for human consumption. In addition to confinement and slaughter, exploited animals also face agonizing cruelty during the span of their short lives. Numerous organizations, such as PETA and

the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), have produced literature that details the extent to which animals suffer in all areas in which they are exploited.

Myriad undercover investigations have found that animals in factory farms typically spend their lives crippled in cages and pens so small that they have no room to freely move around - all the while experiencing extreme temperatures, violent handling, and noxious fumes (Marcus, 2000). In addition, they are commonly alive and fully conscious while enduring their brutal deaths, which range from being plunged in boiling water tanks to having limbs sawn off (Foer, 2009). Animals used in entertainment, particularly circuses, are frequently beaten and terrorized by their trainers. Within the past year, PETA investigators released video footage of baby elephants being torn from their mothers, hit hard with sharp bull hooks, and burnt with cattle prods while being forced to perform (PETA, 2010). Animals used for clothing are brutalized on fur farms by their handlers, forced to live in extremely small cages, and sometimes skinned while still alive (PETA, n.d.). Animals used for science have a documented history of being experimented on without regard for the immense pain and suffering they experience (PETA, n.d.). While this is just a brief snapshot of the horrific practices that take place in the industries that exploit animals, it should also be noted that inhumane treatment of animals is the norm in these industries and not the exception.

### Impact of Animal Exploitation on Humans

One pervasive myth is that exploiting animals - while unfortunate for them - is advantageous for human beings. Evidence demonstrates that this is not true, particularly in the context of eating animal products. We live in a culture where we are bombarded with the messages that drinking another species' milk is a necessary component of healthy human childhood, that vegetarians are frail and weak, and that getting all the vitamins and minerals one needs to survive on a strictly plant-based diet is impossible. Yet, there is a significant link between animal consumption and cancer, obesity, and heart disease (Robbins, 1987). The negative impact that animal products have on the body are prompting the American Heart Association, the World Health Organization, and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute to call for a reduction in dietary saturated fat, the main sources of which are meat, dairy, and eggs (McGee, 2005).

In non-smokers, the primary cause of atherosclerosis is eating meat (Lyman, 2001). Eating meat has been linked to breast cancer, lung cancer, prostate cancer, and colorectal cancer. Animal-based diets have been linked to impotence, asthma, gallstones, kidney stones, arthritis, gout, intestinal disorders, ulcers, diabetes, and osteoporosis (Lyman, 2001; Robbins, 2001). According to the United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention, every year between 6.5 million to 8.1 million people suffer from food poisoning, which results primarily from animal

consumption (Eisnitz, 1997).

Personal health aside, another devastating effect animal consumption has is its contribution to world hunger. According to Tim Kunin and Greg Heterberg (n.d.), 24 thousand people per day die from hunger or related causes (para. 1). Out of that amount, only 10 % of those deaths are the result of war, famine, or similar catastrophic events; 90% are caused by mal-distribution of food resources, such as the immense amount of grain and water used in meat production (McGee, 2005). The amount of wasted food resources resulting from meat production is staggering. According to Robbins (2001), it is estimated that cattle consume twice the amount of grain as human beings in the United States. Cattle in the meat production industry alone consume a food quantity equaling the caloric needs of 8.7 billion people (McGee, 2005). While there is no guarantee that worldwide vegetarianism would mean that the food wasted on animals would be given to starving humans, it certainly could, and should, be.

In a world populated by a staggering amount of humans who suffer from disease and hunger, it is unfortunate that we are often misinformed about the devastating effects that consuming animal products has on both ourselves and our fellow global citizens. Every year, thousands of human deaths and injuries result from factory farming and eating animal products alone, yet animal agriculture industries continue to perpetuate the distorted messages that their products are superior for human health (Foer, 2009). Exploring the detrimental impact that consuming animal products has on human beings is an exemplary circumstance where teaching students about animal exploitation is advantageous to both humans and animals, and would, no doubt, contribute to the goals of Critical Pedagogy.

### Impact of Animal Exploitation on the Environment

In his book, *Eating Animals*, Jonathan Safran Foer (2009) made the bold statement that, “Most simply put, someone who regularly eats factory-farmed animal products cannot call himself an environmentalist without divorcing that word from its meaning” (p. 59). According to Foer and others, the impact of factory farming on the environment is catastrophic. Studies recently conducted by the United Nations (UN) and the Pew Commission have discovered conclusively that animal agriculture contributes 40% more to global warming than pollution from all of the cars, trucks, planes, trains, and ships in the world combined. Factory farming is responsible for 65% of anthropogenic nitrous oxide and 37% of anthropogenic methane, which provide respectively 296 times and 23 times the global warming potential of CO<sub>2</sub>. This and other data collected have demonstrated that omnivores contribute seven times the volume of greenhouse gasses to global warming than do vegans (Foer, 2009).

In addition to the overwhelming contribution to global warming, animal agriculture also advances deforestation, loss of water reserves, soil damage and erosion, pollution of water, loss of wildlife habitat and food, loss of species, and the loss of natural landscapes (Compassion in World Farming, 2009). For example, the staggering amount of feces produced by factory farms is typically dumped into rivers and streams, or spread on fields where it will eventually end up in public water sources. The water is then polluted with ammonia, bacteria, and nitrates, contributing to ten times the amount of pollution in the United States caused directly by the human population (Lyman, 1998). Another jolting fact is that the largest cause of rainforest destruction is the clearing of land for cattle and their food for human consumption (Robbins, 2001). This information all leads to the conclusion that factory farming, which is one of the most widespread and normalized forms of animal exploitation, is having a devastating effect on the Earth's ecosystem.

### The Role of Hegemony in Animal Exploitation

Despite the evidence, we continue to perpetuate animal exploitation at the expense of all parties involved. While using animals for food, fashion, science, and entertainment may seem immediately advantageous for humans, the disastrous effects of animal exploitation will contribute to the human struggle for survival in a world ravaged by ecological degradation, human starvation, and violence. How does this system perpetuate itself? And why do so many of us remain unaware of how much suffering our exploitation of animals is causing on innumerable lives of innumerable species?

McGee (2005) argued that the answer lies in the concept of cultural hegemony. The concept of cultural hegemony, developed by Marxist critic Antonio Gramsci, dictates that ways of thinking about reality are fundamentally created by a dominant group and perpetuated through various systems "mediated by well-intentioned people who, usually unconsciously, act as agents of oppression by merely going about their daily lives" (Bell, 2007, p. 10). These systems may be apparent and tangible, such as policies, laws, and business practices, or abstract and more difficult to identify, such as language, historic depictions, and advertising. Hegemony serves the purpose of normalizing oppression and allowing it to become entrenched in social reality. Hegemony, through numerous operations, makes oppression seem normal, natural, and necessary. According to Bell (2007), "Through hegemony, a dominant group can so successfully project its particular way of seeing social reality that its view is accepted as common sense, as part of the natural order, even by those who are in fact disempowered by it" (p. 10).

In the case of animals, one can easily identify ways in which hegemony serves the purpose of normalizing exploitation. One consistent hegemonic myth that we



are confronted with, for example, is the idea that milk is a necessary component of a healthy diet, particularly for children. Elementary schools often perpetuate the idea through providing milk in cafeterias and displaying posters that tout the health benefits of consuming dairy. Media perpetuate the idea through advertisements such as the famous milk mustache campaign. Some doctors perpetuate the idea because of limited knowledge about the dairy-free diet. As a result of these factors, we, as a culture, are bombarded with images of happy children drinking milk from cows on sprawling farms and the idea that consuming dairy is necessary for survival. From dairy, we are told, we receive protein and calcium that is vital to our health. These myths and images are perpetuated by people who yearn for their good health and the good health of their children.

What we rarely learn, however, is that the dairy industry spends a massive amount of money perpetuating the belief that dairy is a natural and necessary part of a healthy human diet (Robbins, 1987). In 2000, the National Fluid Milk Processor Promotion Board and the Milk Industry Foundation were investigated by the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM) on allegations of disseminating purposefully harmful, deceptive, and scientifically unsubstantiated advertising, including the celebrity milk mustache campaign (McGee, 2005). The presidents of the PCRM concluded that the dairy industry did, and continues to, mislead the public about the supposed healthy benefits of milk while ignoring its side effects, which include increased risk of cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and obesity (Robbins, 2001). cursory dietary investigation of food products reveal that calcium and protein – and all other nutrients in an animal-based diet – are readily available in vegetable and fruit form without all of the harmful side effects of dairy.

As long as hegemony continues to perpetuate these myths and others like it, cruelty and exploitation will continue to be normalized and viewed as common sense for the profit of industries that commit egregious acts against humans, animals, and the environment.

### Humane Education

At the moment, the topic of animal rights is largely absent from the practice of Critical Pedagogy. However, it is discussed in the context of higher education in other fields, such as philosophy, law, and human relations. Two universities even offer master's degrees in Humane Education (McGee, 2005). Humane Education originated with educators from animal protection organizations going into schools and teaching students about responsible pet care. Today, Humane Education is much broader and includes animal rights, human rights, and environmental sustainability. Rae Sikora and Zoe Weil [as cited in McGee, 1999] define Humane Education as “an educational experience that helps students develop the skills to: respect themselves and others, develop critical thinking skills, and inspire

empathy and compassion” (p. 60). Humane Education educators seek to help students understand their impact on the world by critically examining their habits, their beliefs, and their assumptions. Teachers of Humane Education are also cognizant of the impact that government and corporate entities have on human beliefs as well as how these beliefs can support certain products and values that may be detrimental to human and animal welfare. Humane Education educators challenge the acceptance of consumerist and materialist values that many corporations perpetuate with little or no regard to human, animal, or environmental consequences (McGee, 1999).

David Selby (1995), designer of Humane Education curricula, acknowledges that there are numerous forms of education that explore issues of oppression and exploitation. These include: Environmental Education, Social Justice Education, Peace Studies Education, Development Education, and Human Rights Education. Selby believes that Humane Education is the intertwining of all these programs into one form of pedagogy with the ultimate goal of developing critical thinking skills, respect, and compassion for all people, all animals, and the environment [as cited in McGee, 2005]. Humane Education transcends focusing anti-oppression education on one specific field and instead asks students to critically engage oppression in all facets of their lives, which will hopefully lead to the eradication of oppressive ways of navigating the world. Within Humane Education, species is every bit as much an intersecting identity as any other, and the privileges inherent become equally valid.

#### Taking Action Against Animal Exploitation and Opportunities for Further Praxis

Glen T. Martin (2005) stated in *Millennium Dawn* that one of the necessary elements of revolutionary praxis is to “everywhere and in every situation, strive to educate others, with sensitivity and thoughtfulness, about the possibilities and processes and necessity of human and planetary liberation” (p. 388). I have been asked numerous times what connection animal rights could possibly have to student affairs. My response to this question is that if we as student affairs practitioners and social justice educators are to incorporate the act of revolutionary praxis into all facets of our lives, we must not ignore the violent oppression that is so often inherent in the choices we make regarding the food we eat, the fashion we wear, the science we support, and the entertainment we attend. If supporting students is a holistic process and we are to incorporate Critical Pedagogy into student affairs for the sake of revolutionary praxis, learning about animal exploitation is imperative.

Students of Critical Pedagogy have the opportunity to learn about issues such as racism, sexism, and classism. If they also learn about how these systems of oppression are directly linked to the exploitation of animals for human profit, they

will become aware of more practical choices they can make to challenge privilege, power, and profit. Because animal rights issues are so deeply entwined with our personal lives and the decisions we make, learning about animal exploitation will consistently challenge both students and teachers to reflect on their assumptions, biases, and beliefs. The end result does not necessarily have to mean that all people would embrace an animal rights perspective, but would hopefully give people a deeper understanding of ourselves as human beings, how the choices we make effect others, and why exploring all forms of oppression is vital to liberation.

### Conclusion

Within the field of Critical Pedagogy, the topic of animal rights is largely absent. Yet, scientific research has demonstrated undeniable proof that the exploitation of animals – particularly in the context of consuming animals for food – has a devastating effect on animals, human beings, and the environment. As a result of cultural hegemony, most of us contribute to animal exploitation that is linked to racism, classism, and other forms of violence and hierarchy. Humane education, with its focus on critical analysis of hegemony, personal impact of actions, respect and compassion for all living creatures, and eradication of oppression offers methods for dismantling the violence and systems of hierarchy within our culture. If Critical Pedagogy educators were to incorporate the animal rights aspect of Humane Education into their curriculum, students would have additional tools for developing critical thinking skills, learning about personal responsibility, consistently questioning perspectives and assumptions, making positive choices, and challenging systemic forms of oppression.

## References

- Adams, M., Bell, L. A., & Griffin, P. (2007). *Teaching for diversity and social justice*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Bell, L. A. (2007). Theoretical foundations for social justice education. In Adams, M., Bell, L. A., & Griffin, P. (Eds.), *Teaching for diversity and social justice* (1-14). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Compassion in World Farming. (2009). *Eating the planet? How we can feed the world without trashing it*. Retrieved from: [http://www.ciwf.org.uk/includes/documents/cm\\_docs/2009/e/eating\\_the\\_planet\\_press\\_briefing\\_nov\\_2009.pdf](http://www.ciwf.org.uk/includes/documents/cm_docs/2009/e/eating_the_planet_press_briefing_nov_2009.pdf)
- Dunayer, J. (2001). *Animal equality: Language and liberation*. Derwood, MA: Ryce Publishing.
- Eisnitz, G. (1997). *Slaughterhouse: The shocking story of greed, neglect, and inhumane treatment inside the U.S. meat industry*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books.
- Foer, J.S. (2009). *Eating animals*. New York, NY: Back Bay Books.
- Giroux, H.A. (2010). Lessons from Paulo Freire. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <http://chronicle.com/article/Lessons-From-Paulo-Freire/124910/>
- Kunin, T., & Heterberg, G. (n.d.) *International hunger facts*. Retrieved from: [http://www.thehungersite.com/clickToGive/aboutthecausetranslation.faces?siteId=1&link=ctg\\_ths\\_aboutthecausetranslation\\_from\\_ourstory\\_maincolumn#english](http://www.thehungersite.com/clickToGive/aboutthecausetranslation.faces?siteId=1&link=ctg_ths_aboutthecausetranslation_from_ourstory_maincolumn#english)
- Lyman, H. (2001). *Mad cowboy: The plain truth from the cattle rancher who won't eat meat*. New York, NY: Touchstone.
- Marcus, E. (2000). *Vegan: The new ethics of eating*. New York, NY: McBooks Press.
- Martin, G. T. (2005). *Millennium dawn: The philosophy of planetary crisis and human liberation*. Sun City, AZ: Institute of Economic Democracy.
- McGee, K.P. (2005). Critical pedagogy and animal rights: The inclusion of humane education in the critical pedagogy doctoral program at the University of St. Thomas. (Doctoral dissertation.) Retrieved from Proquest. (100155050)
- People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. (n.d.) *Fur farms*. Retrieved from: <http://www.peta.org/issues/animals-used-for-clothing/fur-farms.aspx>
- People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. (n.d.) *People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals*. Retrieved from: <http://www.peta.org>
- People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. (n.d.) *Product testing: Toxic and tragic*. Retrieved from: <http://www.peta.org/issues/Animals-Used-for-Experimentation/product-testing-toxic-tragic.aspx>
- People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. (2010). *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus*. Retrieved from: <http://www.mediapeta.com/peta/PDF/RinglingFactsheet.pdf>
- Robbins, J. (1987). *Diet for a new America*. Tiburon, CA: H J Kramer, Inc.

- Robbins, J. (2001). *The food revolution: How your diet can help save your life and the world*. Berkley, CA: Conari Press.
- Selby, D. (1995). *Earthkind: A teacher's handbook on human education*. Staffordshire, England: Trentham Books Limited.
- Sikora, R., & Weil, Z. (1999). *Sowing seeds workbook: A human education primer*. Surry, ME: Center for Compassionate Living.
- Singer, P. (1975). *Animal liberation*. New York: HarperCollins.

## Moving Toward an Inclusive Model of Allyship for Racial Justice

Viraj S. Patel

*This paper is prompted by a single question fueled by a lifetime of wonder. If I, an Asian American, work in the interests outside of my racial group to end a system of racial oppression from which I suffer and benefit from, is that considered allyship? Within the context of working towards racial justice, allyship refers specifically to White people working to end the system that oppresses people of color. By challenging a binary model of allyship, which I argue continues to perpetuate the binary status quo of dominance; I draw upon Paulo Freire's work to begin a discussion for an alternate way to view acts of allyship that is inclusive of all people. The binary system of viewing race can be challenged by placing such theoretical ideas in the context of a higher education case study in order to show how horizontal oppression can affect the lives of professionals working in the field of Higher Education.*

This paper is prompted by a single question fueled by a lifetime of wonder. If I, an Asian American, work in the interests outside of my racial group to end a system of racial oppression from which I suffer and benefit from, is that considered allyship? The concept of being an ally (Reason, Scales, & Millar, 2005) refers to a person in a dominant position of power working toward ending the system that gives power in the interest of a group with which one does not share a particular social identity. Within the context of working towards racial justice, allyship refers to White people working to end the system that oppresses people of color.

While research has been conducted to discuss the development of social justice allies in higher education as well as the phenomenon of allyship within the context of activism for social justice, all have focused on a binary vision of allyship where people are separated into dominant and subordinated groups (Bishop, 2002; Broido, 2000; Broido & Reason, 2005; Edwards, 2006; Reason, Scales, & Millar, 2005; Washington & Evans, 2000). The binary model for allyship reinforces a top-down

---

*Viraj S. Patel is a second-year student in the HESA program and serves as the Assistant Residence Director for University Heights North. She graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2009 with a major in English and minor in Asian American Studies. Viraj's identities as an Indian-American, a woman, an activist, and a student of social justice greatly influence her academic work and passion for student affairs, both of which she is eager to continue developing.*

vision of racism that relies on a number of assumptions, which I will discuss later, that inhibits the agency of social justice activists and oversimplifies the way race is viewed. Engaging in discussion about the shortcomings of a binary model in which people are split into White/Non-White categories, and acknowledging that subordinated people also engage in a process of racial identity exploration, the need for a new term to address subordinated racial group members who work in the interests of racial groups outside of their own becomes clear.

In section one, I review contemporary literature in the discussion of allyship and then launch into a critique of such a model, pointing out its assumptions and the importance of addressing individual racial identities. In section two, I introduce the phenomenon of horizontal oppression and liberation theology. I conclude in section three with a discussion of the way horizontal oppression and liberation theology can work with theoretical foundations of allyship to explore new pathways in the fight for racial justice that break out of the racial binary.

### A Binary Perception of Allyship

Contemporary discussions of allyship rely upon a binary vision of race where race is viewed as either White or non-White (Bishop, 2002; Broido, 2000; Broido & Reason, 2005; Edwards, 2006; Reason, Scales, & Millar, 2005; Washington & Evans, 2000). This is problematic because binaries essentialize experience and can perpetuate oppressive systems by forcing people into one category or another (Banerjee, 2002). When referencing race, identities that are not White are lumped together under the label “people of color.” While there is value in building coalitions and creating a common identity, I argue that the phenomenon of viewing allyship for racial justice in the context of such a binary is dangerously close to a color-blind approach. A color-blind approach is when interracial relations of subordinated racial groups are not considered and incorporated into discussion of allyship for fear that discussing race will lead to further problems, and instead race, or color, is ignored in place of discussing the impact of race. In the following comment, Young (2000) asserted that although there is a common history of oppression among subordinated populations, that history is comprised of varied legacies and consequences for each group.

In the most general sense, all oppressed people suffer some inhibition of their ability to develop and exercise their capacities and express their needs, thoughts, and feelings. In that abstract sense all oppressed people face a common condition. Beyond that, in any more specific sense, it is not possible to define a single set of criteria that describe the condition of oppression in the above groups. (p. 36)

An emerging body of canonical literature insists on the disaggregation of racial groups and points out that each group, although still a part of the subordinated population, has its own histories and is affected by the systems of oppression in

unique ways (Takaki, 2008).

The binary model also presumes that subordinated racial populations share a common identity as people of color and that any action taken in the name of racial justice by a subordinated activist is in the interest of all racial groups. A recent study that explored stereotypes held by Black students found that Black American college students have stereotypes about different racial groups that affect the way members of the group view other people:

Black Americans mostly appear to think about competency and trustworthiness in terms of what they feel is most attributable to their own racial group members and Asian Americans and Latinos in comparison to people generally and Whites specifically. That is, they view Asian Americans and Latinos as being generally more competent and trustworthy than people generally and Whites specifically...Asian Americans are perceived as being less trustworthy than Black Americans. Whites, however, are viewed as being the least trustworthy of all the targets. (Nunally, 2009, p. 257)

The findings in Nunally's (2009) study indicate that there is not a cohesive people of color identity and that there is a stratification among racial groups at even the most basic levels of trustworthiness and individual competency. While Nunally's findings suggest that a common people of color identity exists since, ultimately, it is the White population that is deemed least trustworthy among participants, the findings also point to the fact that there is a distinction made among different racial groups since "Asian Americans are perceived as being less trustworthy than Black Americans" (Nunally, 2009, p. 258). If the notion that a common "people of color identity" exists is true, there would not be a difference in levels of trustworthiness among different racial populations.

There is also a need to recognize that people who come from subordinated populations are not automatically born with an understanding of their racial identity and the way that identity informs their worldviews. As White students develop their racial identity, so do students of color (Reason, Millar, & Scales, 2005). Outside of the many racial and ethnic identity development models, the scholarship of Torres (2009) addressed students (in her study, Latino/a students) from subordinated racial groups engage in a process to make meaning of internalized racist thoughts or comments:

...participants were also externally defined by how the outside world saw Latino identity....They did not possess the cognitive ability to recognize the multiple perspectives needed to understand that there are poor neighborhoods for all races and that people of all races can be gardeners. (Torres, 2009, p. 515)



Inkelas (2004) found that Asian Pacific American (APA) students who participated in ethnic student organizations experienced a heightened understanding and connection to their ethnic and racial identity versus their APA peers who did not participate in such organizations. This shows that students of color also engage in critical understanding and meaning-making of their social identities through outside resources and group activity, and that understanding of social identities is not innate.

The binary model of allyship also relies upon the assumption that White people only benefit from a system that affords privileges. While I do not discount that such privilege exists, I wish to challenge the notion that White people are not adversely affected at times by the racial binary system that denies ethnic plurality and culture. Antiracist activist Tim Wise (2008) wrote in his autobiography: “Whites pay enormous costs in order to have access to the privileges that come from a system of racism – costs that are intensely personal and collective, and which should inspire us to fight racism *for our own sake*” (p. xii). In this autobiography, Wise recounted examples of when White people had been adversely affected by systems of racial privilege. For example, during the 1999 shooting at Columbine High School, law officials were slow to enter the building to help the students at the predominantly White school. Wise asserts that because of the privilege afforded by many of the students, law officials were afraid they might get sued if something went wrong. If the officials were not nervous because of previous exercises of privilege among the local population in resistance to law officials, the building would have been secured more quickly.

By considering engagement with a binary model, recognizing the agency of subordinated peoples, and challenging the notion that White people are not also affected negatively by White culture and legacies of dominance, a path is opened to explore a pluralistic perspective of allyship for racial justice among multiple racial groups. The concepts of horizontal and lateral oppression must be incorporated into conversations in order to move towards a pluralistic model of allyship for racial justice.

### Horizontal and Lateral Oppression

While there is a binary concept of oppression (the dominant group and the oppressed group), there is a sub-phenomenon deemed horizontal or lateral oppression. Drawing upon themes of internalized oppression (when the oppressed believe the views of the oppressor) horizontal hostility suggests that the:

internalized self-hatred because of one’s membership in a ‘minority group’...can easily be extended to the entire group so that one does not see hope or promise for the whole. It is safer to express hostility toward other oppressed peoples than toward the oppressor. (Pharr, 1997, p. 61)

Horizontal oppression is a manifestation of internalized oppression that is projected onto those with a similar social identity.

Horizontal oppression can take two forms: targeted-to-targeted and advantaged-to-advantaged. “Targeted-to-targeted horizontal oppression is the conscious and/or unconscious attitudes and behaviors exhibited in interactions among members of the same targeted group that support and stem from internalized subordination” (Hardiman, Jackson, & Griffin, 2007, p. 47). An example of targeted-to-targeted horizontal oppression in the United States is the 1992 riots in Los Angeles between Black and Korean populations. The internecine riots, which erupted over boycotts of Korean-American merchants in predominantly Black and Latino neighborhoods, were highly publicized in the mainstream media and perpetuated images of dysfunctional communities of color. The riots were violent, resulted in deaths, and left a legacy of horizontal violence in Los Angeles. While the definition provided above lumps Black and Korean people under the same targeted group, I argue that within the same targeted group, there is evidence of subsections of ethnic identity that shows the existence of group identities that go further than a “person of color” identity. The Korean or Black identity was more salient than the identity as a “person of color” as cited in Kim (2000):

Getting involved...meant protecting their [Korean-Americans] collective position within the racial order and thereby the order itself. Using the hallowed notions of colorblindness, equal opportunity, and the American Dream...the Korean American countermobilization sought to return things to the status quo ante...Korean American leaders only had in mind protecting their group interest, not fortifying an oppressive system that keeps Blacks on the bottom of American society. (p. 158)

As seen with the example of the 1992 riots, horizontal oppression not only continues to oppress people of color, but also upholds the normalized narrative of dominance – in this particular case, White dominance. Black and Korean people were fighting for limited resources that were the result of White gentrification – instead of challenging the dominant powers that created the situation, the oppressed continued to fight with each other to create another layer of dominance and subordinated status.

Advantaged-to-advantaged horizontal oppression is “the conscious and/or unconscious punishments that oppressor groups bestow on other members of their group who violate the ideology of the oppressive system” (Hardiman, et al., 2007, p. 47). A hypothetical example is the risk White people take when they engage in discussions about race and address racist behavior within their own community and are rejected as a result of that behavior.

While this article focuses on the connection between targeted-to-targeted horizon-

tal oppression in connection to allyship and liberation theology, the existence of another facet of horizontal oppression is important to consider. For the remainder of this paper, when I refer to “horizontal oppression,” it is only in reference to targeted-to-targeted horizontal oppression.

Horizontal oppression is also connected to classrooms in colleges. Ethnic studies programs and departments, which grew out of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement, were created with the intention of legitimizing the experiences of historically marginalized communities in the classroom as well as creating venues to challenge and foster scholarship (Umemoto, 1989). However, there is a trend of students majoring and/or minoring in Race/Ethnic Studies programs but then continuing on to a degree in a more “traditional” field based on the realities of the capitalist economy as well as in-group pressures:

On college campuses, the culture of upwardly mobile racialism runs counter to the values of ethnic studies, and yet the epistemology of pluralism in the latter tends to facilitate the former. Our classes fill up with brave students who read longingly about the origins of the social movements of identity, but whose own social location makes those struggles romantically distant. (Prashad, 2006, p. xvii)

Just as horizontal oppression can affect experiences inside the classroom, it is also pervasive outside of the classroom on college campuses. As Nunnally (2009) found, students (in this study, Black students) possess negative stereotypes of other subordinated racial groups that continue to uphold a dominant White paradigm and reduce venues that build coalitions to challenge the aforementioned dominant White paradigm. Torres (2009) studied the impact of internalized oppression and the way it can affect students’ relationships with people of their same racial and/or ethnic identity on a college campus. The study found that while Latino students have different interpretations of racist ideas based on experiences of privilege, the participants created a “critical developmental tool for challenging those negative beliefs [racism]” (Torres, 2009, p. 518). Since students experience internalized oppression and racism in different ways, there are many different methods for challenging such beliefs, which can range from personal meaning making to encouraging in-group dialogue of such phenomena.

Horizontal oppression has not received much attention in the student affairs literature and is a phenomenon that demands further exploration within discussion of diversity and social justice. A pathway beyond a binary vision of oppression is developed by incorporating a framework of horizontal oppression to the discussion of allyship. Additionally, a need to address the agency of students participating in the active oppression (and anti-oppression efforts) of other subordinated populations exposes a gap in language and social justice theology which does not have a response to horizontal oppression and the way that subordinated racial groups

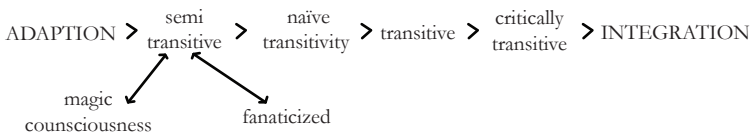
work to help one another. The link between allyship and horizontal oppression becomes clearer when overlapped with concepts of liberation theology.

### Liberation Theology

In the way that an act of allyship responding to dominant-to-subordinated oppression also frees the oppressor, an act of allyship from a person of color responding to targeted-to-targeted horizontal oppression liberates all subordinated parties. The works of Freire (1973 & 2009) can help to provide a framework not only for what education and allyship can look like, but also the way liberation can be achieved.

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (2009) discussed that the oppressed cannot be liberated by the oppressor. If the oppressor is the one liberating, then the status quo does not change. Instead, the oppressed must work to liberate themselves. In the binary construction of allyship, an act of allyship is not achieved by working to liberate people of color, but rather by creating venues for people of color to liberate themselves. In a classroom or staff meeting, this could be achieved by, depending on one's dominant identities, simply choosing not to speak first and making space for other ideas to be brought into the conversation.

In *Education for Critical Consciousness*, Freire (1973) asserted that there are different stages of consciousness, which are determined by the extent to which one is able to question their surroundings and historical context. Freire presents a model that describes various states along the path to achieving critical consciousness. I will provide a brief description of each state below and will then consider Freire's concepts in the context of a student affairs case study. In order to achieve a process of education where individuals can liberate themselves, a state of consciousness (deemed "transitive consciousness") must be achieved. Different states of consciousness, displayed on a continuum, show different levels of engagement with integration. Adaptation, which is a precursor to integration, is characterized on an individual level by the inability to make choices and being subjected to the choices of others. The person is viewed as an object whose decisions are no longer their own. Integration, on the other hand, is characterized by the capacity to adapt in addition to a critical capacity to make choices and to transform reality. The person is viewed as a subject who develops a critical engagement with the definition of culture. The diagram below demonstrates Freire's (1973) different levels of consciousness as well as characteristics associated with each level:



As seen in the diagram, people start in a semi-intransitive state of consciousness where individuals are deemed by Freire as illogical. As one becomes increasingly aware of their own reality, not as it is shaped and taught by others, they either move to a state of magic consciousness, a side track from Freire's continuum characterized by the development of a fatalistic view of reality, or move along the continuum to naïve transitivity, which is the next step in the path toward a critically transitive state. The state of naïve transitivity is characterized by the oversimplification of problems, nostalgia for the past, and underestimation of the common person. From naïve transitivity people either slip into fanaticized consciousness, where people are seen as objects and are irrational or move along the continuum towards a critically transitive consciousness, where subjects are fully engaged with reality and can make decisions on their own. To achieve a critically transitive consciousness, one must pursue intervention and integration with their cultural context in place of accepting, without question, the status quo.

A breakout model of allyship complicates this interpretation of Freire's (1973) work. Consider the following scenario:

*Serena, a residence director who identifies racially as Asian, is in her weekly meeting with one of the RAs she supervises. Jamie, the president of the school's Latin@ student organization, has heard that Oliver, the president of the school's Asian/Asian American organization, is concerned that his organization has not been allocated enough money by the Student Government Association to cover the costs of their annual Moon Festival celebration. Jamie is frustrated that Oliver has been heard complaining to multiple administrators that Jamie's group has been allocated too much money for their Day of the Dead celebration and that some money should be pulled from their budget to cover the expenses for the Moon Festival celebration.*

Serena has multiple options in this scenario. As a self-identified Asian, she could simply do nothing and benefit from a potentially greater Moon Festival celebration. This act would fuel the horizontal oppression that occurs on her campus. A second option would be to address the issue privately with Oliver. As an active member of the Asian/Asian American community, she could speak on behalf of Jamie's organization and ask Oliver to stop commenting about the Latin@ student organization's budget. However, this plan of action would not empower Jamie to explore the situation herself and to find a comfortable solution. While Serena can and should feel empowered to discuss the impact the situation has on her with Oliver, the discussion should not include speaking on behalf of Jamie. Instead, the third option – and the one that I argue would be an act of allyship – involves Serena working with Jamie to explore the impact of Oliver's comments with herself, her student organization, and her community. Other prompting questions can include discussion of what may be compelling Oliver to make such comments as well. While there is no set answer to these questions, Jamie has at least engaged in working towards what Freire (1973) terms transitive consciousness, the final

step in achieving a consciousness where one can liberate oneself. Serena's role as a facilitator of learning, and not as a lecturer, encourages Jamie to figure out how to go about addressing the situation and understanding how it affects her on an individual and group level.

Another key point made by Freire (1973) is that education must be a mutual process. Education has traditionally relied upon a "banking concept of education" (Freire, 2009, p. 72), such as through lecture formats, which does not engage students in the process of their own learning and maintains the status quo of inequality by encouraging memorization and recitation in place of mutual dialogue. However, education, which works to liberate oppressed populations, engages students and teachers to work together in the process to learn and challenge existing ideas. As illustrated in the case study above, people from marginalized identities can work together to educate and liberate themselves from a system that creates not only top-down, but also horizontal modes of oppression.

### Bringing It All Together

The phenomenon of targeted-to-targeted horizontal oppression does not yet have a place in the discussion of allyship and liberation. By challenging a binary model of allyship, which I argue continues to perpetuate the binary status quo of dominance, I draw upon Paulo Freire's works (1973 & 1999) to begin a discussion for an alternate way to view acts of allyship that is inclusive of all people. By altering the model to include all racialized people as individual agents of allyship, I argue that the binary system of viewing race can be challenged. Placing such theoretical ideas in the context of a case study in student affairs shows how horizontal oppression can affect the lives of professionals and ways that such situations can encourage self-liberation and be turned into opportunities for acts of allyship.

While this paper is largely theoretical, there are opportunities for field research at institutions of higher education in the United States to discuss the creation of alternate models and definitions of allyship. One potential project would be to interview staff members at different cultural identity centers across campus to discuss the ways, if they exist, collaboration between centers occurs to address intersecting identities are discussed. Student groups that collaborate together to share resources could also be interviewed to determine how horizontal oppression has been addressed and how to work successfully across social identities. By engaging subjects in defining what allyship means to them and considering ways that horizontal oppression has affected the climate, a model can be developed to address the unique needs of allyship as a response to horizontal oppression.

## References

- Banerjea, K. (2002). The tyranny of the binary: Race, nation, and the logic of failing liberalisms. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 25(4), 572-590.
- Bishop, A. (2002). *Becoming an ally: Breaking the cycle of oppression in people* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). City, Canada: Fernwood Publishing.
- Broido, E. M. (2000). The development of social justice allies during college: A phenomenological investigation. *Journal of College Student Development*, 41(1), 3-17.
- Broido, E. M., & Reason, R. D. (2005). The development of social justice attitudes and actions: An overview of current understandings. In R. D. Reason, E. M. Broido, T. L. Davis, & N. J. Davis, (Eds.). *New Directions for Student Services: Developing Social Justice Allies* (pp 17-28). San Francisco, CA: Wiley Periodicals, Inc.
- Kim, C. (2000). *Bitter fruit: The politics of Black-Korean conflict in New York City*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 156-187.
- Edwards, K. E. (2006). Aspiring social justice ally identity development: A conceptual model. *NASPA Journal*, 43(4), 39-60.
- Freire, P. (2009). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York, NY: The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc.
- Freire, P. (1973). *Education for critical consciousness*. New York, NY: Seabury Press.
- Hardiman, R., Jackson, B., & Griffin, P. (2007). Conceptual foundations for social justice education. In Adams, M., Bell, L.A., Griffin, P. (Eds). *Teaching for diversity and social justice*. (pp. 35-66). New York: Routledge.
- Inkelas, K. K. (2004). Does participation in ethnic cocurricular activities facilitate a sense of ethnic awareness and understanding? A study of Asian Pacific American undergraduates. *Journal of College Student Development*, 45(3), 285-302.
- Nunnally, S. C. (2009). Racial homogenization and stereotypes: Black American college students' stereotypes about racial groups. *Journal of Black Studies*, 40, 252-264.
- Pharr, S. (1997). *Homophobia: A weapon of sexism*. Berkeley, CA: Chardon Press.
- Prashad, V. (2006). Foreword: Bandung is Done – Passages in AfroAsian epistemology. In Raphael-Hernandez, H. & Steem, S (Eds.), *AfroAsian Encounters* (pp.xi-xxiii). New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Reason, R., Millar, E. A., & Scales T. C. (2005). Toward a model of racial justice ally development. *Journal of College Student Development*, 46(5), 530-546.
- Reason, R. D., Scales, T. C., & Millar, E. R. (2005). Encouraging the development of racial justice allies. In Reason, R. D., Broido, E. M., Davis, T. L., & Davis, N. J. (Eds.). *New Directions for Student Services: Developing social justice allies* (pp. 55-66). San Francisco, CA: Wiley Periodicals, Inc.
- Takaki, R. (2008). *A different mirror: A history of multicultural America*. Boston,

MA: Back Bay Books.

- Torres, V. (2009). The developmental dimensions of recognizing racist thoughts. *Journal of College Student Development*, 50(5), 504-521.
- Umemoto, K. (1989). "On Strike!" San Francisco State College strike, 1968-69: The role of Asian American students. *Amerasia Journal*, 15(1), 3-41
- Washington, J., & Evans, N. J. (2000). Becoming an ally: A new examination. In Adams, M., Blumenfeld, W.J., Castaneda, R., Hackman, H.W., Peters, M.L., Zuniga, X. (Eds.). *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice: An anthology on racism, antisemitism, heterosexism, ableism, and classism* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 413-422). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Wise, T. White like me. (2004). New York, NY: Soft Skull Press.
- Young, I. M. (2000). Five faces of oppression. In Adams, M., Blumenfeld, W. J., Castaneda, R., Hackman, H.W., Peters, M.L., & Zuniga, X. (Eds.). *Readings for diversity and social justice: An anthology on racism, antisemitism, heterosexism, ableism, and classism* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 35-44). New York, NY: Routledge.



## Culture Through Sculpture: Carving New Understandings and Uses of Campus Sculptures

Salomón (Salo) Antonio Rodezno

*This article explores a common artifact of history on museum floors and college campuses: sculptures. It looks at: how sculptures contribute to campus culture; reclaiming history through new campus sculptures; using sculptures as a teaching object (object-based pedagogy) in and outside the classroom. The author explores the link museums and college campuses share in their promotion to understand cultural legacies through the acquisition, preservation, exhibition, and interpretation of material culture. The author's visual and performing arts background will interlace his personal and professional narratives providing readers a context complementing this piece.*

Even before attending my first lecture in my Master of Education graduate program, my history lesson began as I walked down the main campus of the University of Vermont (UVM). Walking and looking at the architecture of the buildings, the well-kept green landscapes, and the sculptural renditions of university figures, I realized this part of campus was like experiencing a 291 year-old exhibit in a museum. Museums are unique campus resources often promoting the understanding of a university's cultural legacy through the acquisition, preservation, exhibition, and interpretation of its collections of art, archeological artifacts, and other material culture.

The UVM campus first opened its doors to students in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and its history is tangible when one walks around the campus and is able to touch a sculpture from 1808. The possibility to physically interact, integrate, and interpret history drew me to work at UVM's Fleming Museum to better understand the integration between the conceptual and practical existing structures in the daily operation of a museum and a college campus. I realized there was more to material cultures, like campus sculptures, than aesthetic enjoyment.

---

*Salo is a 26-year old gay Latino artist originally from North Hollywood, California. He received his Bachelor's degree in Visual Arts and Film Production from the University of California San Diego. Salo is the first in his family to receive a Master's degree in the United States and hopes to continue working as an imaginative artist, creative practitioner, and unconventional scholar. His scholarly curiosities revolve around: campus cultures, first generation college students, campus ghost stories, campus architecture, marketing, equity, and diversity work. A special thanks to Chris Fearon (Fleming Museum) and Shirley Fortier (Campus Planning Services) for their support and enthusiasm when writing this article.*

This is important to the higher education and student affairs field because sculptures, like other campus material cultures, have the ability to shape the meanings behind what it means to be a college student at a particular campus. A bond is created when students take their first steps and experience their college campus. Administrators in student affairs and higher education serve as their institution's museum curators. They are the cultural keepers ensuring which campus cultures "are maintained, celebrated, and passed on to future generations of students" (Broussard, 2009, p. 13). Therefore, the history of a college campus is living and organic. Administrators, along with faculty, have the ability to create what it does and does not mean to be a student at a college campus. This in turn allows administrators and students to not be observers of a college's history but be active participants in its development. This article explores a common artifact on the museum floor and the college campus: sculptures. It looks at how sculptures contribute to campus culture; how history can be reclaimed through the addition of new sculptures; and how to intentionally use campus sculptures as teaching objects in and outside the classroom via object-based pedagogy.

#### Author's Bias

I come from an environment fusing art and education – this is where I thrive, dream, and prosper. I was raised in a family of visual, performing, and musical artists - informally being exposed to folk art, painting, embroidery, artisanship, and craftsmanship. When I went off to college I was formally trained in the visual arts focusing on film production (production design, art directing, camera operation and video editing) and performance art. I hoped to integrate my two passions (working with creative individuals and college students) when I enrolled in a master's degree program in higher education and student affairs administration.

During the first three semesters of my program, I was required to select an administrative office of my choosing to integrate my conceptual knowledge of student affairs with some hands-on administrative practice. Wanting to better understand the importance and the connection art plays in an educational setting, I decided to work for the university museum: I would leave this learning experience with a clearer sense of my vocation and myself.

After working at the museum, I realized art and education are my vocational passions. The majority of this article will be narrated by my identity as an educator. My identity as an artist *who is an* educator will surface at the very end of this article.

#### Intertwining Museums and the College Campus

Culture is often understood as attitudes, behaviors, and artifacts espoused by a particular group of people or setting. Institutions of higher education exercise

cultural artifacts through similar physical (buildings/objects), verbal (acronyms/sayings), and behavioral (rituals/traditions) properties. These properties make up the institutional culture of a college campus (Kuh & Whitt, 1988). Similarly, culture is observed in a museum through displayed labels, etiquette, and artifacts.

### *The Big Idea*

Culture in a museum is observed through verbal communication, behaviors, and material culture, also known as artifacts. Descriptions and stories of objects communicate a *verbal* form of culture through written, audio, and visual labeling. The museum etiquette of looking and not touching an object on display is an example of a *behavioral* culture widely practiced and enforced in most museums. *Artifacts* are defined as “any object made by human work” (Merriam-Websters Collegiate Dictionary, 2007, p. 80). Thus, collections of paintings, sculptures, photographs, scientific instruments, furniture, and other objects comprise *material* culture: artifacts. These verbal, behavioral, and physical manifestations of culture are tied together by a *big idea*.

Working at the museum, I learned that the first priority when organizing an exhibition is developing a clear and specific *big idea*. A big idea describes what an exhibition will and will not be about. It is also specific and unique to a single exhibit. It does not confuse, complicate, or provide all the answers to patrons; rather, a big idea is provocative, evocative, and most importantly clear. Serrel (1996) believed the big idea can be a theme, story, or a goal setting the tone and limits to the content in an exhibit. A big idea could be to use historical, scientific, artistic, or cultural interest artifacts to communicate the message of what it means and has meant to be human. College campuses have a very similar big idea.

College campuses share and express subtle and blatant meanings of what it is and has meant to be a college student. This meaning begins to form when students take their first step onto a physical campus such as UVM. Broussard (2009) called this process branding - an identifying marker that makes a college campus unique and different from all other college campuses and experiences. College branding communicates what a particular college campus is and will be about. UVM's Common Ground, for example, is a type of branding that makes UVM a unique campus for prospective students to consider when applying for college. Therefore, the Common Ground is UVM's big idea.

### *The Common Ground at UVM*

Unlike its mission, vision, or strategic goal statement, the Common Ground is a community agreement centered on how to create and foster a campus environment valuing respect, integrity, innovation, openness, justice, and responsibility (UVM,

2009b). The Common Ground communicates what the campus is about and what it aspires to achieve. In a sense, it acts as a guide for the academic, extracurricular, and behavioral attributes on campus. Like a museum exhibit, the Common Ground is a big idea communicating what being a member of the UVM campus will and will not be about. UVM's big idea became very clear to me after walking down the main campus green and coming across three sculptures.

### Sculptures

UVM is rich in providing physical artifacts that “visually assert their history...to commemorate important events [and] acknowledge individuals who [helped shape the institution’s] development” (UVM, 2001). Architecture, green landscapes, public art and monuments fashion the school’s big idea. I took an interest in the sculptures surrounding the main campus green of UVM because they share the same space with students, creating a physical relationship between sculpture and viewer, “which is not without psychological consequences” (Selz, 1963, p. 12). This physical and psychological connection creates an opportunity to explore what it is and has meant to be a student at UVM. Read (1969) described sculptures as physical artifacts challenging viewers to create meanings from what is *seen* while also challenging viewers to reflect on what is *not* seen (p. 25). Sculptures command attention by their mere presence but what do they present aside from the material from which they are made?

Sculptures in a collection are “developed with cleverness and creativity, sharing a cohesive and logical relationship to each other” (Serrel, 1996, p. 5). Nine pieces make up UVM’s sculpture collection (see appendix), three of which resemble historical human figures: the Marquis de LaFayette (Figure 9), John Purple Howard (Figure 5), and Ira Allen (Figure 4). At first, the ordinary presence of these sculptures bothered me but I was not sure why. After working at the Fleming, I realized that the presence of these sculptures on campus today represented how UVM had not always been uniformly accessible to those interested in higher education. I did not see myself reflected in these sculptures that communicated time periods where my college campus mostly served students, faculty, and other affiliates who were predominantly White, male, and belonged to the upper socio-economic class. These sculptures reminded me of how Read, Archer, and Leathwood (2003) believed institutional culture and history are not uniformly accessed or experienced on college campuses (p. 261). For a moment, these sculptures reminded me that UVM was not initially meant for people like me: Latino and from a poor socio-economic class.

As I walked away from the sculptures I realized the meanings of being part of the UVM community have evolved over time. While the three sculptures did not communicate a history capturing the experiences of underrepresented groups, the

sculptures did communicate how the campus was founded and how much it has changed. The sculptures lent themselves to be more than just cultural artifacts; they were objects that were helping me learn about how to use the Common Ground as an administrator.

The 1997 *Campus Master Plan* (CMP) used the Common Ground as an overall philosophy guiding the preservation, enhancement, and use of the university's distinctive landscape features, like the sculptures. The CMP recognizes "historic buildings and structures (e.g. sculptures) of the University contribute to an understanding of identity and history" (UVM, 1997). Part of communicating an accurate account of UVM's identity and history is unveiling how the campus was not always inclusive, evident in the prominent three sculptures. However, the sculpture collection could become more representative of UVM's increasingly diverse learning community by introducing new public art pieces. The story of the Ira Allen Chapel and sculpture is an example of how history can be reclaimed.

### *Reclaiming History*

Marshall (1991) told a story of a wealthy businessman named James B. Wilbur who became UVM's most generous benefactor between 1919 and 1929. Wilbur made several monetary donations helping fund the construction of the Ira Allen Chapel and the Ira Allen sculpture (Figure 4). Unveiling Ira Allen's sculpture was very important for Wilbur. He "believed...historians had neglected Ira Allen's role in founding Vermont and its university" (Marshall, p. 62). The sculpture now prominently stands tall in the main campus green as an example of history reclaimed. Informed by Manning (1994), I see this story as an example of how an old form of institutional culture can be used to express the quintessential messages of the campus culture.

New sculptures can be commissioned to contribute another layer to the campus history, one that includes the untold stories of those UVM students who are not represented on the foreground of the college campus through its old forms of culture (sculptures). These new objects could provide prospective students and alumni/ae a more "wholesome sense of history, continuity, and future" of their college campus (UVM, 1997). For example, detailed on UVM's webpage is a bulleted list of traditions of equality (UVM, 2009a). The campus has a history of being "an early advocate of both women's and African American's participation in higher education" (UVM, 2009a). However, if the campus defied custom and admitted women and African Americans throughout history, how is it that the artwork commemorating these student pioneers is absent?

This is an open-ended question that is difficult to answer; however, a possible solution would be for campus leaders to consider commissioning artwork that

expresses the untold histories of some underrepresented but distinguished alumni/ae. Asking questions similar to the one in the previous paragraph allows for multiple solutions to be voiced in order to solve a legitimate campus issue. In this case, I was asking open-ended questions framed around objects: the sculptures. I learned this form of teaching at the museum and found it particularly helpful in creating a learning environment in and outside the classroom.

### Teaching with Objects

Object-based pedagogy is a commonly used form of museum teaching that guides students to explore the ideas behind material culture and its relationship to other objects, people, eras, and ideas. It starts when educators carefully develop a big idea and then select objects to help evoke exploration that will be “dependent on the students sharing their [own] questions...thoughts and ideas...and answers” (Alvarado & Herr, 2003, p. 17). For example, if I want to teach about the Victorian Era, I need to carefully select objects clearly serving and exploring this period of time in history. Next, I must develop questions that help guide my students or audience to arrive at an understanding of a big idea. Alvarado and Herr (2003) encourage asking open-ended questions, since these questions do not detract from students directing their own course of learning.

After working at the museum, I created a lesson plan on how sculptures are part of a learning environment in or outside the classroom by anyone interested in exploring institutional culture, artifacts, and object-based pedagogy. I believe the following lesson plan is helpful in a number of ways: teaching higher education culture, working on commissions to update/renew tangible properties of the college campus, and residential advisor’s programming related to campus resources. For student affairs professionals particularly, this lesson plan is an excellent way to respond to NASPA’s (1987) expectation of creating “opportunities for students to expand their aesthetic and cultural appreciation” (p.13). Moreover, this lesson plan is an example of an intentional way to use campus sculptures in and outside the classroom.

### *Using Sculptures*

My lesson plan explores how environments can shape “attitudes...and the quality of the college experience” (NASPA, 1987, p. 10). Treat your campus sculptures as learning objects that can engage the campus community in or outside the classroom. Carefully select the sculptures (or objects) that clearly serve and explore your syllabi’s aim, commission project, program topic/theme, etc. Next, develop open-ended questions that direct your audience (students, co-workers, residents) to create their own course of learning by playfully answering your questions. Generally, I begin with who, what, when, and where questions, followed by questions

asking why and how. These last two questions are more complicated to answer or solve. An example of a “how” question is: how do UVM’s sculptures fit or do not fit with the Common Ground? You can further this lesson by complicating and introducing a new but related big idea. For example, you can ask: how is the Common Ground used to make policy, decisions, and tackle controversial issues? Is it used at all? The learning associated with object-based pedagogy is “focused on a process rather than an outcome” (Leinhardt, Crawley, & Knutson, 2002, p. 262). Play with the lesson plan and see what happens.

### Conclusion

Museums and higher education are not just storehouses for cultural artifacts and meanings. They are organic environments where communities congregate and learn about the past, present, and future. UVM’s sculptures should not just enhance the Common Ground but be an integral part of its values. Toma, Dubrow, and Hartley’s (2005) article on strengthening institutional culture claims the best performing institutions are the ones with well-defined values and with clear symbols, narratives, and practices that articulate them. The sculptures are vehicles driving UVM’s institutional culture - but it is not clear whether they are currently moving forward or backward. If sculptures solicit an understanding of history at UVM at a deeper level, the possibility for that understanding to carry over in other forms of institutional culture can begin to make other richer connections for the campus community.

### Epilogue

“No matter what, continue to do your art.” These were the words a former colleague of mine shared with me as she reconnected with her roots as an off-Broadway theater actress while she pursued a high-level administrative position at a medium-sized public university. She encouraged me to stay true to my creative and imaginative self and cultivated in me the confidence to never compromise any part of my artistic identity. I remember seeing her “inner actress” come out as she courageously advocated for affirmative action, equal opportunity, diversity, and equity at her institution. I remember silently admiring her from afar and being honored to have her as a role model.

As I concluded my intertwining of museums and the college campus, I realized I had yet to interlace two important and personal punctuations of my life. Punctuation marks are often used in writing to separate sentences, connect elements, and create meaning. Unlike the terminating properties of the period punctuation mark, writing this article was more like embracing the linking qualities of the hyphen punctuation mark. This article was my way of exploring the connections between my identity as an artist and educator. I believe art *can* create meaningful learning

environments for students and their communities. These are my vocational passions and where my true self nestles and thrives. As I envision myself walking across the stage during commencement and receiving my master's degree this May, I have two hopes for those future artists who see themselves working in the field of higher education and student affairs administration. My two hopes are for those readers to continue working on their art and find ways of incorporating their talents into their daily work as practitioners. And above all else, always be their creative selves.



## References

- Alvarado, A. E., & Herr, P. R. (2003). In Birdsall, M. (Ed.), *Inquiry-based learning using everyday objects: Hands-on instructional strategies that promote active learning in grades 3-8*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Broussard, E. (2009). The power of place on campus. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 55(34), 12-17.
- Kuh, G.D., & Whitt, E.J. (1988). The invisible tapestry: Cultures in American colleges and universities. *Association for the Study of Higher Education-Education Resources Information Center, Higher Education Report [ASHE-ERIC]* 17(1). Washington, DC: Association for the Study of Higher Education
- Leinhardt, G., Crowley, K., & Knutson, K. (2002). *Learning conversations in museums*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Marshall, J. D. (c1991). *Universitas Viridis Montis, 1791-1991: An exhibition of documents and artifacts telling the story of the University of Vermont*. Burlington, VT: University of Vermont.
- Merriam-Websters Collegiate Dictionary (11<sup>th</sup> ed.). 2007. Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster.
- National Association of Student Personnel Administrators. (1987). *A perspective on student affairs*. National Association of Student Personnel Administrators. Washington, DC.
- Read, H. (1969). The image of man. *The art of sculpture* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Read, B., Leethwood, C., Archer, L. (2003). Challenging cultures? Student conceptions of 'belonging' and 'isolation' at a post-1992 university. *Studies in Higher Education*, 28(3). doi:10.1080/03075070310000113397
- Selz, J. (1963). *Modern sculpture: Origins and evolution* (Annette Michelson Trans.). New York, NY: G. Braziller.
- Serrell, B. (1996). *Exhibit labels: An interpretive approach*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Toma, J. D., Dubrow, G., & Hartley, M. (2005). *The uses of institutional culture: Strengthening identification and building brand equity in higher education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- University of Vermont. (1997). *The University of Vermont 1997 campus master plan*. Burlington, VT: University of Vermont.
- University of Vermont. (2009a). *History and tradition: About UVM*. Retrieved October 31, 2009, from [http://www.uvm.edu/about\\_uvm/?Page=history/default.html&SM=historysubmenu.html](http://www.uvm.edu/about_uvm/?Page=history/default.html&SM=historysubmenu.html)
- University of Vermont. (2009b). *Our Common Ground*. Retrieved October 31, 2009, from [http://www.uvm.edu/nfo/administration/?Page=administration\\_factsandstats\\_common.php&SM=administration\\_submenu\\_factsandstats.html](http://www.uvm.edu/nfo/administration/?Page=administration_factsandstats_common.php&SM=administration_submenu_factsandstats.html)

Appendix



*Figure 1.* Aschenbach, P. (1960-1).  
The Tree of Knowledge [metal  
sculpture]. Photographed by  
Salomon Rodezno.



*Figure 2.* Brown, J. (1989/1993).  
Lamentations [recycled scrap  
steel sculpture]. Photographed by  
Salomon Rodezno.



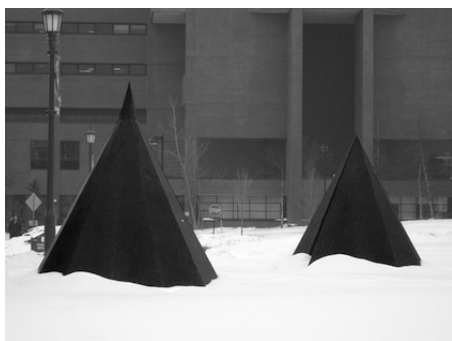
*Figure 3.* Erdman, R. (2010). Pri-  
mavera [bronze sculpture]. Pho-  
tographed by Salomon Rodezno.



*Figure 4.* Fry, S. (1921). Ira Allen [bronze sculpture]. Photographed by Salomon Rodezno.



*Figure 5.* Hartley, J. (1883). John Purple Howard [bronze sculpture]. Photographer unknown.



*Figure 6.* Smith, G. (1990-91). Kindred Spirits [steel sculpture]. Photographed by Salomon Rodezno.



*Figure 7.* Sparling, D. (1998).  
UVM Catamount [bronze sculpture]. Photographed by Salomon Rodezno.



*Figure 8.* Unknown artist. (1848).  
UVM Boulder [granite]. Photographed by Salomon Rodezno.



*Figure 9.* Ward, J.Q.A. (1883).  
Marquis de LaFayette [bronze sculpture]. Photographed by Salomon Rodezno.

## Dominant Scholarship: White Neocolonialism and Academic Integrity

Katelyn M. Sadler

*Academic integrity policy sets scholarly guidelines for the style and quality of original work expected in academic pursuits. This policy derives from intellectual property laws, which aim to protect authors, but these guidelines and policies exclude and disadvantage certain students based on the preconceived notion that all authors come from a context where individual work is prized above the collective. Academic integrity is founded on dominant White ideas of rugged individualism. As a result, academic integrity policies with narrow definitions of plagiarism collude in assimilating students of color and international students into an educational environment that excludes their stories and alternative forms of expression. By integrating post-colonial theories with post-modern technological discourses of authorship, this article deconstructs the limitations of traditional institutional policies stressing academic integrity and explore the experiences of the students who are systematically disempowered in the practical implementation of this policy in the classroom.*

Academic integrity policies at colleges and universities have faced massive evolution in recent years due to increasing conflict over how to define intellectual property in the digital age and over how best to assist students in learning. In forming academic integrity policies, colleges and universities model their policies on existing intellectual property laws and educational precedents. These very policies and precedents, as well as the universities themselves, are based on White European systems of property ownership and education and continue to be formulated in a way to further a corporate, neoliberal economic agenda worldwide. White cultural values have worked their way into these laws and practices (Sunder, 2006), and these values moderate the way students of a variety of identities interact with their course material and define scholarship. Current manifestations of academic integrity policies and intellectual property on university campuses narrow the access points for learning and create an environment that places individual, non-

---

*Katelyn M. Sadler is a second-year graduate student in the University of Vermont's Higher Education and Student Affairs Program, and serves as the Assistant Residence Director to Jeanne Mance Trinity. Katelyn graduated from the University of Arizona in 2009 with a Bachelor's of Arts in Media Arts, and with a background in Anthropology and English. Katelyn is interested in exploring social justice and inequality through the lens of art and self-expression, along with being interested in a great many other things.*

collaborative work above work that utilizes new technologies, universal design, group work-shopping, and dual-authorship in the classroom. This environment naturally benefits White, dominant identity students coming from a paradigm of individual, competitive learning and disadvantages students of color and international students who may come from more collective cultures, where work and storytelling are done more collaboratively.

### Methodology

Using the University of Vermont's academic integrity policy as a case study, I aim to analyze the limitations of current academic integrity policies and whom, and what kind of work, these policies exclude. I utilize postcolonial theory as a framework to analyze how these academic integrity policies impact historically colonized and displaced people by incorporating the current manifestation of neocolonial education and intellectual property. An analysis of White culture and how academic integrity policies emphasize values inherent in White culture, reveals how issues of individual authorship, and the written word as property, subvert the possibilities for creative and revolutionary multicultural, multidisciplinary work. Critical race theory and writings on Web 2.0 culture provide guides to alternative forms of learning and policy making that emphasize collective work and storytelling over a traditional emphasis on individual intellectual property ownership. Grounded in the language of UVM's academic integrity policy, these theoretical frameworks aim to critically examine which voices canonized academic methods ignore.

### Academic Integrity Policy, Definitions, and an Overview of the Issues

Much like most universities, the University of Vermont has an explicit code regulating the creation of academic work within the classroom. This academic integrity policy lays out institutional expectations for students around plagiarism, collusion, fabrication, and cheating, and sets proper standards for accepted forms of academic work (University of Vermont Dean of Students, 2009).

The academic work supported by codes of academic integrity translates almost exclusively into work by individual authors. The University of Vermont's code clearly states that collaborative work will only be acceptable if the professor explicitly specifies that partnerships or group work are preferred for a certain project (University of Vermont Dean of Students, 2009). Any other form of collaborative work is labeled collusion, and both authors can be held responsible for violation of the University's policies. The almost exclusive focus on individual work, unless otherwise mandated, upholds a one-dimensional form of scholarship that, as discussed later, promotes a dominant perspective that alienates people with subordinate identities and often pushes students into cheating and plagiarizing. Group work, in essence, is tacked on as a method to promote teamwork in an

individualistic structure. In the few times I have personally engaged in collaborative work for a class, the presentations have largely benefited from the diversity of voices at the table. When it came to writing papers however, they turned out disjointed and awkward because, as a student, my group mates and I were not taught how to write as a collective. We were too busy writing as individuals to find a communal voice. Academic integrity policies that promote only one kind of learning and writing limit forms of expression that promote diversity and provide access points for people who work well individually or come from a more collective culture. The pressure to perform and produce original, individual work has an impact on students of both dominant and subordinated identities.

Under this academic integrity policy, any work not cited properly as the product of another author is assumed to be original work by the student. Any violation of this assumption is considered plagiarism (University of Vermont Dean of Students, 2009). If a student borrows from another work, from a paper to a piece of music, even to create something new out of the individual pieces, this must be acknowledged in the newly created work. There are limitations and benefits to this policy. The rights of the individual author are protected and the system maintains a certain standard of academic excellence and consistency of citation allowing more consistent student assessment. Papers become more unified, identical products, rather than fluctuating, imperfect, and compositional experiments for students. Storytelling is not the focus, but instead a brand of professional writing is forwarded that is scholarly and respected, and promotes an argument of the head that is separate from the heart. Innovation in this system is limited, since proper form must always be upheld. Proper citation is constructed as normal in White American culture, but there are other cultures, China is one of them, where quoting a famous academic without giving proper citation is a sign of respect (Redden, 2010). On an individual university level the implications of academic assimilation are minimal, since students attending the university have agreed to embrace the values of that institution merely by attending. On a system wide scale, though, the global standardization of the definition and prioritization of plagiarism as a value has a much more devious history, which has promoted a Western-centric brand of educational expression.

One of the most alarming things about plagiarism is how often students practice it. Sixty-eight percent of students openly admit to having committed at least one academic offense in their college career (Oomen-Early & Murphy, 2009). Cheating and incidences of self-plagiarism, where the student copies bits of their own previous work verbatim, are also increasing. Faculty and researchers are also engaging in this behavior, not just students (Zirkel, 2010). The current academic integrity policies are not working. Research has shown that educating students on plagiarism and cheating, and working with students to update these policies are the most effective mechanisms for solving these issues (Redden, 2010). Policy change



that creates a more culturally conscious view of how different communities regulate and value intellectual property is critical in academic integrity policies. This process has begun in the wider scope of intellectual property law through the advocacy of lawyers and through the creation of communities like Creative Commons (2010), but has not trickled down to academics in creating policies that support collective, innovative, and expressive work. Universities themselves are only just beginning to join the movement towards Open Education Resources (OER).

### White Culture and “Rugged Individualism”

In order to examine how policy change must occur, a look at the underpinnings of White cultural values within current policy is vital. The connections between the values of White culture, as defined by psychologist Judith Katz (1985), and the values promoted by academic integrity policies align in several ways.

Current policy upholds a traditional Cartesian pedagogy, based on hierarchy and individual learning, where students do not work together and discuss material, and individual authorship is sanctified (Tapscott & Williams, 2010).

In these constructions of authorship, the writer is represented as an autonomous individual who creates fictions with an imagination free of all constraint. For such an author, everything in the world must be made available and accessible as an idea that can be transformed into his expression which thus becomes his work. Through his labour, he makes these ideas his own; his possession and control over the work is justified by his expressive activity. (Coombe, 1993, p. 9)

The Cartesian method of authorship is extremely troubling, not just because of its constraints on pedagogy, but because of its foundations in White culture's emphasis on rugged individualism, which focuses on individual control and responsibility and rewards independence and autonomy (Katz, 1985). Hsu (1972), an early social scientist, pointed to White America's emphasis on self-reliance as a deep-seated root to many of its social problems, and pointed out how laws and policies protect White interests and values such as autonomy and competition. Ironically, the pressure to succeed or win as an individual often leads students to violate these academic integrity policies. Students are caught between two contrasting requirements of White culture – the need to be self-reliant, and the fact that in order to succeed sometimes help from peers is required.

As mentioned above, current policies uphold a set of concrete requirements for scholarly work requiring adequate citations. Academic integrity policies do not specify what kind of citation. But these policies promote a paper format supported by logical arguments, where outside work is paramount to substantiate any arguments or assertions made by the author. A focus on rational thought, separated



from emotion, fits within Katz's (1985) observation that White culture values objective, linear thinking, and stringently controls emotion. By promoting the need for logic, emotional and reflective writing has taken on a secondary, trivialized place in academics. Students that excel in relating their ideas through emotions and personal story do not receive praise or support for their personal writing.

Policies rooted in White culture define "normative assumptions from which a particular group is seen to deviate" (Carter, Gushue, & Weitzman, 1994, p. 186), and the academic integrity policy is not an exception. Academic integrity policies exemplify how colleges and universities have institutionalized dominant White values about what property is and have limited access to higher education by perpetuating a dominant view of acceptable work.

### Promoting Neocolonialism: Assimilation of Academic Integrity Policies

Under the current system, academic integrity policies disenfranchise students of color and international students operating from a different paradigm. They do so by perpetuating a narrow formula of the type of work accepted at the academy. In practice and in theory, the current code is limiting for many students. People of color entering the university setting from outside the rugged individual paradigm do not find a place at the table. In many cases, people of color must assimilate their work to the expectations laid out, or they find their collaborative or collective cultural works unprotected and unacknowledged. There are many documented incidents of governmental entities, in some cases universities, co-opting indigenous cultural work as their own. For instance, in Canada in the early nineties, First Nation peoples lobbied for state and governmental bodies to give them collective intellectual property rights over their representation in public settings, including in university scholarship (Coombe, 1993). Since many of these oral traditions, art pieces, and writings have collective authorship, without a properly documented single author, indigenous peoples have had no legal recourse under traditional intellectual property laws (Coombe, 1993). Since the 1990s when the flaws of this system were pointed out, intellectual property has expanded to address identity politics, but university academic integrity policies have not adapted along with the law to include collective work (Sunder, 2006). Many policies continue to be devoted to the traditional conception of what makes a legitimate text.

Outside of the United States (US), a form of cultural colonialism is taking place. Rodney (2006), a postcolonial scholar, writes extensively about how European nations used colonial education in Africa to promote a stratified society to further capitalistic enterprise. He points out that the European focus on individualism promoted the justification of an individual property holder's rights to exploit Africans, those without rights (Rodney, 2006). What Rodney wrote in the 1960s still resonates today. Rather than Western nations having political control over

colonial education though, today's educational neocolonialism is about economics and culture (Carnoy & Rhoten, 2002). Thomas and Postlethwaite (1984) define neocolonialism as "politically independent people of a developing nation continuing to be bound, though voluntarily and perhaps through necessity, to a European or American society" (p.13). Education still is a tool for capitalism and neocolonialism. The monolithic idea of individualism continues the discourse of colonial expansion by institutionalizing individualism in the way the US and other nation's teachers educate (Kussuraw, 1999). Neocolonialist education has stakeholders with their own economic interests in play around education and intellectual property. WorldBank now coordinates most literacy education in developing nations in exchange for neoliberal economic policies (Carnoy & Rhoten, 2002). In forming trade agreements with other nations, the US has mandated that these countries must implement traditional intellectual property rights laws (Maskus, 2000). Policies like this one enforce traditional academic integrity laws, and uphold traditional scholarship and intellectual property interchange within a new discourse of economic and cultural exploitation.

Western higher education also spreads its values of individualism and academic integrity globally through satellite colleges in countries around the world. Arms of liberal arts colleges and research institutions emerge around the globe, from New York University's branch in Abu Dhabi, to Bard College's expansion into Russia, South Africa, and Jerusalem (Redden, 2009). Even universities from other countries are instituting traditional Western education on a global scale, with universities from South Korea and Saudi Arabia also erecting new branches in other nations (Jascik, 2010). Only one university across the world comes from a tradition outside of Western education: Al-Ahzar in Egypt founds its principles on Islamic scriptures and serves as both a place of spiritual and higher education learning (Amin, 2007). Almost all other universities are founded on a Western formation of the university.

This trend becomes problematic when thinking about academic integrity, scholarship, and student expression. Cultures that are traditionally collective in nature, such as the Japanese, are adopting more aspects of White American values, often through coercion (Temin, 1997). Students who traditionally view collective work as paramount now work in a system where the individual is the only form of measurement. Under Western education, only one form of intellectual property protection is exercised and "virtually all cultures have their own knowledge-protection protocols or conventions" (Oguamanam, 2003, p. 136). Current systems of academic integrity do not take into account indigenous values and cultural differences from place to place when it comes to knowledge-protection. The globalization of academic integrity means that local communities no longer monitor and mediate their own disputes around intellectual property. This not only affects the indigenous people, but it has a significant impact on the college's own economic

success. Centenary College's satellite M.B.A. program in China had to shut down following a series of plagiarism by students (Redden, 2010). Centenary could not adequately follow up with the students and hold them accountable to its academic integrity policies because it was coming from a completely different paradigm of ownership and encountered a cultural dissonance. If colleges do not adapt academic integrity policies to be more culturally relevant to their clients, then these institutions run the risk of being financially unsuccessful, as well as silencing the voices and values of the populations they serve. Rigid academic integrity policies promoting the supremacy of individual work continue the tradition of colonialism into institutions of higher education, which damages all entities involved. This does particular disservice to students who should be given a place to voice their stories, learn from their classmates, and form academic communities. Ultimately, change is vital to be inclusive of all student voices.

### Critical Race Theory and Web 2.0

Change to academic integrity policies must emphasize the potential for collective work and alternative authorship and storytelling. Storytelling is one of the key tenets to Critical Race Theory (CRT), a form of scholarship that comments on how race is constructed and analyzes how a dominant White narrative marginalizes people of color (Ladson-Billings, 1998). CRT "utilizes storytelling to analyze myths, presuppositions, and received wisdoms that make up common culture about race," and believes storytelling provides a place to voice alternative narratives, which are systematically silenced (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 11). By utilizing collective storytelling in an academic setting, dominant values of White culture inherent in traditional academic integrity policies will hopefully slowly disintegrate.

The only currently acknowledged challenge to traditional academic integrity policy that does involve collective storytelling and work is new technology (which comes with its own issues of access), but the limited use of web forms in the classroom have not pressured significant changes. Most millennial students are literate collective authors in the Web 2.0 generation, and this interest convergence could pressure policy change that would allow more access to people hoping to express their cultural background more freely (Gray, Sheard, & Hamilton, 2010). From Facebook to Twitter, social networking online has given rise to new forms of collaboration and authorship (Gray, Sheard, & Hamilton, 2010). Professors are the ones hesitating to join this trend. Many professors do not know how to assess online collaborative work, and 65% of current faculty fear that they do not know how to enforce academic integrity policies in a digital age and therefore do not utilize online teaching techniques (Gray, Sheard, & Hamilton, 2010; Oomen-Early & Murphy, 2009). Training is necessary for these professionals, but so is a clarification and re-framing of current policy.

The current system stressing individual original work puts undue strain, not only on students of color and international students, but also on White students, particularly of the technological generation. Access to the Internet limits who can participate in online learning, but the forms of cultural expression open up greatly in this medium. For instance, under digital technologies, music has become much more liberated. Musicians sample from other people's work, and entire mash-ups of derivative work become popular without any original content (Gunkel, 2008). Imagine if this was the case at places of higher education. Students would sample each other's work, add to it, and create new, more innovative forms of writing. Rather than each article and author existing in a separate universe, a community of writers creating texts together might form. This is the goal of Creative Commons (2010), a community of artists, authors, and policy makers who actively share their work and allow others to sample pieces in their own work. Creative Commons currently advocates for the principle of Open Educational Resources (OER) in higher education, which has only been taken up by a few institutions, including the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). OER is a growing collective group of work, including textbooks, lesson plans, and articles, shared by universities that are "freely available to use, remix, and redistribute" the work as they see fit (Creative Commons, 2010). However, this vision of collective scholarship and shared knowledge will only get off the ground if institutions look critically at their academic integrity policies, and institutionalize a dedication to open scholarship.

### Conclusion

In practice, academic integrity, as it currently stands, alienates students of color and some international students who may come from more collective societies and limits the possibilities of collaboration between student authors. This dominant White paradigm, established based on rugged individualism and competition, compels students and teachers within academics to hold rigid standards for who can participate in the writing process and what the final product can look like. Writing a reformed policy liberating authorship and form from traditional intellectual property laws will aid greatly in creating inclusive classroom communities. Using CRT as a guide toward collective authorship and storytelling, and utilizing technology as a medium for building a community of open scholarship and scholars, educators must reexamine how their institutions construct and enforce academic integrity policies in a neocolonialist world.

## References

- Amin, H.A. (2007). Al-Azhar University, Cairo: The world's oldest university and Sunni Islam's foremost seat of learning. *Islam for Today*. Retrieved from <http://www.islamfortoday.com/alazhar.htm>
- Carnoy, M. & Rhoten, D. (2002). What does globalization mean for educational change? A comparative approach. *Comparative Education Review*, 46(1), 1-9.
- Carter, R.T. Gushue, G.V., & Weitzman, L.M. (1994). White racial identity development and work values. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 44, 185-197.
- Coombe, R.J. (1993). Cultural and intellectual properties: Occupying the colonial imagination. *Political and Legal Anthropology Review*, 16(1), 8-15.
- Creative Commons. (2010). Education. Retrieved from <http://creativecommons.org/education>
- Gray, K.G., Sheard, J. & Hamilton, M. (2010). Students as Web 2.0 authors: Implications for assessment design and conduct. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, 26(1), 105-122.
- Gunkel, D.J. (2008). Rethinking the digital remix: Mash-ups and the metaphysics of sound recording. *Popular Music and Society*, 31(4), 489-510.
- Hsu, F.L.K. (1972). *Psychological Anthropology*. Morristown, NJ: Shenkman Books.
- Jascik, S. (2010, April 5). The great brain race. *Inside Higher Ed*. Retrieved from <http://www.insidehighered.com/layout/set/print/news/2010/04/05/wildavsky>
- Katz, J. (1985). The sociopolitical nature of counseling. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 13, 615-624.
- Kusserow, A.S. (1999). De-homogenizing American individualism: Socializing hard and soft individualism in Manhattan and Queens. *Ethos*, 27(2), 210-234.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 11(1), 7-24.
- Maskus, K.E. (2000). *Intellectual property rights in the global economy*. Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics.
- Oguamanam, C. (2003). Localizing intellectual property in the globalization epoche: The integration of indigenous knowledge. Unpublished paper contributed to Association of Pacific Rim Universities 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, Mexico City, Mexico.
- Oomen-Early, J. & Murphy, L. (2009). Self-actualization and e-learning: A qualitative investigation of university faculty's perceived needs for effective online instruction. *International Journal on E-Learning*, 8(2), 223-240.
- Redden, E. (2009, February 16). The liberal arts, abroad. *Inside Higher Ed*. Retrieved from <http://www.insidehighered.com/layout/set/print/news/2009/02/16/liberalarts>
- Redden, E. (2010, July 27). Policing plagiarism abroad. *Inside Higher Ed*.

Retrieved from <http://www.insidehighered.com/layout/set/print/news/2010/07/27/china>

Rodney, W. (2006). How Europe underdeveloped Africa. In P.S. Rothenburg (Ed.), *Beyond borders: Thinking critically about global issues*, (pp. 107-125). New York, NY: Worth Publishers.

Sunder, M. (2006). IP<sup>3</sup>. *Stanford Law Review*, 59(2), pp. 257-332.

Tapscott, D. & Williams, A.D. (2010). Innovating the 21<sup>st</sup>-century university: It's time. *Educause Review*, 17-29.

Temin, P. (1997). Is it kosher to talk about culture? *The Journal of Economic History*, 57(2), 267-287.

Thomas, R. M., & Postlethwaite, T. N. (1984). *Schooling in the Pacific Islands*. Oxford, UK: Pergamon.

University of Vermont Dean of Students. (2009, July 1). *Code of academic integrity*. Retrieved from <http://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/acadintegrity.pdf>

Zirkel, P.A. (2010, December 3). A study of self-plagiarism. *Inside Higher Ed*. Retrieved from <http://www.insidehighered.com/layout/set/print/views/2010/12/03/zirkel>



## 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 31st 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.

## Embracing the Artist and Discovering the Scholar Practitioner

Lacretia Johnson Flash

Remembering Your Essence

For more than a decade, my sensibility as an artist and my approach as a student affairs professional in higher education have been deeply interwoven. Through both roles, I am able to find the space in which to create and discover new ways of bringing together disparate elements into a cohesive and elegant whole. The work of the artist is to take an idea or vision and to turn that vision into something that can be seen and experienced. For the artist, this is done with art materials, tools, skills, an ability to conceptualize something new, and a willingness to take risks. I believe that this approach as an artist is also infused in my practice as an administrator. Though the materials and tools of the artist and administrator are very different, I have found that the spirit and joy underlying both sides of myself are the same.

My sensitivity to the arts was planted and nurtured during my early childhood. As a child I would spend hours cutting, coloring, and pasting the paper scraps from an old dress box that belonged to my mom. I loved taking whatever materials I could find (e.g., paper scraps, bits of cloth, pieces of yarn, beads, and crayons) to see what I could make. Hours of creating could pass without me noticing. Sometimes the result was a collage or a picture. Sometimes it was just a mess. No matter what came of my creative efforts (as a child and now as an adult), I experience great joy in the process of creating and experimenting with color, texture, and form. This joy has followed me throughout my childhood, college years, graduate school, and even more so now as an administrator.

---

*Dr. Lacretia Johnson Flash is the Assistant Dean for Conduct, Policy, and Climate in the Division of Student and Campus Life at the University of Vermont. Lacretia earned her doctorate in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies from the University of Vermont. From the University of Maryland at College Park, she earned degrees in College Student Personnel and in English Literature. In addition to her career in higher education, Lacretia has also served as an Artist-in-Residence with the Studio G program at Georgetown University Medical Center and Art is the Heart.*

*This reflection was written with excerpts taken from "The Artist and the Administrator" - Lacretia's admissions essay for the University of Vermont Educational Leadership and Policy Studies doctoral program*



I believe that the situations that challenge me the most intellectually, spiritually, and emotionally often give the most satisfaction upon resolution. I try to embrace the process of working through difficult problems under demanding constraints (e.g., time, resources, policies, and other parameters). Though in the immediate moment I may feel stuck, frustrated, perplexed, or overwhelmed, ultimately I am able to find my way through these moments by embracing the spirit and process of the artist.

### The Art of Being a Practitioner

As I move through professional work challenges, I use many of the same principles and processes that I use as an artist. Instead of working with a set of artists' tools, I work with teams of staff and students. Instead of using paper, paint, beads, and fiber, I draw on my experiences and knowledge. Rather than a frame or canvas on which my art is contained, I work within a framework of political, organizational, social, and economic contexts. Instead of using an aesthetic vision as my guide, I move forward with a sense of personal and institutional values, mission, and purpose. And rather than creating a sculptural piece or collage, my products are programs, interventions, policies, or new approaches to my work.

I believe that being a practitioner or administrator in higher education is profoundly creative and deeply satisfying work. In moments of great stress and high-stakes decisions, remembering my essence as an artist has helped keep me grounded, centered, and productive.

### The Necessity of Naïveté

I have been a full-time higher education professional for more than a decade. My early professional career in higher education focused on service-learning and community service in both the academic affairs and student affairs contexts. I now serve as the Assistant Dean for Conduct, Policy, and Climate at the University of Vermont.

I look back on my early years as a master's student and young professional with humility. I entered into my graduate program with great hopes, intentions, and a deep willingness to learn. My master's education was essential in helping me to acquire the knowledge and skills on which to anchor my professional practice. Through my years of working in higher education, I am constantly building upon a rich repertoire of experiences that test my knowledge and skills. As I have moved through my career, I have come to see the work of higher education as much more complicated, challenging, and yes, even rewarding than I did a decade ago.

One of my earliest memories as a graduate student was sitting in Marylu McEwen's Student Development Theory class at the University of Maryland. After reading about a particular student development theory, my classmates and I would often spend much of class critiquing the models and theories of respected scholars. We would impose our most vigorous scholarly lens and often criticize how a model or theory was created, tested, and applied. In hindsight, it was energizing and remarkably easy to harshly judge the work of people (who had spent years, decades, or a whole career carefully developing the models that have shaped our understanding of complex phenomena). Even though we had never created anything close to a model or theoretical framework, our lack of experience or knowledge did not hinder us from engaging in our "critiquefest."

In my second year of graduate study, I took Retention Theories taught by Sharon Fries-Britt. For our final project, we had to create our own model or theory of student retention. It was then I realized that theory and model building were remarkably difficult to do. For this project, I drew on everything that I knew and had learned, and came up with an unremarkable model of retaining commuter students. Through this project, I learned one of my most important life lessons — *It is much easier to tear something apart than it is to build it.*

After experiencing the critiques of my model, I became much more respectful and appreciative of the courage and effort that it takes to develop and share one's work. It also became very clear to me in that moment as a young pre-professional that graduate school was really just the beginning of a much longer journey of growing into the higher education professional and scholar that I might one day become.

#### Discovering the Scholar in the Practitioner

Years ago, I heard Susan Komives speak of the scholar practitioners as those higher education professionals who actively use scholarly work to inform their practice or to create scholarly work that benefits the field. This idea that there are higher education professionals who excel as both practitioners and scholars was deeply intriguing to me. I was curious about this professional identity, but at the time it was only a very distant possibility. Like so many other graduate students, I was just trying to make it to the end of the term with papers, readings, and projects while balancing the demands of my assistantship and personal life. Maybe my becoming a scholar practitioner would happen one day, but not in the near future.

By the completion of my master's degree I was exhausted and burnt out. I had chosen to engage in an additional year of coursework beyond what was required and wrote my master's thesis and a book chapter while working full time.

During this time, it was difficult to imagine ever pursuing a doctoral degree. The only way I would engage in doctoral work is if I came upon a question that was so compelling to me, that I would have no choice but to engage in the disciplined and intensive exploration afforded through doctoral study.

In the decade following my master's graduate school years, I find myself strongly drawn to the identity of the scholar practitioner. Much of this has resulted from years of contemplating the question of what does it mean to develop and assess multicultural competence in student affairs organizations. For me, this question remains complicated, persistent, and perplexing. Professionally, I have read many articles and books on the subject, attended workshops, served on committees, and engaged with colleagues on this topic. In 2006, my colleague and friend Jake Diaz asked me to join the Division of Student and Campus Life's Multicultural Competencies Evaluation Team. As we worked with the framework from Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller (2004), *Multicultural Competence in Student Affairs*, it was clear that assessing organizational multicultural competence is very difficult and made more difficult by the lack of validated instruments with which to do so.

In recent years, when I was a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies program at the University of Vermont, I decided to explore measuring multicultural competence in student affairs organizations using the model in Pope et al. (2004) for my final project in a quantitative research methods class with Bud Meyers. Each week, Professor Meyers would ask us to report on our progress. I would share my ideas, but I was never able to answer his question of what measurement instrument I would use to explore my question. I had always assumed an instrument was out there, but that I just could not find it.

Out of my growing frustration, I decided to call Amy Reynolds, a co-creator of the model, hoping she could help point me in the direction of an instrument based on the model. During our conversation, she revealed that neither she nor her colleagues had developed an instrument to operationalize the model. She was also unaware of anyone who was working on this. In a moment that I will never forget, I remember asking, "Would it be o.k. with you if I tried to develop an instrument from the model?" To my surprise, she said yes and quickly followed by saying, "Developing an instrument is a lot of work... let me know if I can help."

### Joining the Scholarly Community

The phone conversation with Amy changed my life and my professional identity from a consumer to a creator, from a practitioner to a scholar. Over the

next 2-3 years, I began the painstaking work of developing, testing, and refining an instrument called the Multicultural Competence in Student Affairs Organizations (MCSAO) questionnaire for my doctoral dissertation. Had I fully comprehended what Amy warned, I might have been scared off by the enormity of the task. To date, I have spent thousands of hours attempting to define and operationalize organizational multicultural competence in student affairs. As a result of this effort, I developed an instrument and tested it at more than 20 institutions across the U.S.

I believe that now the real work begins of sharing my work in new forums, subjecting my research to scholarly review, and using this instrument to answer new research questions. I anticipate that the MCSAO questionnaire will be a significant part of my life and professional identity for the duration of my career.

I still love creating mixed-media visual art, but as I look back on the last three years of my doctoral work and career, I realize that at the time, my research was my art. My tools were decidedly different. I had to learn new skills in survey research and statistical methods. I sacrificed vacations, cooking, socializing, and my identity as a visual artist for the joy of pursuing the answer to an important question in my profession. I gave up a lot, but also gained a lot by willingly immersing myself in new territory.

Now my professional journey is calling on me to understand and embrace my dual identity as a scholar practitioner. I love both. I am both. With this dual identity, I feel a profound responsibility to share what I am uncovering and to have the courage to put my work forward so, one day if I am lucky, my work too will be subject to vigorous discussion and critique by eager graduate students.

---

#### References

- Pope, R.L., Reynolds, A.L., & Mueller, J.A. (2004). *Multicultural competence in student affairs*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.



## 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 2010, the Kenneth P. Saurman Award was proudly presented to:

*Matthew J. Van Jura*

## **The Truth About Legacies: Three Salient Moments in the Life of a Young Professional**

Matthew J. Van Jura  
2010 Saurman Award Recipient

My younger sister, Hannah, is currently a junior at Ohio State. When she graduates, we'll share the same Alma Mater, just like we've attended the same preschool, elementary school, middle school, and high school.

As the younger sibling, Hannah grew up routinely hearing the expression, "Oh, you must be Matt's sister." It's no secret that she despises these comparisons. But she's done a fairly effective job of pursuing studies and forms of involvement that are completely different than my own in an attempt to negate any basis for comparison. Nevertheless, comparisons still come up from time to time, and when she applied to work at the Ohio Union during her first year at college, the barrage of questions regarding our family ties again resurfaced from my past supervisors, advisors, and friends.

As the big brother, I have never had to worry about these comparisons or struggle to forge an identity separate from that of an older sibling. But last fall, while attending the Association of College Unions International (ACUI) Region 7 Conference I took an open seat at a breakfast table occupied by a group of students from Ohio State. We introduced each other, asked how the other was enjoying the conference, and engaged in small talk. At one point I made a passing remark about my sister who works at the Ohio Union, when one of the student's eyes suddenly lit up with recognition. "Wait!" she exclaimed, "Are you Hannah's brother?" Sensing the irony of the moment, I inwardly laughed to myself. "Yes," I replied. "I'm Hannah's brother."

As I listened to this student recount all the interactions she has had with my sister and explain the nature of their friendship, something dawned upon me. My sister is a pretty big deal. Granted, this wasn't a total revelation to me. Growing up in the same household, I've always known how gifted she is. Rather, hearing so much praise from her peers made me appreciate how college has allowed Hannah

---

*Matthew Van Jura is a 2010 graduate from the University of Vermont's HESA Program. He is an alumnus of The Ohio State University, where his sister, Hannah, currently studies Vocal Performance. Hannah has starred as Julia in the lead role of "The Wedding Singer," Emmie in "Albert Herring," and last summer studied abroad with the American Institute of Musical Studies in Graz, Austria. Matt currently is a Program Advisor for University Unions at the University of Michigan.*

to develop the talents she's had from a young age, discover what she's passionate about, grow into her own skin, and become a role model that other students now look up to. Living on two separate campuses several hundred miles apart, I don't get to see that transformation play out every day and it gives me tremendous pride to know that my sister has found her fit and is building quite a legacy for herself.

### The Truth About Legacies

In one of my favorite Calvin and Hobbes strips, the scene begins with Calvin and his father stepping onto an escalator. As the two ascend to the next level, his father turns to Calvin and breaks the silence by telling a story. He tells Calvin about the days when he was a boy and his mom would take him to the department store. How he loved to ride the escalators. How they were wooden with small gaps between the slats, and made noises like, “click, clack, and creak.” How some were narrow and some were wooden, and how those escalators had so much more personality than the slick metal ones found in today's stores. The story ends and Calvin looks up at his father for a moment before thinking to himself, “I'd hate to think that all my current experiences will someday become stories with no point.”

As I sat at the breakfast table that morning listening to Hannah's coworkers speak about her accomplishments, the annoying brother in me had the urge to one-up my sister, and talk about “when I was a student.” Fighting this impulse, I couldn't help but think about this particular comic strip and picture myself as Calvin's father. I reminded myself that even though I was in these students' shoes less than three years ago, they neither knew about, nor probably cared, about my moments of triumph or the legacy that I worked so hard to achieve as a student. And that's okay. In that moment, it was a good thing to be known as Hannah's brother. Because this is her time to be in the spotlight.

Nevertheless, I began to think. Three years removed from being an undergrad I am known as “Hannah's brother.” Was this a sign that my legacy as a student leader had now faded? Beyond the learning outcomes, what was the lasting result of the countless hours invested in my organizations, campus job, classes, and leadership positions? How did I make meaning of my experience if I could no longer find tangible evidence of the impact I had on campus? The questions were cerebral, and actually did not cause me alarm or denial (although I was beginning to feel old). Yet three years ago, these questions would have constituted a crisis of identity.

So why wasn't this question of my legacy causing me greater concern? I pondered this throughout the weekend. I decided that the reason I was at peace stemmed from three specific moments of influence on my path from student leader, to HESA graduate student, and now first-time professional. Three stories that have allowed me to more fully understand my critical truth. Three lessons that have

helped to shape my values, find meaning in my new profession, and ultimately see my greatest successes in the triumphs of those around me.

( 1 )

During my first year of college, I experienced one of the most salient and influential moments from my time as an undergraduate. It came from a speech. At the conclusion of an otherwise uneventful hall council meeting, our advisor stood up to talk to us about the concept of leaving a legacy. Each of us had been given an opportunity, he told us. What we did with that opportunity was up to us. We could very easily wake up each morning and do the bare minimum of what was required to get through the day. We could spend the next four years, five years, or the rest of our lives focused on ourselves. Some people have little or no control over the circumstances that dictate the course of their lives. However, being first-year students, our choices were innumerable and we were privileged to be in the position to have these choices. He challenged us to demand more from ourselves, to lead lives of purpose, and to care about more than our own personal interests. He asked us to realize the opportunity we had as students to work each day toward creating a legacy. That way, when we left the university, we would leave it better than the way we found it.

This was an incredibly inspirational and motivating speech, and one that I took to heart. For the next four years, the speech became my mantra. Live with purpose, dedicate yourself to your community, leave a legacy. However, while I can trace the roots of my professional calling and many of my values back to that speech, my understanding of “legacy” has changed considerably.

Being charged with leaving a legacy motivated me. It got my butt out of bed each morning determined to make a difference, but for reasons that were not entirely altruistic. I believe there are many good changes that come about by striving to build one’s legacy. But at times I lost sight of my values. Sometimes I valued my legacy and my image more than the work that I was doing for my community.

For much of my time as a student leader, building a legacy through my own accomplishments was what I thought to be a critical truth. Yet as proud as I was of these accomplishments, over time I began to struggle when searching for meaning in these milestones. I would look at the names of past students, engraved on plaques throughout the student union, and wonder if in 30 years my legacy would affect students beyond serving as a trophy case decoration. Thinking more about those enshrined former student leaders, I felt that regardless of how well known they were to today’s students, to their peers and those who worked alongside them, their legacies lived on. And so, over time, my critical truth and understanding of “legacy” began to evolve.



My senior year of college soon came and brought with it a great amount of reflection. Grasping the finality of my time as a student, I struggled to put into words what I had done to leave campus better than the way I found it. Thinking back on my favorite memories, the accomplishments I was most proud of, and the moments when I felt I made a difference, I realized that beyond any line on a resume or certificate of achievement, it was the people around me that brought the greatest satisfaction. The characteristics that I wanted to be remembered the most for were being a good friend, acting as a mentor, learning someone's story, and showing authentic appreciation. Ultimately I arrived at this critical truth: legacies can accomplish great things, but legacies can be impersonal. Equally, if not more important, are the impressions you make on others. Impressions leave a lasting mark on the people you meet in life, for good or for bad, and a small act of kindness often has a much greater impact beneath the surface.

( 2 )

Now my critical truth did not come in a moment of epiphany, and I find it much easier to articulate several years removed. I believe that in my heart I understood this long before being able to put it down on paper. So with this truth entrenched in my heart, I arrived at the University of Vermont to continue my journey, where I quickly met another influential mentor whose words fit well with my new understanding of legacies and impressions.

When I arrived in Burlington to interview for the HESA program, I remember feeling quite unaccomplished. Meeting the other candidates, I was struck by the conviction with which they spoke about their beliefs and the dedication they displayed toward their causes. Attempting to remain “on” throughout my visit, I did my best to display admiration without revealing my insecurity that many of my accomplishments paled in comparison.

Adding to my stress was the fact that within the HESA community, I was more aware of my privilege than at any previous time in my life. As an undergraduate, my privilege allowed me to go through four years of college without understanding how my identities contributed to the wonderful experience I enjoyed. My privilege also prevented me from considering how many of those same experiences were marginalizing to others. Again, I questioned the impact of my work as a student leader, and whether my accomplishments constituted living with purpose if I had never before considered who my actions were actually serving.

By mid-afternoon of the second day, I arrived at Mann Hall for my faculty interview with Deb feeling tired, stressed, and sensing my chance of admission slipping away. After being invited into the office, I took a seat on the edge of her rocking chair so as not to allow myself to become too comfortable. Yet as the interview

unfolded, I felt myself begin to relax. The tension in my shoulders dissipated, and my voice began to steady.

Ultimately, we arrived at the final question. Leaning back in her chair, Deb peered over at me before saying, “Now, we, the HESA faculty, each year receive many applications to this program. And in selecting those fourteen to eighteen students who will be admitted, we attempt to fashion a cohort that brings many different perspectives and experiences to the group. So if *you* were to be offered admission to this program, and if you were to accept that offer and join us, what qualities do you think you might bring?”

Her words lingered in the air for a moment as I considered my response. While not as difficult as anticipated, this question pinpointed the worry that had been festering inside of me all weekend. Finding my voice, I told her that although I had the best intentions of doing good work in this field, I was still discovering my passion. I could not articulate it or put a name to the cause I had chosen to dedicate my life toward, but my visit had shown me how much I needed to learn not only about student affairs, but also about myself. Once I finished, Deb set her legal pad on her desk and paused to collect her thoughts before responding.

“Look,” she began. “Within this program, we place a heavy emphasis on topics of social justice. And the reason we do that is because when you look at the history of higher education, in many ways it hasn’t always been an inclusive environment. Yet when you stop to consider the powerful impact that higher education can have over a person’s life, you realize how important it is that the opportunity to attend and succeed in college be available to all students, regardless of who they are or where they come from. We’re not trying to make anyone feel guilty or embarrassed for who they are. So while you may have certain privileges, and it’s important that you recognize those privileges, you have an extraordinary opportunity to do good work for the world by being in this field.”

Hearing this response felt incredibly empowering. When I made the decision to apply for student affairs graduate programs, I was drawn to the field for many reasons. But hearing a faculty member express what she believed to be the purpose of the profession helped me to connect the unique learning outcomes of the HESA program to my earlier epiphany concerning the value of impressions in contrast to legacies. Reminiscent of the charge delivered by my hall director, I felt that what made HESA special was the degree to which the program challenged community members to lead with purpose, to better the lives of others, and in doing so, to change the landscape of higher education. That’s what I wanted my passion to be, that’s what I wanted to dedicate myself toward, and that was the impression I hoped to leave behind on the campus I would one day call home.

## ( 3 )

My third and final lesson stems from a personal tradition. Each fall, the week before college football season kicks off, I watch the movie, “Rudy.” For those of you unfamiliar with the film, it chronicles the true story of Daniel “Rudy” Ruettiger, who grew up dreaming of one day playing football for the University of Notre Dame. In order to pursue his dream, Rudy has to overcome many obstacles.

At 5’ 7” and 165 pounds, Rudy does not have the prototypical build of a Division I football player, but his challenges are more than short physical stature and limited athletic ability. No one in his family has attended college. Following high school, he serves in the Navy for two years before working in a factory to save up tuition. And although he doesn’t know it until later in life, Rudy struggles with schoolwork because of dyslexia. When he makes the decision to return to school in 1972, he is denied admittance to Notre Dame three times before finally being accepted as a transfer student in 1974.

When Rudy finally arrives on campus in South Bend, he has the fortune of befriending Father John Cavanaugh. A former president of the University, Father Cavanaugh becomes a mentor to Rudy. He listens to Rudy’s story, takes his dream seriously, and when Rudy is most discouraged, Father Cavanaugh is there to offer encouragement and connect him to people who can help.

Rudy eventually earns a spot on the football practice squad, and after two years of training in obscurity is given the chance to dress with the Varsity players for the final game of his senior year. At the end of the game, with the outcome already determined, the coaches send Rudy in for the final five seconds. On his only play, the last play of the game, he tackles the quarterback for a loss and the stadium goes wild. Rudy is carried off the field on the shoulders of his teammates while 60,000 fans give him a standing ovation. The camera cuts to his family, his friends, his teammates and coaches, but one figure notably absent is Father Cavanaugh.

The most recent time I watched “Rudy,” I was struck by the parallels between this scene and the nature of our work in higher education and student affairs. Stories like Daniel Ruettiger’s happen at colleges and universities nationwide each year. Like Ruettiger, there are countless students who possess the potential to be great in their own regard. But potential does not always translate into achievement, and hard work alone cannot transcend all challenges. For many students, it is the presence and support of mentors that bridges the gap between realizing success and succumbing to life’s obstacles.

Father Cavanaugh’s character personifies the attitude of many student affairs professionals. Although he is accomplished, intelligent, and served his institution

with distinction, it's not about him. It's about the students. As student affairs professionals, our work may go without recognition, and we cannot expect results to materialize overnight. It is uncommon that we witness our students' moments of triumph, and never should we expect to share their spotlight. However, the impressions we make on others change lives, and selflessly dedicating ourselves toward the dreams of our students is when we shine brightest. Let your legacy be the students you serve. By empowering their voices, and encouraging them to believe in themselves, work each day to change the landscape of our campuses and our world for the better.

### An Older Brother's Closing Words

When I was growing up, I often tried to convince my sister to be just like me. I wanted her to play sports, love social studies, run for student council, and play with Legos®. I was always frustrated that she hated those things that I loved and instead focused on musical theater. But as I sat at the breakfast table last November, listening to her friend describe Hannah's accomplishments, I felt happy that my sister didn't take my advice. Can you imagine Daniel Ruettiger's story if Father Cavanaugh took such an approach? I don't think the movie would have been as inspirational if Rudy spent his entire life chasing a dream of playing college football, only to be pressured into joining the priesthood.

As a first-year professional, I am reminded every day that there is more I can learn. At the beginning of what I hope will be a long career in this profession, I believe it is not enough to simply understand and articulate what I have outlined as my critical truth, but to now live out this belief each day. Listen to people's stories, offer encouragement, motivate others to reach their potential, and find happiness in the success of others. This is my critical truth, how I hope to empower the voices of those around me, and the impact I hope to have on the landscape of our field.

As our regional conference ended and I said goodbye to my breakfast companions, I couldn't help but feel an immense pride to be recognized as Hannah's brother. This feeling reminded me that although I hadn't always been the perfect brother, there were plenty of times when I did attend her plays, cheer her performances, encourage her imagination, or otherwise show her how much I love her and believe in her. As a rising star, Hannah's success is all her own, but I'm glad to have played a supporting role along the way.

Riding home in our van and thinking about the lessons learned that weekend, I couldn't help but look forward to the coming year and years ahead. I hoped that one day, I might hear updates about students I've worked with, listen to stories chronicling their adventures, and feel a similar sense of pride. In my opinion, this would be evidence of a purposeful and meaningful career. After all, I believe

it is through the stories of our students, our impression on their lives, and how we prepare them for their journeys that our own legacies are truly written. So in closing, I ask you, the reader, “What stories comprise your legacy? And what is the impression you’ve made today?” I hope to hear from you soon.



## 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:

*Mike Segawa,*  
Vice President of Student Affairs &  
Dean of Students  
University of Puget Sound

## Critical Voices in Higher Education Disconnected

Mike Segawa

For nine years I have been privileged to serve our Student Affairs profession as a member of the NASPA Board of Directors, including as President from 2009-10. During this time I have been offered a perspective on our work that most are not afforded. As I end my national leadership commitments, I come away from the experience with a variety of emotions: eternal gratitude for the sharing and support that has been shown to me throughout my entire thirty year career, deep respect for the work we in Student Affairs do on a daily basis on behalf of our students and institutions, an abiding sense of pride for the evolution of our profession, and tremendous appreciation for the unsung contributions we make to the success of higher education.

Yet I am also troubled by challenges I see, challenges that many of us may either not see or choose to not see as concerns. There are, in my mind, critical voices in Student Affairs and higher education that are disconnected from each other. These disconnects have a direct impact on our work but are within our ability to change or at least influence should we so desire. I firmly believe successfully addressing these issues will be vital to the strengthening of Student Affairs.

### Higher Education and the Public

American higher education is at a crossroads with the public. Demands are increasing for us to look critically at affordability, access, and accountability. For all types of institutions, the cost of what we deliver is becoming increasingly difficult to manage. Maintaining quality, as we now define it, is nearly impossible to

---

*Mike Segawa is the Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students at the University of Puget Sound. Prior to this appointment, he served Puget Sound as the Associate Dean of Students. He has also served as the Director of Housing at The Evergreen State College and Assistant Director for Residential Life at the University of Washington. Mike has been actively involved in NASPA, ACPA, and ACUHO-I including serving as NASPA's President in 2009-2010, co-chairing the 2007 Joint Meeting of ACPA and NASPA, serving on the NASPA Board of Directors for eight years, chairing the 2001 NASPA conference in Seattle and serving as the NASPA Region V Vice President.*

*Mike is not only a provider of higher education services but also a consumer as he and his wife Mary (Prevention Manager at the State Liquor Control Board) are the proud parents of a 2008 graduate of Western Washington University and a second year student at Washington University in St. Louis. Mike is a baseball geek, being the owner of three fantasy baseball teams and a Mariner season ticket holder since 1997. He has also tried being a runner for the last 29 years.*

achieve for the majority of campuses. Of course, affordability leads directly to the challenge of access and is making what we offer increasingly out of the reach for too many we desire to serve.

Accountability is a concept that we in higher education have been slow to accept and even slower to embrace. Only recently have we turned our minds to a true exploration of how to define what we do, how we legitimately measure that, and how we use that feedback to improve our performance. We are still not close to mastering these tasks. We have even further to go with systematically being transparent about these accountability efforts with external constituencies. Too often we choose not to share data for fear that it will not be understood, misused or will be misconstrued by those outside of our institution.

These challenges of affordability, access and accountability require those of us in higher education to radically re-envision what we do and how we do that. Many of our core operating principles such as tenure, faculty governance and administrative structures need to be critically examined and recast. To do this kind of examination requires a level of collaboration we have yet to achieve inside and outside the academy but must strive to do so. Campuses that continue to allow for organizational silos will be unable to evolve. Higher education associations will not remain viable if we remain separate in our efforts. And higher education itself will not prosper if we are not more effectively connected to the public we serve. Our future must truly be addressed collectively on the local and global levels if we are to achieve sustainable new models.

### Student Affairs and Faculty

While there are campuses, including my own, where the relationship between Academic and Student Affairs divisions is a strong one, more typically I hear of the continuing divide between these areas charged with the education and support of our students. I do recognize significant progress has been made especially over the last ten years as the shared focus on student learning and assessment has taken root. However, as long as Senior Student Affairs Officers, our association conferences and preparation programs focus on topics such as how Student Affairs can become equal partners in the academic enterprise, we will for the most part be reinforcing a disconnect with our academic colleagues.

Almost all students come to college to earn a degree and student and institutional success are ultimately measured against this variable. And it is the faculty who are responsible for defining and providing the pathways for how a student achieves a degree. We in Student Affairs are critically complimentary to this enterprise, importantly helping to remove obstacles to student achievement and offering valuable but not usually required enhancements to degree learning. We can be an integral



part of an institutional mission statement but not its centerpiece. In this context, a term like “co-curricular” is actually presumptuous on our part but perhaps to the credit of our faculty, now generally accepted lexicon on many campuses.

I offer this perspective not to minimize the importance of the work we do related to student learning but, rather, to challenge us to re-think what we do on some fundamental levels. It is often a Student Affairs lament that faculty do not understand or appreciate us. While I have no doubt this can be the case, it is also the case that we in Student Affairs too often do not understand the academic environment in which we serve. For example, how many Student Affairs staff know the general education/graduation requirement for their students? What percentage of our staff training is devoted to understanding how academics work on our campus? How familiar are we with the structure of the academic division? Do we know the scholarly interests of many of our faculty colleagues? How is tenure achieved and how might we be supportive of faculty colleagues in that process? When was the last time we visited a faculty member during their office hours? Do we even know where their office is?

Recently I came to the realization that I had been limited in understanding how the faculty are equipped to do things that we in Student Affairs are not. In our profession the issue of social justice has been a vital part of our Student Affairs heritage and often to our credit we have been the ones at the center of these efforts on many campuses. But it is quite likely that there are faculty members on our campuses who have greater content knowledge than we do when it comes to issues of social justice. This past year we had a campus issue with some of our organizations for students of color. It was a very difficult and nuanced situation but one that benefitted greatly from the involvement of faculty from a variety of academic disciplines. They brought a depth of topical knowledge that we in Student Affairs did not possess. We in Student Affairs brought a depth of experience in working with students outside of the relatively controlled classroom environment that our faculty does not possess. Together we were able to bring content and process knowledge to bear on a student challenge of significant institutional interest.

As I have reflected on that collaboration, I have come to realize that when there is a disconnect between academics and Student Affairs, our students are the ones who ultimately suffer. Because of this, we have a responsibility for better understanding how to more effectively bring these voices together. Doing this may necessitate a reassessment of how we conceptualize and articulate our work in the academy.

#### Preparation Faculty and Practitioner

One of my more surprising revelations as a NASPA Board member has been the disconnect I perceive between our field's practitioners and the faculty at Student

Affairs preparation programs. Certainly there are exceptions to this assertion but, overall, I witnessed more often than not a lack of conversation between these two critical constituencies in our profession. Rarely did faculty follow-up with employers of their recent graduates and even more rarely was I aware of practitioners providing faculty with feedback on the performance of their graduates. The scholars in our profession were generally not aware if their research was being used by practitioners and practitioners were not consistent in their use of cutting edge data to inform practice. Even when the practitioners and faculty were on the same campus, often the awareness of each other's work was minimal.

Perhaps a strong contributing factor to this dynamic is the historical tendency for our faculty colleagues to more readily identify with ACPA as a professional association home and for especially the senior level employers to more often affiliate with NASPA. Some of this may have changed in the last ten years but not to the point where the predominant paradigm is one of consistent collaboration and consultation. I believe the potential for enhanced faculty/practitioner connections has been one of the most underappreciated benefits of the recent ACPA/NASPA consolidation process. It would be my assertion that a consequence of this disconnect is that both practitioners and faculty are slower to evolve than we should given the data and talent readily available to us. In this present societal climate, professions that are slow to change are at risk for becoming marginalized, forced to change and even eliminated.

This final word was not meant to be a doom and gloom prediction for our beloved profession. Overall I am optimistic that we will collectively continue to find ways to strengthen the work we do for the benefit of our students, institutions, and society. Historically our profession has proven to be adaptable and Student Affairs is stronger and healthier because of this ability to evolve. But I do not believe we are guaranteed a more vibrant future for our field and as the saying goes, "we should not rest on our laurels." The signs of challenge are there for us to witness and we most definitely have the resources to create forward looking strategies. The issues I have described are by no means insurmountable but if we allow them to exist in their present forms for too much longer I suspect they will become challenges that we will not control and will only have the most painful of solutions.



## 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 2010, along with the “New Connections” they have made following their graduation. What follows is the current placement of members of the Class of 2010, 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.

*Please note that submission of an abstract is not required for Scholarly Personal Narratives (SPN) and therefore may not be included for some author’s comprehensive exams.*



**Lorriz Anne Alvarado**

Program Coordinator, University Honors Program  
American University

*Defining and Finding Meaning in Success: A Reflection on the American Dream and Recommendation for Student Affairs Educators*

“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? Through Scholarly Personal Narrative, the author explores a definition of success through literature supported by personal experiences. Recommendations on how to challenge and change our views on success are offered for higher education and student affairs educators.



**Stacey Banfield-Hardaway**

Residential Coordinator  
St. Lawrence University

*Charting Your Path From Within: An Aspiring Educator’s Journey of Self-Authorship*



**Kailee Brickner-McDonald**

VISTA  
The University of Vermont

*Exploring the Dance: Journey, Community, and Voice in Social Justice Education*

This author uses contra dancing to explore themes central to enriching and accessible social justice education: social justice as a journey; appreciating and fostering community; and finding individual voice. Combining narrative from the author’s life experiences and research on effective educational practices, this paper demonstrates how student affairs social justice educators can apply lessons from dancing to their pedagogy to better reach diverse students.



## Erin Crow

*On Our Way: Discovering Children of Alcoholics in Student Affairs*



## Kirsten Fricke

Assistant Director and AdvoCat Coordinator, Office of Admissions  
The University of Vermont

*Exploring the Experiences of Students of Color in the Field of Natural Resources through Counter-storytelling*

This study utilizes Critical Race Theory, specifically counter-storytelling, to examine students of color experiences in the Rubenstein School for the Environment and Natural Resources (RSENr) at the University of Vermont (UVM), an extreme predominantly White institution. Utilizing qualitative inquiry, participants were invited to share their experiences transitioning to UVM and navigating residential and academic environments. The resulting counter-stories highlight the impact of racial micro-aggressions on students' ability to find community and succeed. Challenging the dominant narrative, the participants' experiences highlighted intentional and unintentional ways people of color are excluded from the environmental field.



## Valerie Garcia

Assistant Director of New Student Programs  
Florida Gulf Coast University

*Developing an Understanding of Sorority Membership On First-Generation College Student Success*

First-generation college students are students whose parents do not have any postsecondary education (Choy, 2001). First-generation students face greater challenges in the area of access to college, persistence throughout college, and attainment of a degree. Alexander Astin's (1984) research indicates there is a positive correlation between students' co-curricular involvement and their college success. Using Astin's previous research along with more current research, this qualitative study explored the experiences of five sorority women who are first-generation college students. The findings indicate that the presence of roles models, social and emotional support systems, academic resources and support, prospects for further involvement and leadership, and the opportunity for personal development were key factors in the participants' sorority experience that contributed to their college success.



**Payne Hiraldo**

Resident Director  
University of Massachusetts - Lowell

*The Role of Positive Self Image and Internalized Racial Oppression: A Reflection of an Aspiring Student Affairs Practitioner*



**Jacqueline Hyman**

Hall Director  
Georgetown University

*Goldilocks Syndrome: A Biracial Students' Journey to Find a Community That's Just Right*



**Jason Johnson**

Residential Learning Coordinator  
Virginia Tech

*Sustainability Through Meaning: One Part-Time Graduate Student's Journey Through A Cohort-Based Master's Program*

Part-time students in cohort-based graduate programs face a unique set of challenges in finding meaning with the program outside of academic work. Cohort-based programs cater to full-time student and not the non-traditional, part-time learner. This paper explores the journey of one part-time student through a cohort-based graduate program in higher education and student affairs. Through the use of Scholarly Personal Narrative (SPN), five themes are identified and elucidated through personal stories recommendations for institutional improvement are also identified and included.



**Laura Megivern**

Career Counselor  
The University of Vermont

*Views from the Field: Faculty and Student Affairs Professionals' Experiences in Politics and Service-Learning*

In service-learning experiences, students work to serve community needs while learning about the social issues that exist in those communities. Students involved in service-learning often examine social structures and economic systems from a complex perspective, leading to a re-examination of previously held beliefs and political opinions, and this sometimes causes political conflict within groups of students. This qualitative study explores how service-learning practitioners navigate the political content and process of service-learning, and especially how they approach conflict in groups and encourage students to explore these issues without advocating for their own beliefs. The seven participants included faculty and student affairs professionals working at institutions of higher education in New England who have used service-learning. Inductive data analysis was employed to identify emergent themes from the semi-structured interviews conducted in Fall 2009. Three themes surrounding service-learning practice were identified, in addition to three political themes and three areas for further study.



### **Adam Ortiz**

House Director

Hampshire College

#### *And We Will Risk the Ship: Student Spiritual Exploration in Higher Education*

The intentional pursuit of a meaningful and pluralistic religio-spiritual identity is largely absent from institutions of higher education, particularly in public colleges and universities. Given the potentially volatile and extremely personal nature of religious and spiritual exploration, student affairs professionals at many schools allow students to develop spiritually without institutional assistance or support. However, the growing diversity of religion in the United States is creating conditions where global citizens must be equipped with an understanding of religious pluralism as well as faculties for critically examining their own beliefs. In this paper, I share my own spiritual narrative and articulate how it has lead me to becoming a student affairs professional invested in supporting students through their religio-spiritual journeys. In addition, I offer suggestions for how best to help students explore their religio-spiritual identities while actively validating others'.



## **Nathan Divino Panelo**

Residence Hall Director  
Seattle University

*Asian American Male Students and their Identity Development at an Extreme Predominately White Institution: Reexamining Kim's Asian American Identity Development Model*

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.



## **Finn J. Schneider**

Residence Director  
Macalester College

*Beyond the Binary: An Inclusive Model of Gender Identity Development*

Student development is recognized as an important component of student affairs professionals' knowledge and work. Numerous models exist which outline the developmental processes for a variety of identities; however, the current literature does not include a model of gender identity development that is representative of the diversity of experiences among transgender people. Drawing from racial identity development theory as well as gender theory, a new model is proposed that emphasized fluidity and moves beyond the scope of the gender binary.





## Matthew Van Jura

Program Advisor  
The University of Michigan

*Better Men on Campus (B.M.O.C.): Supporting the Gender Identity Development of College Men, and How Involvement Can Promote Positive Expressions of Masculinity*

Men are a historically privileged population within higher education. However, a growing body of literature indicates that male identified students are struggling to succeed academically and socially while in college. Within the United States, society's narrow interpretation of masculinity limits the expression of these students, and often leads to the perpetuation of hypermasculine behaviors. These actions not only negatively affect the individual performing them, but also harm the campus community as a whole. By examining male gender identity development within the context of student involvement theories, this article explores ways in which student affairs educators can better serve male identified students by encouraging a positive and healthy gender identity.



## Mon!que Wright

Prevention Services Coordinator  
Lower East Side Harm Reduction Center

*Charting Your Path From Within: An Aspiring Educator's Journey of Self-Authorship*



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dear TVC friends and colleagues,  
Greetings and many thanks for another collaborative year of the Vermont Connection! We hope this letter finds you well and in the midst of a successful academic year. We would like to extend our gratitude to all who helped with the production of this year's journal, which includes Phone-a-Thon contributors, our authors, and the article editing teams. It has also been a pleasure to work with this year's Executive Board members, who have worked tirelessly to produce the 32<sup>nd</sup> volume of the TVC journal. Their energy and dedication to the process of putting together a scholarly journal never fails to impress us.

These two authors (and former E-Board members) have reunited as TVC advisors, six years after our first Vermont adventure started together as HESA cohort mates. Both California natives, we found ourselves leaving home for an east coast destination that neither of us had experienced before. If you ask any HESA alum what brought them to UVM, they will most likely dig up a story that includes a mentor who played a key role in introducing them to "The Vermont Connection." In our case, it was outstanding UC Santa Barbara student affairs professionals who encouraged us to consider careers in the field, and to explore the option of a UVM education. We were surrounded by people who were eager to share how amazing their HESA program experience was, spoke highly of the well-renowned faculty, and fondly remembered the connections made with cohort members and university colleagues. It was these, and many other reasons, that led us to enter the HESA program in 2004. We proceeded to spend many hours together circled up in a Mann Hall classroom, learning not only about higher education as an organization and a career, but also finding life-changing lessons about ourselves

---

*Tricia Rascon is Assistant Director for New Student Orientation at the University of Vermont. She is currently attempting to learn how to cross country ski, and dreaming of warm summer days.*

*Nick Negrete is Assistant Dean of Students at the University of Vermont. He is the proud uncle (and godfather) of twin nieces, with whom he Skypes from 3,000 miles away. He has recently been contemplating training for the Vermont City Marathon.*

within the experience.

After graduation, we each took paths that eventually led us back to California and west coast life. But before long, we found ourselves drawn back to the green mountain state. People often ask what brought us back from sunny California to freezing Vermont (as we write this in the month of December, we cannot resist the winter reference!). While there are many answers to that question, there are a few that speak specifically to the culture of community that exists within the HESA program, amongst both current students and alumni.

The Vermont Connection is not just an organization within HESA; it is also a way of life at UVM. Colleagues across campus work hard to not only create a fulfilling experience for students, but to also build and sustain a fulfilling experience for each other. Mentorship, connections with students, a progressive environment, and a collaborative community were all pieces of our HESA experience that drew us back to the university. For us, UVM had become a “home away from home,” and this sentiment made it that much more enticing to return home to familiar colleagues and work in the midst of a thriving institution.

The Vermont Connection serves as an extended family, a family we all choose, and TVC continues to be a home away from home for many. We hope it will continue to serve as a space to foster community, engage in collegiality, and sustain meaningful relationships for years to come.

As we approach the end of this academic year and watch our second-year HESA graduate students move into the next phase of their student affairs careers, we are enthusiastically preparing to welcome new members to our TVC family. Although we speak of coming “home” to UVM and re-engaging with a community of colleagues, the reality is that each of our alums over the past 35 years have created that same community for their students at college campuses across this country, infusing the values and ideals that have been imparted upon them wherever they go.

We thank you for actively participating in the TVC community, exemplifying what it means to foster community and professional growth, and mentoring students who will continue to pass along our stories and examples of what it means to be a part of the Vermont Connection.

All the best,

Nick Negrete (HESA '06) and Tricia Rascon (HESA '06)

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



### **Leadership Circle**

*Donations of \$250 or more*

Wendy Lou Baker  
Christopher B. Kennedy  
Jason Carroll Locke  
Madelyn Krest Nash  
Robert James Nash



### **Vector 8**

*Donations of \$100 or more*

Felix Jose Alonso  
Lorri Anne Alvarado  
Adam Jon Aparicio  
Christine Ellen Anthony  
Patrick James Beatty  
Demethra Bradley  
Patrick Joseph Buckley  
Julie Innes Caruccio  
Kristen Marie Crepezzi  
Sidonia Tamule Dalby  
Michael Addison Dunn  
A. Mela Dutka  
Rachelle Leeann Emard  
Jerry E. Flanagan  
Elizabeth Marie Guevara  
V. Hilton Hallock  
Jennifer Lynn Hart  
Bryan G. Hartman  
Kimberly Anne Howard  
Robert Douglas Hradsky  
Deborah Ellen Hunter  
Marcia Craig Jacobs  
Jason Michael Johnson

Joseph Cary Johnson  
Khristian L. Kemp-DeLisser  
Sabrina T. Kwist  
Kathleen Manning  
Lester John Manzano  
Paul Joseph McLoughlin, II  
Nancy W. Moore  
Stephanie Marie Moreira  
Lael Croteau Oldmixon  
Tonantzin Socorro Oseguera  
Sheryl Schoen Poole  
Christiana Jane Raether  
Frederick Carl Schneider  
John Frederick Schwenger  
Alan Lee Sickbert  
Annie Stevens  
Kurt Michael Thiede  
Nathaniel A. Victoria  
Janet Edgar Walbert  
Jennifer Grace Wegner  
Thomas Edward Whitcher



### **Editorial Board Club**

*Donations of \$75 or more*

Susan Norris Berry  
Deborah Ann Desjardins  
Jillian Gronski Gray  
Michael Gerard Gunzenhauser  
Jonathan Henry Jankowski  
Dottie Ann Johnson Foley  
Karen Franta Love  
Katie Flanagan Mobley  
Patricia Chau Nguyen  
Thomas Everett Robinson



## Green & Gold Club

*Donations of \$50 or more*

M. Kathleen Knight Abowitz  
 Joyce Wagoner Ames  
 Scott Richard Anderson  
 Grady S. Bailey  
 Patrick MacGregor Brown  
 Randy Dorian Brown  
 Jessica Belue Buckley  
 Meagan Crishon Burton-  
 Krieger  
 Brian Edward Canavan  
 Barbara Dean Carskaddan  
 Gary Alan Carskaddan  
 Susan Schirmer Chiappetta  
 Danielle Marie Comey  
 Aaron Michael Ferguson  
 Rachelle Ann Flisser  
 Christopher Ryan Foley  
 Deanna M. Garrett  
 Amy Joan Gillard  
 Melissa Thomas Hagan  
 Betty M. Hibler  
 Amy Huntington  
 Jacqueline Elizabeth Hyman  
 Clinton Luckert Jasperson  
 Susan Robb Jones  
 David Lee Laxamana  
 Jessica Marie Lein  
 B. Jean Leonard  
 Kimberley Kirsch LeSage  
 Ann Crittenden Livingston  
 Sarah Conant Martin  
 Deborah Orr May  
 Jerry Allan May  
 Dorian McCoy  
 Carrie R. McCoy  
 Jeffrey Frank Milem  
 Erin K. Miller

Matthew Neil Milner  
 Martin Hershel Nadelman  
 Jennifer Anne Ostermiller  
 John Eric Osthaus  
 David Thomas Ouimette  
 Nathan Divino Panelo  
 Jean Marie Papalia  
 Rosemary Jane Perez  
 Czarina Elena Ramsay  
 Enzo Rebula  
 Steven M. Rose  
 Finn Jean Schneider  
 John Gerald Spissinger, Jr.  
 Alissa B. Strong  
 Charlotte Ann Taylor  
 Kim Anne Thomas  
 Colleen Rose Toomey  
 Matthew J. Van Jura  
 Cynthia Baxter Watchmaker  
 Andrew McMahan Wells  
 Scott Thomas Wolterink



## Donor's Club

*Donations of up to \$50*

Ruth E. Abelman  
 Alexis Linda Andres  
 Travis Annan Annameier  
 Stacey Banfield-Hardaway  
 Joslyn DiRamio Bedell  
 Sheryl Lynn Bellman  
 Raja Gopal Bhattar  
 Allan Patrick Blattner  
 Carolyn Maxwell Blattner  
 Kailee Ann Brickner-  
 McDonald  
 Allen W. Brouillette  
 Darcy O'Keefe Brouillette  
 Tom R. Burke  
 Michael Matthew DeBowes

Deborah Ann Desjardins  
 Douglas Alexander Dickey, Jr.  
 Kimberly Equinoa  
 Christopher Ryan Foley  
 Kirsten Freeman Fox  
 Kirsten Elizabeth Fricke  
 Suzanne Fritz  
 Pamela Kay Gardner  
 Amy Elisabeth Grieger  
 Michael Gerard Gunzenhauser  
 Sadika Sulaiman Hara  
 Katherine Elizabeth Hawley  
 Jonathan G. Hopkins  
 Carrie Frances Williams Howe  
 Eric Austen Howe  
 Brett Phillip Hulst  
 William Allen Hyman  
 Kalise DaRia Jacobs  
 Dottie Ann Johnson Foley  
 Edward John Keagle  
 Martha Burroughs Keagle  
 Lorraine Betz Kelm  
 Robert John Kelm  
 David Allen Kembel  
 Kim Barth Kembel  
 Stephanie Nelle Kurtzman  
 Ellen Whitten Lencioni  
 Lewis Scott Lerman, Esq.  
 Hannah Roberts Lozon  
 Patricia Marin  
 Merin Eglington Maxwell  
 Scott McIntyre  
 John Hubbard Miller  
 Anna Iannuzzi Molettieri  
 Alison L. Moll  
 Garrett J. Naiman  
 Nicholas Efren Negrete  
 Marian Frank Newman

Jeffrey James Nolan  
 Adam Joseph Ortiz  
 James Anthony Pietrovito  
 Janet Early Pietrovito  
 Heather Parkin Poppy  
 Janine Elizabeth Pratt  
 Christopher J. Purcell  
 Enzo Rebula  
 Gabriel H. Reif  
 Kenneth Hans Sartorelli, M.D.  
 Marybeth Bacon Sartorelli  
 Lara Elizabeth Scott  
 John Gerald Spissinger, Jr.  
 Susan Landers Spissinger  
 Michael John Stillwagon  
 Karen Netter Stonely  
 Valerie Bowker Szymkowicz  
 Beth E. Taylor-Nolan  
 Patricia Turner-Gill  
 Debbie VanSchaack  
 Barbara Howland Verrier  
 David Arthur Verrier  
 Greg Palmer Voorheis  
 Susan Aleen Wilson  
 Monique Wright  
 Terry York Zacker  
 Michael John Zoll



## 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.
- Original research (literary, qualitative, quantitative, or scholarly personal narrative) is encouraged. All such work should be applicable to the higher education and student affairs professions.

- Field reports should not exceed three (3) pages (approximately 600 words in length). They should briefly report on or describe new practices, programs, or techniques. Authors should supply additional background information for interested parties who may request it.
- Dialogues/Interviews should follow the manuscript guidelines outlined in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition*. They should take the form of verbatim exchange, oral or written, between two or more people.
- Book reviews should not exceed five (5) pages in length (approximately 1,000 words). Proposed titles to be reviewed should be approved by the Full Board. Authors are fully responsible for obtaining such texts. Additionally, it is the author's responsibility to secure permission to quote or adapt text content. A copy of the publisher's written permission must be provided to the Full Board before any manuscript can be published.
- Authors are responsible for the accuracy of all references, quotations, tables, and figures. Authors should make every effort to ensure that such items are complete and correct.

#### Submission Instructions

- Form and content of manuscripts should comply with the above style guidelines and the general guidelines of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition*. Manuscripts that do not conform to these guidelines cannot be considered.
- Never submit manuscripts that have been previously published or are currently under consideration for publication.
- Material should be submitted electronically only; visit *The Vermont Connection* website for more information.
- It is imperative for authors to adhere to all dates outlined in the Call for Articles.

*The Vermont Connection* Executive Board will be responsible for all publication and editorial decisions.

**Visit <http://uvm.edu/tvc> for additional information.**