

**Educational Leadership & Policy – University of Utah**

**M.Ed. Student Affairs Capstones – 2017 Graduates**

Developing a Civic Identity through Critical Reflection in Service-Learning

Abstract

Service-learning programs are often utilized on college campuses as a method of encouraging students to volunteer and to be good citizens. But how often do these activities prompt students to ask questions about the systemic issues affecting the group being served? Through the use of a critical reflection journal, students at predominantly White institutions will be encouraged to break out of the volunteerism mindset and begin seeing themselves as active, democratically-engaged citizens. Using theoretical frameworks by David Kolb and Janet Helms, I propose a model of civic identity development that sets the expectations and guidelines for civic growth in students as they progress through critical reflection.

TROOP: A TRANSITION ORIENTATION PROGRAM FOR VETERANS

Abstract

The events of September 11, 2001 and the resulting global conflict have led to a modern generation of veterans. In 2008, the education benefits of the GI bill were updated to improve access to higher education for student veterans. Though the increased benefits led to an increase in veteran student enrollment, the implementation of a new benefit distribution system caused increased turmoil for students that were already undergoing the difficult transition from military service to student life. This paper discusses the evolution of the GI Bill and the history of veterans in higher education, and explores challenges that these students face. The proposed TROOP program is grounded in Schlossberg's transition theory, and is intended for institutions that already have veteran service centers to coordinate resources in developing a veteran specific orientation program.

Is Rape Culture at the Root of Sexual Violence on College Campuses?

Abstract

This paper examines the literature regarding rape culture and the connection it has to the perpetration of sexual violence on college campuses. While the term *rape culture* is only 40 years old (Brownmiller, 1975), its impact can be seen throughout social structures that govern college life. The literature reveals rape culture as a result of socialization, how this translates to the campus setting, and bystander intervention approaches that may be successful in addressing this issue. This paper provides suggestions for policy, practice, and future research and questions the effectiveness of federal legislation and bystander intervention programming. This paper argues that a rape culture lens must be utilized when developing and implementing sexual violence prevention strategies.

## One Size Does Not Fit All: Selecting Bystander Intervention Programming for College Students Based on Program Style and Contextual Factors

### Abstract

One in four college women experiences sexual assault. Many colleges and universities have turned to bystander intervention strategies, which encourage those who may observe sexually aggressive behavior to act to prevent an assault from happening. One way to divide bystander is to consider the delivery method in four categories: in-person skill building curricula, online resources, social marketing, and interactive theater. These various methodologies can differ based on the delivery method and intended audience. Other contextual factors – such as cost, student investment, and results – should play into the selection of bystander intervention programming for college students. The goal of bystander intervention programming is to reduce or eliminate the rates of sexual assaults happening on college campuses. Within bystander intervention programming, there is room for growth and improvement regarding policy, practice, and future research. I provide a guide for practitioners to be able to select bystander intervention programming strategies for their institutions based on programming delivery method and contextual factors.

## Refocusing Developmental Education Reform

### Abstract

National college completion initiatives such as Complete College America (CCA) have renewed conversations about institutional effectiveness. In particular, these initiatives have led to a number of new studies on the effectiveness of remedial or developmental education. However, when comparing early studies to current ones, it becomes clear that despite this renewed interest, the conversation about developmental education reform has remained mostly unchanged for nearly thirty years. In order to move the conversation about reform forward, this paper classifies the current literature in explicit quantitative (focus on student institutional outcomes and trajectories, outcomes based on teaching and learning methods, and cost) and qualitative subsections (historical context, the development of teaching and learning methods, critical scholarship and structural reform). In doing so, I find that there is a distinct lack of understanding of the experience of developmental students and teachers in the creation of new policy. I assert that using the work of Norton Grubb and Robert Gabriner (2013), which takes into account the experience of faculty and students when making suggestions for policy reform, will be key in advancing ideas about developmental education. Further, centering the classroom experience of students and teachers through robust qualitative data provides a model that can lead to broader institutional change.

## Identifying Safety Strategies for Undocumented Students in Higher Education

### Abstract

This paper evaluates potential safety strategies for undocumented students through an examination of other student populations, such as women and refugees. The social change model is used to demonstrate how higher education leaders can implement safety strategies for undocumented students. Key themes that emerge in the literature are: historically locating safety in the experience of women and refugee populations, current safety strategies used by women and refugees, and identifying safety for undocumented students through sanctuary and safe zone campus designations. This examination is significant because of the political climate surrounding the Trump administration and the changing demography of the U.S. toward majority-minority status. Implications for practice, policy, and research are derived from how undocumented students contrast with women and refugees.

## The Students Are Not Alright:

### Implications of the Model Minority Myth in the Southeast Asian American Context

#### Abstract

Current data suggests Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) college students are achieving college success. However, it is critical predominately White institutions (PWIs) recognize there are ethnic subpopulations within the AAPI community that are struggling with college degree attainment. The disaggregation of data would demonstrate that Southeast Asian American (SEAA) ethnicities have the lowest degree attainment within the AAPI community. The purpose of this paper is to focus on the SEAA undergraduate student populations and their experiences as they relate to misconceptions of the model minority myth. In addition to reviewing the literature, this paper will also offer insight on to how PWIs can effectively change their policies and practices to better support SEAA college student persistence and retention. Finally, this paper will conclude by communicating policy, practice and research as it relates to SEAA college students.

## Positively Impacting the Muslim Students' Higher Education

### Experience Through Peer Mentoring

#### Abstract

Islam is growing globally and nationally. This increase has an impact on who enters higher education in the future. Although present in significant numbers in U.S higher education, Muslim students believe they are largely ignored by campus policies, practices and resources, and find it challenging to live through university experiences while upholding religious values and practices. Additionally, Muslim students experience the negative impacts of Islamophobia, while facing other challenges that manifest socially, academically, and/or emotionally that make it difficult for them to have a positive experience in U.S. higher education

Therefore, a Muslim Peer Mentor Program is proposed that is aimed at addressing these challenges. Strayhorn's Sense of Belonging model, promoting this sense as a basic human need, is used to provide the theoretical framework for the proposed Program.

## The Academy with a Weak Foundation: Analyzing the Interaction Between Race and Space in Higher Education

### Abstract

This document provides an analysis and critique of the interaction between race and space in higher education through a post-structuralist geography framework. This exploration demonstrates that physical space in post-secondary education is oppressive for Students of Color and inhibits feelings of belonging. Although higher education institutions have made efforts to retain Students of Color, if the physical spaces in which these efforts are developed and occur sustain dominant power structures the outcomes are lesser in effect. A detailed literature review leads to future implications for thinking, practice, policy, and research, which are provided to guide a shift in developing more inclusive physical spaces in the academy.

## Learning Reconsidered: Implications for On-Campus Housing Professionals

### Abstract

With the publication of *Learning Reconsidered: A Campus-Wide Focus on the Student Experience (Learning Reconsidered)*, academic affairs and student affairs have been called to partner in the demonstration of student learning in all of their initiatives (Keeling, 2004). This capstone attempts to highlight the response of on-campus housing programs to this new focus on demonstrating learning within residential communities. Partnerships with faculty to create Living Learning Communities (LLC) and develop structured Residential Curricula, have solidified the possibility of facilitating an on-campus housing program that operates with learning as a core outcome. This process has illuminated the need for shifting professional competencies and proficiencies, as well as changes in the hiring and training of professional and paraprofessional staff to meet the new demands of demonstrative learning. Examining the current literature, on-campus housing professionals have been slow to embrace a shift from an engagement and programmatic model to one with learning at the foundation that has the potential to reveal on-campus housing as a co-curricular experience for students. Recommendations for further practice, policy, and research are provided in order for on-campus housing professionals to further the mission of *Learning Reconsidered*.

## Using Masculinity to Inform the Reduction of Sexual Violence on College Campuses

### Abstract

Over the years colleges across the country have taken various approaches to preventing sexual violence on campus. However, very few of these approaches have been tailored specifically to males. This paper explores the concept of masculinity and the possible connection to sexual violence. Current policies (Title IX, Clery Act, and Dear Colleague Letter) that serve as guiding principles for what college administrators must oblige by were reviewed, and current practices that focus on sexual violence prevention were analyzed. Engaging males in conversations around masculinity via the creation of the Behind the Mask program can serve as an additional strategy for sexual violence prevention on college campuses.

## Empowering American Indian Students in Higher Education

### Abstract

Year after year American Indians (AI) are struggling to reach degree completion in higher educational institutions. Most institutions, with the exception of Tribal Colleges (TC's) have direct support and programs dedicated to AI student's success. This paper explores the barriers AI students face within higher education specifically at predominantly white institutions (PWI's) by analyzing the history of AI's in education (Boarding schools and tribal colleges), what factors help AI students to persist (Campus Climate and Financial Support), and the importance for AI students to graduate (Family responsibility and Self-Determination). Recognizing these barriers current programs supporting AI completion in higher education will be analyzed. Conclusively proposing the importance to provide intentional support for AI students by engaging student's in conversations around racial struggles and building cultural community through the creation of the American Indian Empowerment Initiative (AIEI) in order to support persistence and increase completion for AI communities.

## This Missing Elements in the Pipeline to Post-Secondary Education: A Critical Analysis on Access Programs

### Abstract

This paper explores the access to post-secondary education for the Latinx student population in the state of Utah. To have a greater understanding of the trends in college enrollment for Latinx students, a critical look at the data will be administered to show what those trends are along with three access programs in Utah including AVID, GEAR UP, and UCAC to examine existing efforts of access programs. Students who participate in similar access programs deal with a series of barriers such as a lack of involvement from parents, less financial support, limited exposure to post-secondary education, inadequate academic preparation, and lack of a sense of belonging. Lastly this analysis will examine an existing framework that demonstrates what a successful access program can be. Through the exploration of literature on access to post-secondary education it has been uncovered that the issue is not about getting Latinx students access, but rather is more about retaining Latinx students and fostering a Latinx student's persistence. A series of implications are provided though policy practice and research to combat the leaking educational pipeline for Latinx. Access programs need to not only support Latinx students to access post-secondary education, but also support them throughout their journey to obtain a degree.

## Sense of Belonging as a Key to Graduate Student Retention

### Abstract

This paper investigates the importance of creating graduate student sense of belonging as a protection factor against attrition. Factors related to the retention of graduate students such as advisor support, faculty relationships, socialization, peer involvement, financial aid, and student characteristics are discussed. Sense of belonging as a theoretical framework is described, and connections between sense of belonging and common factors affecting graduate student retention are outlined. This paper argues that sense of belonging is an important factor for graduate student retention and recommendations are made in the areas of policy, practice, and future research to increase graduate student sense of belonging in a university setting.

Asian Americans Don't Need Activism?: Improving Higher Education's Stance On Advocating for Asian American Student's Success

**Abstract**

This paper reviews literature unpacking the threats towards Asian American identity development. The threats come in the form of aggregated data of all Asian American students, the 'Model Minority Myth', pressures to assimilate, and complexities of internalized racism among the Asian American community. There is minimal literature that speaks to how higher education authentically and intentionally creates platforms to advance Asian American student identity issues and self-advocacy. Thus, there is a call for higher education to foster activism, as it plays a crucial key to developing critical thinking and awareness to empower Asian American students. In doing so, Asian American students will be able to achieve persistence and retention in higher education.

On Being Intentional: A Program Proposal for a Latin\* STEM Pipeline

**Abstract**

The Latin\* population is one of the fastest growing and youngest populations in the nation. This is important to note because it is projected that more school age Latin\* people will be entering higher education institutions, which has an impact on enrollments. Even so, Latino students are not receiving bachelor degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) at the same rate when compared to other student populations. As the United States workforce is moves toward a technological labor market, the need to support Latin\* student in STEM fields becomes clear. Knowing that Latin\* students are completing STEM degrees in low numbers compared to their White counterparts, in combination with the projected U.S. labor market, highlights the need to focus energy on Latin\* persistence and retention in STEM programs.

Understanding Name-Identity:

New Perspectives on Names and Student Identity Development

**Abstract**

Names play an essential role in the construction and development of individual identity. This paper examines the deep and complex connection between names and identity development illustrated within a new term called *name-identity*. Names reflect various dimensions of identity (i.e. gender, ethnicity, family/kinship) that helps shape the construction and development of individual identity (i.e. having a female-identifying name affirming female identity). There are also certain ways how names are inappropriately articulated and used through stereotyping and discrimination which can lead to a negative impact on life outcomes, the dissonance of names, and in some cases name changing. This paper suggests that practitioners in higher education should integrating name-identity into student development frameworks with recommendations for practice, policy and research.

## Constructing the Welfare Queen: How Target Policy Impacts Access to Postsecondary Education for Poor, Single Mothers

### Abstract

Single women with children occupy the largest sector of American society living in poverty. Heading more than 50% of households living in poverty, single mothers often need the support of welfare programs in order to survive. However, welfare recipients are stigmatized in American culture and often the target for punitive policy creation. With the ascent of the image of the Welfare Queen, policy makers overhauled the welfare program in 1996 and created policy that placed barriers to single mothers' access to postsecondary education. With the alarming decline in college enrollment after the 1996 welfare reform, states offered very restrictive educational provisions that pushed welfare mothers towards predatory proprietary sectors. However, proprietary schools leave welfare mothers with elevated debt and questionable degrees. Non-profit schools, who have continued to leave welfare mothers shut out, can follow the formulas of for-profit institutions to foster climates of inclusion and acceptance that could potentially elevate welfare mothers away from negative stereotypes and provide greater economic mobility.

## Live on to Succeed: First-Year Students Living on Campus

### Abstract

This paper explores how first-year students lack awareness of the benefits and challenges of living on campus. Jamelske (2009) states students who live on campus maintain higher grade point averages (GPAs), graduation, persistence, and retention rates, which is how success is defined throughout this paper (Jamelske, 2009). Themes from the literature review focus on benefits and challenges of living on campus, retention and persistence, financial literacy, while focusing on first-year students. This topic is important to unfold because recent institutional efforts on student success have shown little to no impact (Tinto, 2006). This paper proposes that institutions with an online admissions process and university housing should implement the proposed Live On To Succeed (LOTS) program to assist an increase in student GPAs, graduation, persistence, and retention. The LOTS program assists students in determining if living on campus is a good decision for them when considering higher education with informative education.

## Pre-College Ecological Predictors that Influence Degree Attainment for High-Achieving Black Students

### Abstract

High achieving Black students have a high school grade point average and standardized test score in the top percentile of their graduating class. Many of these high-achievers graduate high school at the same rate as the national average each year but only 59% of those who enroll will attain a college degree within 6 years. In the past 20 years, more than one million high-achieving Black students have not accessed higher education. There is an abundance of literature that aims at explaining what factors contribute to low access rates. However, much of the literature does not focus on how ecological factors impact degree attainment for these students. Using current literature on secondary education experience and geographical placement from various research sources, this analysis finds that the geographic location of secondary education is an important predictor of degree attainment for high-achieving Black students. A large proportion of high-achieving Black students are concentrated in low-income and under-resourced schools. Federal

policies contribute to geographical segregation and discrimination in education and by location. These two factors impact high-achieving Black students' possibility of being linked to colleges, their decisions to apply to college, their ability to develop strategies to cope with racism and the outcomes of their educational attainment. Providing substantial funding, academic education, and implementation practices to combat discrimination can increase degree attainment for high-achieving Black students.