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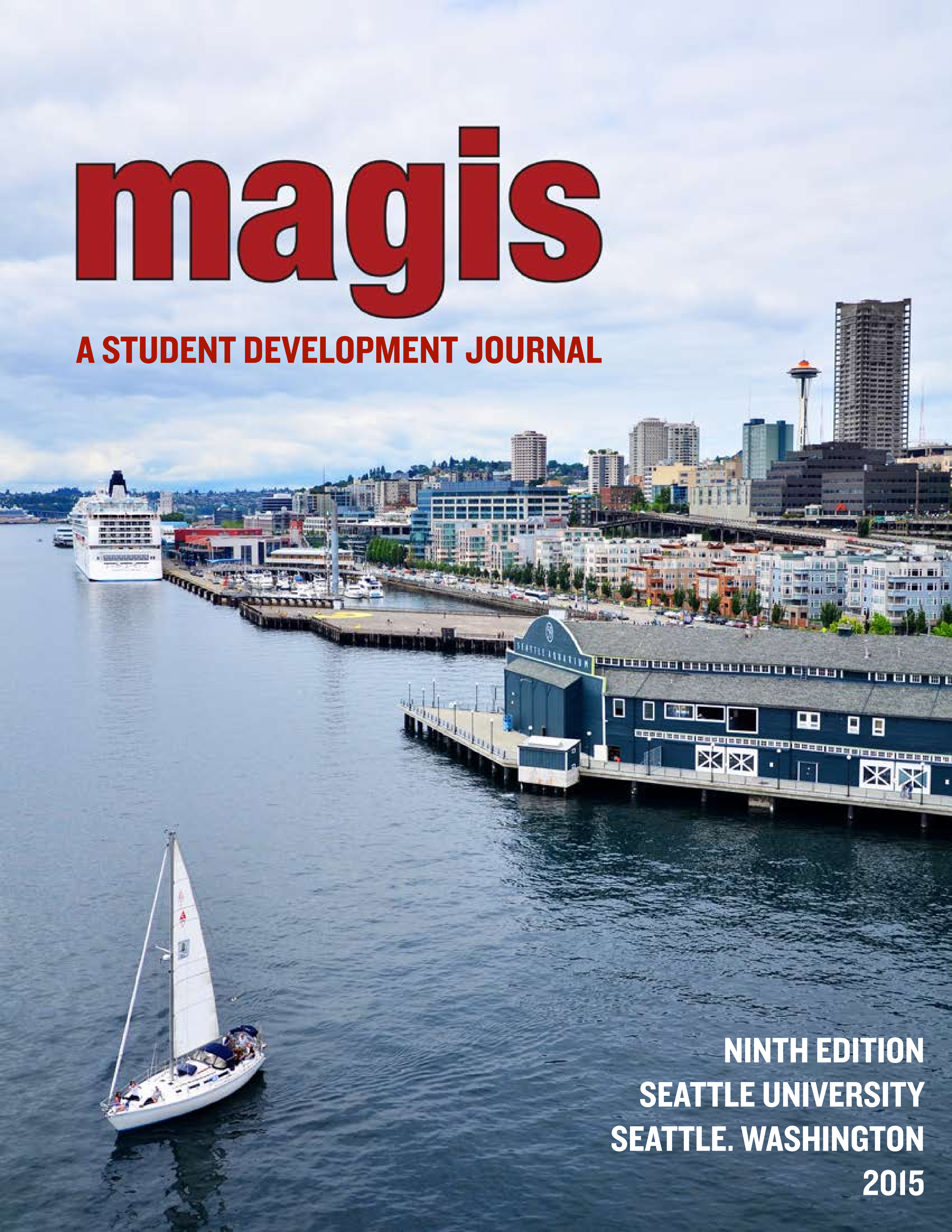
A STUDENT DEVELOPMENT JOURNAL



NINTH EDITION
SEATTLE UNIVERSITY
SEATTLE. WASHINGTON
2015

Seattle University
MAGIS: A Student Development Journal
Volume 9—2015

Editors' Note

As we conclude the publication of the ninth edition of *MAGIS: A Student Development Journal*, one thing we are particularly proud of is the group effort that has gone into publishing this year's journal. An entirely student-run journal, *MAGIS* would not be successful without the commitment of the hard-working students in the Student Development Administration (SDA) program. The journal's excellence also reaches beyond the dedication of SDA students. Seattle University alumni, faculty, and staff, as well as partners outside of the university, contribute to the continued success of our journal. We are thankful for your time and effort.

This year's journal is dedicated to Dr. Jeremy Stringer in honor of his retirement after more than 30 years of service to Seattle University. Thank you for your commitment and dedication to the field of student affairs.

All the best,
Amy Bergstrom & Bobby Helton

Mission

MAGIS is the peer-reviewed academic journal for the Student Development Administration (SDA) program at Seattle University. Published annually and entirely student-run, the journal showcases scholarly and reflective writing by SDA students, alumni, faculty, and student affairs professionals. Following the Jesuit tradition of academic inquiry, *MAGIS* is committed to creating the premier forum within Jesuit higher education for dialogue on the theory and practice of student affairs.

Vision

The vision of *MAGIS* is to represent the Seattle University College of Education and Student Development Administration program as a scholarly and reflective resource for student affairs graduate students and professionals in Jesuit higher education.

Editorial Board and Acknowledgements

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
We would like to thank our faculty adviser, Dr. Erica Yamamura, Dr. Jeremy Stringer, Erin Swezey, Dr. Deanna Sands, Dr. Tim Wilson, Dr. Alvin Sturdivant, Dr. David Green, Ryan Greene, Eunice MacGill, and the Seattle University Student Development Association (SUSDA) Executive Team for their contributions to the formation and publication of the journal.

OWNERSHIP
MAGIS: A Student Development Journal is published annually by the Seattle University Student Development Association, 901 12th Avenue, Seattle, WA 98122.

To contact the Editorial Board, please email magis.susda@gmail.com.

MAGIS: A Student Development Journal can be found online at https://susda.wordpress.com/magis/

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Tribute to Jeremy

Erin Swezey, *Seattle University*

In the spring quarter of 2014, Seattle University recognized Jeremy Stringer, PhD, for 30 years of service as an administrator, faculty member, and colleague. In these three decades, Dr. Stringer's leadership as the vice president of Student Development (1984-1992) gave rise to our present-day Division of Student Development, and as the founding director and professor of the Student Development Administration (SDA) graduate preparation program (1992-2015), he significantly impacted the Puget Sound regional landscape of the student affairs profession. For the past 23 years, Dr. Stringer advanced the SDA program to national visibility and prominence. As he has announced his retirement effective at the end of the 2014-15 academic year, the 2015 edition of *MAGIS* is dedicated in his honor for his commitment, vision, care, and professionalism. Having served as his colleague for half of his tenure at Seattle University, I am honored to offer the following tribute.

Foundations of a Program

In 1992, with the strong endorsement and financial commitment of then Seattle University President William Sullivan, SJ, Dr. Stringer gathered regional senior student affairs administrators and educators to envision, design, and launch the SDA program. It was the only such independent university graduate preparation program in student affairs in the Northwest and the only one within a Jesuit University context on the West Coast. From the beginning, guided by Jeremy's leadership and the advisory committee, the SDA program focused on holistic learning, leadership development, theory-to-practice application, best practice research, and the preparation of our graduates to be lifelong learners. SDA graduates are culturally competent, committed to educational equity, and able to adapt student services to various institutional types (two-year, four-year, public, private) as well as distinct campus cultures and specific student populations. Today, the SDA program is in its 23rd year with over 400 active, engaged alumni, plus national recognition as a premier student affairs preparation program. Dr. Stringer's approach to teaching as well as his leadership enables program faculty, regional professionals, engaged alumni, and current students to contribute to this growth and success of the SDA program. In 2012, during SDA's 20th anniversary celebration, the College of Education together with the SDA alumni community created the first SDA student scholarship and named it in Dr. Stringer's honor.

Commitment to Students

Dr. Stringer always puts students first. SDA students seek him out as an instructor, adviser, and mentor. Students and colleagues alike respect his nationally recognized expertise; rely on his wisdom honed from a lifetime of professional practice (director of Residential Life, vice president of Student Affairs, dean of students for Semester at Sea, professor of Education, etc.); value his keen grasp of pertinent and emerging issues in adult, post-secondary, and higher education; admire the provocative ways in which he engages others in critical thinking; and trust that his commitment to Jesuit education consistently grounds and guides his practice. Dr. Stringer has taught a range of courses over the years—many that he created or developed—dealing with various aspects of student affairs, higher education, and global engagement. The hallmark learning experiences of Foundations of the Student Affairs Profession (SDAD 5300), Leadership in Education I (EDAD 5700), Best Practices in Student Services (SDAD 5750), Leadership and Governance (SDAD 5760), and Comparative Education and Social Policy (SDAD 5840) have been consistently and collectively praised by our students and alumni throughout his teaching tenure.

Dr. Stringer regularly integrates innovative instructional strategies and case study pedagogy into his courses to engage students in meaningful, relevant, and thought-provoking interaction that results in high-quality learning. His well-respected record of teaching demonstrates his effectiveness year after year. His experience and expertise in leadership and governance in higher education especially have contributed to his effective teaching, as he has skillfully combined his command of these domains with best practices in teaching and learning. Finally, Dr. Stringer has worked with dozens of students over the history of the program to participate in national case study competitions for graduate students and young professionals. His dedication to these particular students and their diligent research and final entries often results in first-place recognition, which shines the light on the comprehensive and deep learning provided by the SDA curriculum. In his final year before retirement, it is fitting that a team of three SDA students took first place in the 2015 National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) Graduate Student Case Study Competition in New Orleans.

Commitment to the University and the Field

Dr. Stringer's record of scholarship has had a significant impact on the field of student affairs in higher education. His scholarship agenda includes leadership and politics in higher education, collaboration between student and academic affairs, student affairs within the Jesuit context, and student affairs in a global context. Currently, he is the co-editor of the fourth edition (already having co-edited the third edition) of *The Handbook of Student Affairs Administration*, published by Jossey-Bass. This comprehensive text is used throughout the United States within graduate preparation programs, by professional administrators and their staffs, as well as by the leadership of professional associations, especially NASPA. Additionally, Dr. Stringer has promoted the research and scholarship of faculty and practitioners in the field by serving on the Committee for Scholarship and Publications in Student Affairs (both ACPA and NASPA appointee), as a member of the editorial board for *NASPA Journal,* and finally, as a member of the research division for NASPA. During his tenure at Seattle University, he consistently has provided scholarly presentations at professional conferences, served as faculty adviser to the *MAGIS* journal, and has supervised at least seven doctoral dissertations.

Jeremy is a principled leader whose service to the academy has had a profound positive impact over the years. He has served Seattle University at all levels of governance—program, department, college, university, and the profession at large. His noteworthy roles have included:

- Vice President for Student Development;
- Associate Provost;
- Department Chair;
- Program Director;
- Dean's Advisory Council member;
- Academic Assembly representative;
- Faculty peer coach with the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning;
- Chair of the University Strategic Planning Committee.

Through this service, Dr. Stringer contributes the ability to bring a broad perspective to decision-making, calm demeanor to intense situations, inclusive and collaborative problem solving, and firm commitment to Seattle University's Jesuit mission, vision, and values. He brings wise counsel to all issues and situations and has earned the respect and trust of his colleagues for his steadfast commitment to what he values—he knows what he stands for and stands firm for those principles.

Nationally, Dr. Stringer has served on the Board of Directors for NASPA Region V and was the national chair for the NASPA Faculty Fellows program. He has coordinated professional institutes and regional conferences and served on accreditation teams. His stellar service has been recognized when he was selected into the first class of national faculty fellows of NASPA. He is the recipient of the "Distinguished Service to the Profession Award" as well as the Innovative Program Award from NASPA for the development of the Student Development Administration program at Seattle University and its impact on the profession throughout the country.

Lasting Impact

As I have reflected on and prepared this tribute, the dimension of Jeremy's legacy that I find most compelling are the more than 425 SDA alumni whom he has taught, advised, and mentored and who each day impact the educational lives of so many adults and college students. Truly an amazing ripple effect of impact! Recently, I contacted some of our alumni and asked them to provide three words that best describe Jeremy, as well as to share memories. The responses were truly heartwarming and gave credence to my more formal tribute above.

Everyone who responded consistently offered the word **caring** or supportive to describe Jeremy, and some added warm, student-focused, and encouraging along with patient and intentional. Alumni shared fond memories of student dinners at Jeremy's home to celebrate the end of a term, appreciating the warm hospitality, insightful conversation, and good humor shared by all. (Ask Jeremy about the holiday gift of a little sock puppet dressed in a sweater vest with glasses and carrying a student development theory book as an accessory!) Others shared memories of the Best Practices course, whether traveling to Spokane, Oregon, or Idaho, and the educational and community-building outcomes of this experience, which provided deep learning and beneficial professional connections. Many described Jeremy as a leader, or more specifically, servant leader, who is dedicated, visionary, wise, an expert, and a steward. Finally, many alumni wrote, "And lest we forget, 'Leaders are readers!'"

Dr. Jeremy Stringer has given immeasurably over the years to the Student Development Administration program and our community of learners. This community as a dedicated network of educators ***is*** his legacy. He is our pillar of the student affairs profession. Over the years, we have been blessed by his vision and leadership, which has shaped and developed the SDA program with a strong foundation of values and accomplishments. For all that you have given, Jeremy, we join in our collective gratitude and praise. We wish you well in the adventure of retirement and look forward to staying connected. We hope you know that we always welcome you into the community that you founded, shaped, and now pass on to new leaders for a future destined to hold new possibilities and potential. Thank you, dear colleague, teacher, mentor, and friend. Blessings to you and your family!

Erin Swezey
(SDA Faculty, 2004-present)

**Laurie Stevahn, PhD, Professor, Educational Leadership Doctoral Program, contributed to the writing of this tribute.*

A Reflection on Dr. Jeremy Stringer

Bernard (Bernie) Liang, *Seattle University*

Every so often, I'm asked to give a reflection on a specific event, trend, or person that somehow affects student affairs. As a Jesuit-educated professional, reflection is not something that is difficult for me but when I was asked to give my reflections on a person who has impacted to me so deeply, somehow it became more difficult. How do you sum up in a few pages someone who has transformed you, multiple students/alumni, and an institution? Like Julie Andrews sings in the Sound of Music, let's start from the very beginning.

When I enrolled in the Student Development Administration (SDA) program in 1999, Seattle University and the city of Seattle were vastly different than they are now. Capitol Hill was still coming off its grunge era and Seattle University out of the 1990s and into the new millennium. People were worried that their computers, mostly PCs at the time, were going to shut down in the New Year and the new era of pop music filled the radio stations. The WTO Conference and subsequent riots were coming to Seattle and the Kingdome was soon to be a pile of rubble. I was eager to leave my position as an admissions counselor in central Pennsylvania and into a graduate program in a west coast city, much to my parents' chagrin. I considered other graduate programs on the west coast but, like many alumni of the program, I chose Seattle University for its location, quality education, and, most importantly, the absence of a GRE requirement.

As new students, we were invited to Dr. Stringer's home in Bellevue for a picnic lunch. There were about 15 of us and we were all anxious to start our first quarter. Dr. Stringer, or Jeremy as we learned to call him, was incredibly hospitable, grateful, and generous. He was able to calm our nerves and little did we know, he would serve the same role for the duration of our time in the SDA program. Jeremy cared about our education, wanted the best for all of us, and invested in who we were on an individual level. We also learned that he would challenge us, our notions of higher education, and our privileges that come with being an educated person in our world.

My first class with Jeremy was Principles of Student Development Administration (and it rounded out my first quarter along with consummate favorites Adult Psychology and Intro to Research & Graduate Study). Unlike my classes at Penn State as an undergraduate, what I thought and experienced mattered greatly. Jeremy asked us intriguing questions, provoked thoughts, and encouraged us to reflect about our future as professionals. His balance between practice and reflection, which were further solidified by texts such as Pedagogy of the Oppressed, (Freire, 2000) spoke to the way I wanted to grow as a professional. It also showed up in the way that Jeremy taught his classes. When he was asked a particularly compelling question, more often than not he would say, "What do you think?" and genuinely wanted to hear our thoughts even if they were unclear. He listened, added stories from his own experience, and encouraged us to explore as the next generation of professionals.

This type of reflective teaching was echoed throughout my time in Jeremy's classes: Leadership and Governance, Best Practices (the field trip class), Capstone, and as the faculty advisor for my graduate project on adventure-based leadership. I looked forward to my meetings with Jeremy because I knew I would get a balance of care and challenge as I headed toward graduation. Advising meetings with Jeremy would start with a simple, "how are you?" and ended with a plan for me to achieve my ultimate goal of a master's degree. He knew that an advanced degree meant a lot to me personally as the first person in my family to achieve such educational heights. When my father passed away during my first year in the program, Jeremy took time out of his sabbatical to check in and sent a message of support during a difficult personal time. It would be hard for him to know just how much that meant to me.

Of course Jeremy wasn't serious, reflective, and professorial all the time. He was also fun loving, flexible, gentle, had a good sense of humor, and loved to encourage our creativity. One of my good friends and colleagues, Yoshiko Harden, and I still joke about her common question during our lengthy SDA classes, "Jeremy, can we have a break?" The answer, as you can imagine, was always yes. We knew that Jeremy wanted the break so he could connect personally with us (not to mention a chance at the snacks). We learned in our classes that Jeremy loved baseball, various types of movies, global travel, and deeply cared for his family. Knowing about him personally took him from the all-knowing teacher archetype I was used to, toward a holistic lifelong learner who was human like us. We also learned that feedback was an important part of his teaching style. By the end of each quarter, we mastered the art of the one-minute paper (a minute to reflect on the class).

I soon left the Seattle area but never lost my connection to the SDA program. When I returned to Seattle after a four year run in Oregon, Jeremy reached out to me to be the alumni representative on the SDA Advisory Board in 2007. I felt honored at the invitation. When I walked into the room, I saw a table full of student affairs giants who had been supporting the program behind the scenes. People like Sue Weitz (Gonzaga University), Art Constantino (Evergreen State College), Bridget Kelly (Loyola University Chicago, former SDA faculty), Dale Nienow (Center for Ethical Leadership, former SDA faculty), Mike Segawa (University of Puget Sound), and Erin Swezey (SDA faculty) were there, eager to welcome me to the conversation about keeping the SDA program relevant, competitive, and prominent in the region and beyond. We talked about regional and national trends in student affairs, our strategies for attracting new students, and ways to explore new facets of learning. All the while, I noticed that everyone paid a special reverence to Jeremy and his insights into all of these ideas. Jeremy was strategic and bold in his decision-making. He was different than he was in the classroom but in this scenario it made sense. The advisory board's focus changed many times over the years but Jeremy's dedication to upholding the program, the one that he worked so hard to create and sustain, never waned.

Fast forward to the fall quarter of 2014. Jeremy called me to notify me that he was retiring after this academic year. While the news was not surprising, I simultaneously felt a tinge of sadness. After more than 20 years of dedication and leadership, Dr. Stringer was leaving. I could hear in his voice that he was excited but also shared in my sadness. He said he was excited to travel, write, spend time with his family, go to more movies and baseball games, and enjoy his life after Seattle University. He's meant many things to many people in this program but in that moment, I knew that it was the end of an important era in the program's history. I hung up the phone and took a moment to think about the effect he's had on my life, the lives of my peers, and to our profession. It was a proverbial one-minute paper but this time, I think it will take a lifetime to fully realize what this person meant to me personally and professionally.

All in all, I don't think it's possible to properly sum up everything that Dr. Jeremy Stringer means to this program and the field of student affairs. His hard work and dedication will be felt for many years through his publications, his impact on Seattle University, but mostly in the lives of alumni of the Student Development Administration program. So in this moment I want to reflect and say thank you, Jeremy, for your hard work, care, and dedication. But most of all, thank you for all the lives you have touched in your more than 20 years as a professor. You will be missed.

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Bernard (Bernie) Liang is the Director of Student Activities at Seattle University as well as a member of the Student Development Advisory Board. Bernie earned his MEd in Student Development Administration at Seattle University in 2002.

So You Want to Work With Students…

Jeremy Stringer, PhD, *Seattle University*

During my career, I have had many opportunities to interview students for student leadership roles, and, since I became a faculty member, for graduate school. A common question they would be asked is, "Why do you want this position?" or "Why do you want to go to graduate school in student affairs?" Probably the most common answer I have received over the years is, "I want to work with students."

Wanting to work with students is a good starting place for anyone aspiring to a job (or even a career) in higher education. But for aspiring student affairs educators, it means something a little deeper than it might for an undergraduate applying to be an orientation leader. Let me illustrate by offering a few vignettes from my experience as a student affairs educator.

Vignette #1

At one university where I worked, I was honored to be considered a mentor by the Interfraternity Council president. We seemed to have a lot in common: We both believed in the value of developing strong leaders in fraternities, in eradicating hazing in all its forms, and in trying to penetrate the culture of alcohol abuse so common in many fraternities. We regularly went to lunch together. This student leader was instrumental in organizing the annual Alcohol Awareness Week at the university. In the spring, he and some other student leaders were photographed for the cover of the student newspaper; they were posed next to a demolished car that had been hit by a drunk driver. The symbolic message was clear: don't drink and drive.

About two weeks later, this promising student was dead. What happened? He and some fraternity brothers had driven to Mexico, gone to a notorious cantina, and gotten very, very drunk. Instead of doing what I know he knew he should do, he got behind the wheel of his car and tried to drive home. Tragically, he drove his car off a cliff and he and everyone with him was killed.

No words can describe the devastation I felt about this student's death. He wasn't just another student. He got it! He knew better than to drink and drive. But he did it anyway. I thought, what if I had probed deeper into his declared values and his behaviors? What could I have said or done in our regular lunches together that might have kept him from making such a fatal mistake? If I couldn't prevent this student's death, what was the point in working with any students?

Vignette #2

I had the great privilege of sailing as dean of students aboard the Semester at Sea. The Semester at Sea has a very strict policy against the use of drugs. Whether a student is at sea or in port, drug use (including marijuana) is an infraction with an automatic sanction: getting sent home. The person responsible for sending students home is the dean of students.

On my voyage, due to the discovery of heroin on board fairly early in the voyage, we initiated some random drug testing. The test we employed was a urine test. This test can reveal the presence of THC, the active ingredient in marijuana. A weakness of this test is its inability to detect how long marijuana has been in a subject's system. For regular marijuana users, it can range from a week to over 100 days, depending on many factors. So using the results of this test to suspend students requires something in addition to reading the results: it requires professional judgment.

When two students tested positive for marijuana, I interviewed them both. My approach was fairly simple. If they admitted to using marijuana on the voyage, I would have no choice but to send them home. They knew this. If they had another explanation for the positive test result, I would take that into consideration and try to determine the right thing to do.

Even knowing the consequences, Student A admitted right away he had smoked marijuana on the voyage. Student B said he had been a frequent marijuana smoker before the voyage, and that must be why the drug was still in his system since he had not used it since the voyage began (nearly three months earlier). I strongly suspected Student B was lying. If I chose to believe him, I was faced with the prospect of suspending a student who gave me an honest answer while keeping the student who had not. You want to work with students? What would you do?

Vignette #3

Over the course of my career as a faculty member, I have learned a lot about many of my students. I have been trusted with the information that some have been in abusive relationships, that some have attempted suicide, that some have been treated for addiction, and many other confidences. Sometimes I hear from students that they feel out of place in our master's program. Why do they think this? Sometimes students feel academically unprepared. Sometimes they are not sure they really want to work in higher education. But a reason I have often heard over the years is one I have a harder time with: other students have made them feel unwelcome. Unwelcome? Students in a student affairs preparation program have made other students feel unwelcome?

Shouldn't student affairs be a field where all are welcomed? Why, then, do some students feel they can make hurtful comments about those with different orientations or who have made different life choices? At Seattle University I think many would be quick to protest if they overheard hurtful comments made about someone just because that person was gay, or Black, or undocumented. Yet sometimes those very sensitive people participate in making or tolerating hurtful comments about evangelical Christians, or Catholics, or Veterans, or fraternity members, or politically conservative students. I have heard this in class, and other students rarely call out the perpetrators. When budding student affairs educators make disparaging comments about another person solely because of an aspect of their identity or orientation (say, a Veteran or a political conservative), isn't that a form of oppression? Students (and others on college campuses) shouldn't have to be silent about some portion of their identity to avoid being marginalized. Shouldn't we be curious about and respectful of those with different worldviews from our own? You want to work with students? Even those who are different from you?

These vignettes and other experiences I have had as an educator reflect my experience, but they also preview dilemmas our SDA graduates will face. They offer perspective on the complexity of our work with students. Working with students is not always fun. And it can be messy.

But working with students is important. Traditional higher education is ripe with developmental opportunities. It is likely that newer forms of education, such as online programs, will carry the same potential for individual development, though student affairs as a profession has been slow to stake a claim to its role in the development of wholly online students.

For individual student affairs educators, being in an environment conducive to student development does not assure that they will be active contributors to the growth of any students. To the surprise of some, student affairs is real work, and sometimes discouraging. For those that are committed to working in this profession, here are some suggestions for making a career out of *working with students* and, on occasion, making a lasting difference in their lives.

1. Master the Knowledge Base

The student affairs profession has a rich knowledge base. Professionals who attend a quality student affairs preparation program, such as Seattle University's, have a head start on understanding what it is and how to apply it when working with students.

2. Commit to Lifelong Learning

What you learn in graduate school is not sufficient to last for a career. Professionals must commit to lifelong learning. Fortunately, our field has numerous valuable professional development opportunities, many of which are inexpensive and easy to access. But more important than the available opportunities is the attitude that true professionals have to learn as much as they can to be the best they can.

3. Be Authentic

There is no substitute for authenticity when working with students. Being genuine in your response to them, including how you feel about life decisions they make, and your honest response to campus events, gives you and your work validity. And always remember the impact that your words and actions have for students.

4. Be Open to Change

When George McClellan and I were writing the epilogue to the third edition of *The Handbook of Student Affairs Administration*, we went back and reviewed all of the chapters for themes. The metatheme of the chapters was change. There are profound changes in the larger milieu of higher education, including fiscal pressures, public demand for accountability, and an increased awareness of the importance of proper handling of allegations of sexual assault. Students and their issues are definitely not the same as they were when I began my career. Our campuses are more diverse. Technology is central to student lives.

Students (as a group) are more stressed, and many have serious mental health concerns. Our understanding of how to work with students must continue to evolve as our students and the environments in which they are educated change.

5. Do the Right Thing

It can be argued that the purpose of the student affairs profession is educating the whole person. The Jesuit value of *cura personalis* (care of the person) should be the moral underpinning of our work with students. Student affairs educators who enter the profession today will encounter complex situations. Moral dilemmas are not just theoretical. Professionals must have a grounding in the ethical principles of their profession and have the courage to put them into practice. Integral to this is a person's individual conscience. It sometimes takes extraordinary courage to follow your conscience, and doing so may involve personal risks. But if you do the right thing when working with students you will always sleep better than if you don't.

6. Love the Students

Students can be fun to work with, but they can also be challenging. In the course of your career, students will surprise you with their generosity, humanity, and goodness. They will make you proud. And, occasionally, you will be disappointed in them. But remember that you are an educator, that you are in higher education for a purpose, and that if the road was always easy for them and for you, you would not be needed. Students need to know that you care and that you will be there for them no matter what. If you love the students, you will love your work, and if you love your work, you will have a career in working with students, not just a job.

Looking back on my career, I have many extraordinary memories of my work with students. The rewards of being a student affairs educator always outweighed challenges such as those illustrated in the three vignettes above. So, if you say you want to work with students...I say, congratulations! The student affairs profession needs good people. I hope you enjoy it half as much as I have.

Jeremy Stringer, PhD, is the founder of the Student Development Administration master's degree program at Seattle University. A full professor in the College of Education, he is retiring at the end of the 2014-15 academic year.

Jeremy received his master's degree in English from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and his doctorate in Educational Administration from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He has been a vice president of student affairs, an associate provost, both an academic and student affairs department chair, and has led a university-wide strategic planning process. He served as the national chair of the Faculty Fellows of NASPA: Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education. He is co-editor of one of the profession's leading textbooks, The Handbook of Student Affairs Administration (3rd ed.), and is currently working on the fourth edition.

Jeremy is married to his wife, Susan, and has three daughters (all college graduates). He is interested in global education and international travel and has circumnavigated the globe as dean of students on the Semester at Sea. He is the owner of a fantasy baseball team, a devoted fan of the Seattle Mariners, a modern art collector, and a film buff.

articles

The Impact of Advancement in Higher Education

Thaddeus J. Teo, *Seattle University*

American higher education funding is not just an issue hotly debated by policy makers on Capitol Hill; it is an issue that affects students and their families, and one that student affairs professionals should have on their radars as it continues to make national headlines. From my experience, the impact of a robust institutional advancement program can be often overlooked or misunderstood by educators, including some who work in student affairs. This paper was written with the goal of providing an introductory awareness of the current economic situation as well as a brief understanding of the impact that an effective advancement program has on college and university campuses, as well as some ideas of how student affairs can work with advancement and alumni engagement professionals to support students. The key premise is that an appropriate advancement effort serves to advance the mission of an institution by providing additional funding and energy that the institution would otherwise not have; funding that may remove barriers to access and completion.

Keywords: advancement, funding, higher education

The Economics of Higher Education

Despite much progress and recovery since the financial crisis of 2008, we still live in the midst of challenging economic times with respect to higher education. Data from the U.S. Department of Education Statistics (NCES) (2013) shows that the overall cost of obtaining higher education continues to escalate faster than the cost of living, and that between 1980 and 2010, the cost of college has more than doubled at both public and private institutions even when adjusted for inflation. One of the many complexities of higher education funding involves institutions having numerous sources of revenue and a wide range of output expenditures (Barr & McClellan, 2011). Moreover, revenue and expenditure patterns diverge even further when comparing between institutional type—large university or small college; two or four-year institution; as well as the mode of governance—public or private (Barr & McClellan, 2011). At private institutions, for example, expenditure levels and the patterns of pricing and tuition discounting differ according to the institution's wealth as well as the depth, demographics, and family socioeconomic status of the applicants (National Association of College and University Business Officers, 2005; Barr & McClellan, 2011). There is a fine line between offering students a competitive tuition rate and the risk of losing students to other institutions that offer better financial incentives. Public institutions, on the other hand, offer tuition rates that vary based on state legislation that dictates funding levels, tuition policies, and enrollment limits (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2008). Nevertheless, both students and parents continue to question whether pursuing higher education is even worth it.

The increasing cost of higher education also coincides with the changing student demographics of the twenty-first century. This century has seen a significant increase in the number of first-generation students, many of whom come from families of low socioeconomic backgrounds and require financial aid in order to afford a college education (Goldrick-Rab & Cook, 2011). Although the number of Pell Grant recipients have more than tripled and representation among all undergraduates increased from 14% to 23% from 1976 to 2008 (Goldrick-Rab & Cook, 2011), there are many more students who still resort to taking out loans through the federal Stafford or Perkins programs, adding to the already exorbitant national student loan debt. And so the national debate continues—is college even worth it?

Filmmaker Andrew Rossi (2014) recently attempted to answer that question through his documentary titled *Ivory Tower*. Rossi's film adds to the ongoing argument by contrasting the exponential increase in tuition prices and the negatively evolving social attitudes towards the value of a college degree. The documentary argues that instead of providing an education, colleges are now selling students an experience not found anywhere else. Traditional bunk beds and communal showers are slowly disappearing, making way for walk in-closets, custom-designed furniture, private bathrooms, granite countertops with stainless-steel appliances, and the list of luxury housing upgrades continues (Wotapka, 2012). In addition to residential life upgrades, there are also brand new recreation centers with rock walls, tanning salons, and poolside jumbo video screens. With millions of dollars being spent on brand new housing complexes and state-of-the-art recreational and athletic facilities, attractive marketing brochures have been successful in maximizing the number of applicants and number of donors who provide private support (Pyle, 2011; Jacob, McCall, & Strange, 2013). Although society typically looks at the monetary return on investment of a college degree, educators believe that there are also societal benefits.

There is a growing body of research studying both the economic and nonmonetary returns of a college education. It has been suggested that today's college graduates will earn more money over the course of their lifetimes and are more likely to be employed compared to those without a degree (Baum, Kurose, & Ma, 2013). In addition to higher lifetime earnings, individuals with higher levels of education were also more likely to be offered retirement benefits and health insurance and have better health outcomes due to correlations with positive lifestyles (Baum, Ma, & Payea, 2013). College graduates are also significantly more likely to be involved in civic engagement such as voting, supporting free speech, and newspaper readership making them more informed citizens (Dee, 2004). For these reasons, societies benefit from a college-educated workforce that drives growth and average wages for the whole community. One way to make post-secondary education accessible and increase enrollment of students is by providing scholarships supported by advancement initiatives.

The Role of Institutional Advancement

According to Johnstone (2011), finance underlies three overarching themes in higher education policy: quality, access, and efficiency. Efficiency is the search for a cost-effective relationship between revenues from students, parents, donors, and taxpayers, and output measured in the form of enrollments, graduation rates, student learning, or faculty research and publications. A robust advancement unit not only contributes to the academic quality (through well-funded professorships that lead to competitive hiring of faculty) and access (through student support moneys and scholarships) of the institution, but in my opinion also serves as the most efficient sector of higher education. It brings in large amounts of monetary input otherwise not received by the institution that translates to tremendous nonfinancial output like the development of new academic and student life programming, among other creative initiatives that advances the institution's mission. It plays a role in helping students attend college through the availability of scholarships and the aforementioned returns that follow them afterwards.

Advancement is more than just cultivating or soliciting donors for money. Advancement describes everything a philanthropically-driven higher education institution does to strategically align its mission with supporters who possess similar values, concerns, and aspirations with those inclined to give their time, talent, and treasure to these worthy passions. Advancement officers engage with alumni and supporters of the university to build a sense of community around a common cause, then brainstorm and determine how that cause can be advanced to yield tangible and sustainable improvements for students. It provides the opportunity to engage with faculty, administrators, students, and all other external stakeholders in the community with the common goal of moving the institution forward by adequately determining priorities and effectively executing strategic missions. I believe it is one of, if not the only, sector of higher education that can effectively reduce institutional cost without causing harm to academic quality, the student experience, or to the principles of access for students. Revenue from advancement efforts also continues to increase even as tuition prices are frozen from legislation and despite the uncertainty of state funding.

Various Sources of Revenue Through Advancement

Endowments

Endowments are investments made by institutions whereby the principal amount funded by donors is kept intact throughout the investment process and only the investment's interest income is made available for use. This ensures the perpetuity of available income to accomplish the original goals of the fund as intended by the donor. There are various minimum dollar amounts that have to be reached before an institution will invest and create the endowment. The higher the minimums, the more prestigious and visible the donors' names become—having naming rights to a campus building is usually one of the more "expensive" endowments to establish. Nevertheless, donors have the right to remain anonymous if they choose.

Endowment funds serve as a significant source of higher education revenue. Data collected by the National Association of College and University Business Officers (2014) shows that institutions' endowments on average saw returns of about 11.7% net of fees for the fiscal year that ended in 2013. This is a large sum of revenue considering the fact that the market value of all American colleges' and universities' endowment added up to over $400 billion in 2011 (NCES, 2013). Despite volatile financial markets and state government cutbacks in higher education funding, endowments have played a vital role as a financial cushion that offsets major changes or cuts to academic and student affairs programing. More importantly, donors continue to be interested in creating endowments that support a wide range of activities despite institutions raising the minimum funding levels.

There are differences in how endowments can be invested at different institutional types. Private institutions have the most freedom in how and where they invest their money, and community colleges face the most restrictions (Barr & McClellan, 2011). This discrepancy in endowment investment policies lead to different levels of returns, thus it may be argued that a review of legislative policies is needed for community colleges and public colleges and universities so that their endowment investments might have the opportunity to reach peak potential.

Individual Giving

Major (an occasional large gift) or annual (a regular small gift) giving from individuals can come in the form of an outright donation, a pledge to be completed over time, or a planned testamentary gift. The advantage that higher education has over other nonprofit organizations, hospitals, or foundations is that colleges automatically have a list of gift prospects to solicit at the get-go—alumni and parents of current and prospective students. Many institutions have even begun to inculcate a culture of philanthropy by encouraging graduating students to donate to a senior class fund directed at a specific cause and led by various student representatives (Ensign, 2010). Having an already populated prospective donor list helps to streamline the development process for fundraisers to begin forming strategic and meaningful relationships with those passionate about giving back to higher education.

A recent report released by the Giving USA Foundation (2014) shows that Americans have been donating more money to higher education than they did prior to the recession of 2008. Giving to education has also increased since 2010, with 2013 being a record year where approximately $52 billion was given to education—60%-70% of that dedicated to higher education (Giving USA Foundation, 2014). While this data set only includes donations made within the United States, we can assume, given the fast growing number of international alumni, that gift totals are actually much higher than reported. Colleges and universities continue to be one of the more attractive areas to give to as high net worth donors, with the help of the media, recognize the need to support higher education funding. The breadth of opportunities that colleges and universities make available to donors to support are also endless, and provides much flexibility for donors to direct their gifts to specific areas of interest.

In addition, annual giving campaigns occur multiple times a year and provide opportunities for the institution to easily engage with a large number of external stakeholders. The methods are creative and endless, but most commonly come in the form of direct mail pieces, online social media engagement, cold call solicitations made by students, or reunion giving opportunities. Annual giving is critically important in providing an entry point for prospective major donors, yet at the same time allows for younger, less affluent alumni to begin a habit of philanthropy. No donation amount is ever denied or viewed as too insignificant, because it is after all additional funding and budget revenue that an institution would otherwise not have.

Corporate and Foundation Grants

In addition to soliciting private gifts from individuals, advancement units often also include fundraisers and grant writers who specialize in handling corporate and foundation relations. These various organizations vary in form, purpose, size, and function, and it takes sufficient knowledge to understand how they are structured and governed in order to seek out grants for various academic and capital projects. According to the Council for Aid to Education's Voluntary Support of Education survey (2012), foundations and corporations gave $9.15 billion and $5.25 billion respectively to higher education in 2012, which added up to almost half of all charitable gifts to higher education for that year.

Auxiliary Service Benefits

Various advancement events throughout the year bring in human traffic to the university campus providing auxiliary services like parking, facilities, and catering with more business. Although revenue generated is much more diminished compared to the direct fundraising efforts, it still provides growth for these smaller sectors of the university.

Success of Advancement Programs

The money raised by a higher education institution is revenue that would otherwise not find its way into an institution's budget. Looking specifically at the University of Washington as an example of a large public institution, donations received during the fiscal year that ended in July 2014 doubled the state general fund provided for operating costs (Long, 2014; University of Washington Office of Planning & Budgeting, 2014). The reliance on private support has become increasingly important at public institutions, and is a trend that is evident across the country where many large public universities like Oregon State University and the University of Washington have embarked on large capital campaigns in the billions (Brettman, 2014).

Stanford University is another example of advancement success for a private institution. It was the first university to raise more than a billion dollars in the single fiscal year that ended in 2012 (Lewin, 2013). Dividing that sum by the number of students enrolled that year comes to approximately $56,000 per student, or about the equivalent of what each student paid in tuition. Although this particular year stands out as an outlier, it is an example of how big an impact fundraising has on the overall institution's revenue.

There are many reasons why giving to higher education has been becoming become an increasingly popular trend. I believe that a large part of the success comes down to an institution making an investment to hire, train, and send out advancement officers, faculty, and institutional leaders to form meaningful relationships with the community. According to the Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy (2004), fundraising in the education industry had expenditures of about twenty-four cents for every dollar raised. In other words, fundraisers were bringing in close to four times more money than the cumulative of their salaries and work expenses (this was back in 2004 and overall donations have increased since). Regardless of what the actual return on investment is today, I will reiterate how this money goes on to create numerous scholarships that support student access and retention, research opportunities that enhances students' academic experience and professional development, and a number of other student life opportunities. Scholarship recipients are less likely to take out loans and graduate with debt, which leads to a higher likelihood of them becoming more likely to give back to their institution later on as alumni (Meer & Rosen, 2011). Advancement helps institutions provide students with both an education and an experience, and even remain sustainable through that process.

Opportunities for Student Affairs Professionals to Collaborate

Student affairs professionals need to be aware of and engaged in advancement efforts as institutional budgets continue to remain tight or even diminished. This partnership between student affairs and advancement provides opportunities that will enhance both financial and human resources aimed at sustaining or developing new student life programs beneficial to the student experience. Financial gifts like a new endowment can help kick start and sustain new student programming, and a collaborative partnership can serve as a bridge connecting students to the wealth of knowledge, experience, and resources that alumni have.

There are endless opportunities to create new student-alumni mentorship programs, develop internships or job placements, and to expand students' networks and social capital. Some institutions have also begun to engage alumni in admissions recruiting by plugging them into college fairs out of state and abroad, as well as having them participate in the admissions interview process. Orientation programs have also acknowledged the expertise of international alumni volunteers to answer culturally specific questions and concerns that incoming international students might have prior to leaving their home countries.

It is said that the depth of a donor pipeline is the best long-term indicator of an advancement program's health and that prospective donors need to be added as regularly as currently existing prospects are being targeted. Advancement should partner and aid student affairs divisions with creating positive college experiences so that future donors can be cultivated while they are still students on campus. After all, many alumni donors indicate having exceptional college experiences, which they attribute as one of the many reasons why they remain connected, engaged, and invested in the institution.

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Navigating the Student Affairs Profession

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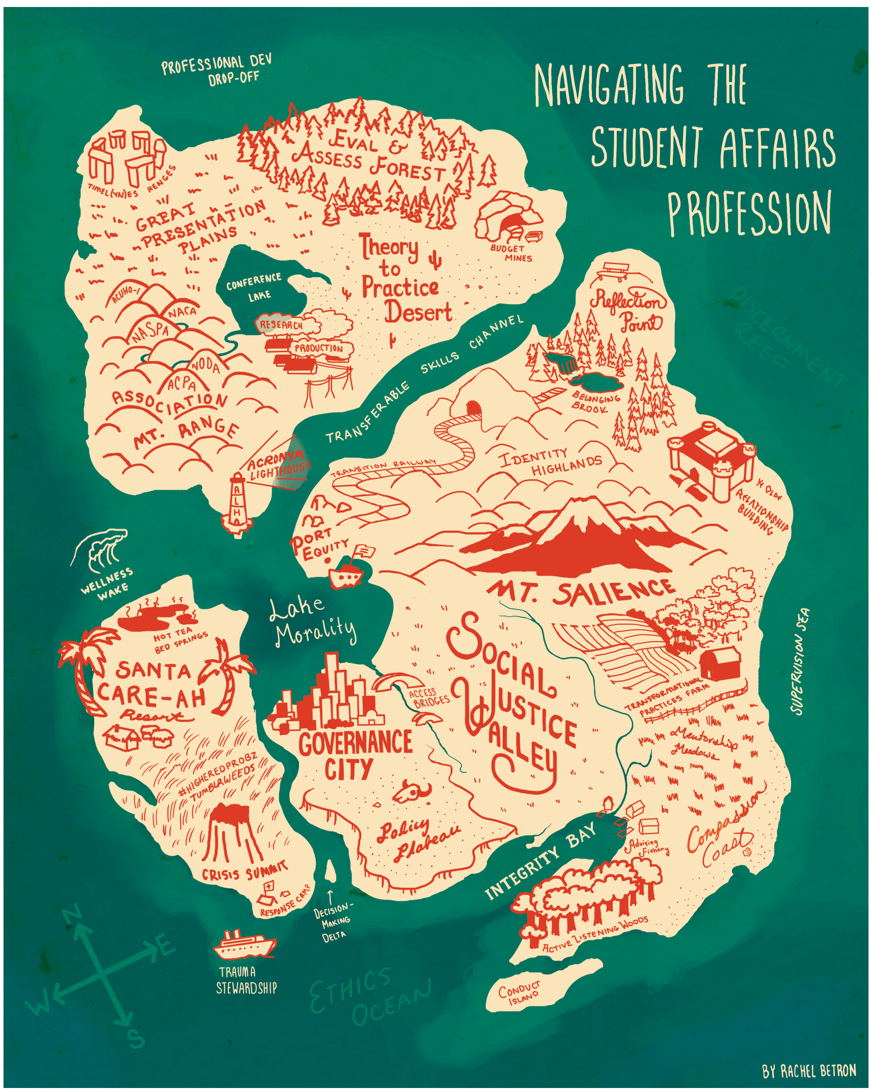
This article provides a reflection on an illustration designed to embody the author's perception of the professional field of student development. The illustration, titled, "Navigating the Student Affairs Profession," is a visual exploration of the competencies, skills, and challenges of the career field as defined by contemporary practitioners and researchers. The author explains that the geographical map of professional practices derives from the author's Jesuit and social justice education in a Student Development Administration master's program. The author also discusses how this visual representation of the profession allows other practitioners to become more cognizant of their own identities and experiences and how these play into professional identity.

Keywords: professional competencies, Ignatian pedagogy, professional identity



In my introductory coursework in Seattle University's Student Development Administration program, there were frequent discussions among the instructors and my cohort around professional competencies and identity in the field of student affairs. As an undergraduate student leader at the Rochester Institute of Technology, my perception of what the student affairs profession entailed was elementary compared to what I have learned through the content of my graduate coursework. When Dr. Jeremy Stringer called on us to share our values in the profession, I felt inspired to visualize my experience as a young professional in the language of the profession and within the framework of scholarly texts. I decided to illustrate a map to abstractly explain how I navigate the various publications on competencies and best practices in the field.

I started creating the map by choosing geographical features to serve as focal points for the different facets of student affairs. For example, the prominence of a large mountain range representing salient and self-identified social identities symbolizes the constant presence of social constructs that influence our behaviors and values as people. Mountains cannot change as fluidly as the identity dimensions portrayed in the reconceptualized model of self-perception of multiple identity dimensions (Abes, Jones, & McEwen, 2007). However, the mountains are not visible or perceived the same from every location on the map, just as our identities are seen differently throughout our careers despite their constant existence. I believe that the exploration of salient identities is necessary in developing multicultural competence, a foundational skill that allows student affairs professionals to best serve the various student populations facing oppression and barriers in the higher education system.

As I was drawing out the foundations for the map, I found myself considering the context of my Jesuit graduate education and integrating various elements of Ignatian pedagogy throughout the illustration. In particular, the concept of care for the individual, adopted by Jesuit colleges as the Latin *cura personalis*, is an expectation and characteristic of Jesuit college community members (International Committee, 1993). Also, the Jesuits' emphasis on reflection, known as the *Examen*, is historically steeped in a religious purpose and context, but it has universal purpose in stimulating constant "experience, reflection, and action" (International Committee, 1993, p. 10) that can help student affairs professionals critically contemplate and understand how students engage with the campus.

Just as every landmark or natural formation on this map is formed in relationship to the others, the whole student affairs profession is dependent on the collective set of skills that members possess. These skills have been sorted and defined into various competency areas by a joint task force of two professional associations, the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA;ACPA, 2010). Personally, I have yet to attain advanced development in the areas of evaluation, assessment, and research; student learning and development through theory-to-practice; and understanding law, policy, and governance. As I seek to grow in these areas, it is fascinating to observe how they are interrelated. Practitioners and researchers often seek additional data or knowledge to supplement the theories and models they already use in their day-to-day practice. I believe that governance and policy-making are most responsible and responsive to campus climate when research and theory have been used to inform executive decisions. Financial and federal pressures have driven institutions such as ACPA and the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) to establish outcome-based assessment to support the work of student affairs professionals and to ensure that students are able to access the services they need (Bresciani, 2009).

Like any geographical formation, my perceptions of the role of student development in higher education and the professional competencies will change slowly over time; and like any natural phenomena, reformation can occur in an unexpected, abrupt fashion. I imagine that in my time as a graduate student in the Student Development Administration program, my perception of myself and the profession will continue to evolve and grow with each new practice or model I take into consideration. It is important to note that higher education constantly experiences pivotal changes, and our professional adaptability is a competency of its own. Personally, I am excited to work in a career field that relies heavily on its own constituents to create societal change. I created this map for the purpose of guiding myself and others through the process of becoming "professionals;" new professionals will be able to compare the landscape to their own experiences or construct a map of their own professional ideals. Most importantly, this map captures a progressive profession in an era marked by evolution and discourse on equity in education.

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First-Generation Spiritual Formation

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This article examines the correlation between identifying with a specific faith, religion, or spirituality and being a first-generation college student at Seattle University (SU). The Office of Campus Ministry at SU was utilized to inform this research. At the end of this project's duration, recommendations were given to the entire staff of Campus Ministry. The findings were also presented at NASPA's Western Regional Conference in November 2014. For this particular research, "first-generation college student" was defined as someone whose guardians and/or siblings did not attend a four-year institution. It was even encompassing of students with guardians who may have went to college at a non-traditional age when the first-generation student was a child in the K-12 system. To assess this correlation, survey results were collected, and three students were interviewed. The themes that emerged were exploration, responsibility, and the Jesuit context. By receiving assistance from Campus Ministers and/or other staff members at SU, these students felt more comfortable in examining their spirituality, transitioning to college as a first-generation student, or engaging in interfaith dialogue that would further support or develop their other identities that intersected with spirituality or religious affiliation.

Keywords: first-generation, spirituality, intersection

Problem and Purpose

While many colleges and universities are directing their attention towards securing safe places for worship among oppressed religious groups (NASPA Spirituality and Religion Knowledge Community, personal communication, November 21, 2013), they do not seem to be assessing how students in those groups are first-generation. In fact, there is little to no research that is nationally directed towards examining the intersection of first-generation status and spirituality or religious affiliation. There are two constituent groups dedicated to topics of spirituality (ACPA, 2015; NASPA, 2008a), and the field of student affairs also has other constituent groups such as NASPA's Socioeconomic and Class Issues in Higher Education Knowledge Community (SCIHEKC; NASPA, 2008b). Specifically, SCIHEKC works towards examining how the first-generation identity intersects with class and race. This is because a number of first-generation students are low-income, making socioeconomic status a common factor among first-generation students. However, it is just one of the many intersections.

Student affairs professionals need to be prepared to support the first-generation status because it intersects with many other identities like gender, sexuality, and/or race. It is not the only identity a first-generation student holds, and it is not the only identity that impacts the student on a daily basis. Just the first-generation status alone can be difficult for myriad reasons. For instance, first-generation students may not be familiar with college terminology, resources, or social norms. Yes, spirituality and first-generation status is an uncommon intersection, but it is just as important for student affairs professionals and the students themselves to reflect upon how and why religion can inform, complicate, or ease a first-generation transition to college.

At Seattle University (SU)specifically, there is a lack of direct and explicit affirmation for students who hold both these identities. As a private, Jesuit institution in the Pacific Northwest, SU students take a class in spirituality or religion as part of the common core curriculum. There is a ministerial office, which supports co-curricular activities of spiritual formation. However, there is no empirical data around why first-generation students at SU do better even though they make up 11-15% of each freshman class (J. Pretty, personal communication, August 22, 2013; Retention and Graduation Rates, 1997-2012). Joelle Pretty, director of Pre-major Studies and the Academic Persistence System at SU, says that "since SU's first-generation population statistically does better than the national average" (personal communication, August 22, 2013), the university does not qualify for the grant that supports TRIO Programs—a student support service for low-income and first-generation students. Additionally, staff members are encouraged to advise with holistic care and students participate in classes of smaller size, making it easier for students to get their hands on the resources they might need. SU also prides itself on admitting students on a merit-based scale, meaning it is selective and competitive. This explains why there is not one singular department dedicated to first-generation services at SU. Instead, there are many offices that indirectly support this population (J. Pretty, personal communication, August 22, 2013).

The Office of Campus Ministry was specifically chosen for this study because of its developmental programs such as Search and New Student Retreat (NSR). Pizzolato's (2003) research shows how first-generation students become self-authored individuals when they seek out answers to questions. By handing out resources at NSR, and then promoting how an individual can ask for help, the office is doing a service to first-generation students in an inclusive manner—first-generation students do not have to disclose that they are first-generation if they do not wish to. Additionally, the department meets one-on-one with students of all class standings, an approach that supports first-generation students throughout their varied stages of development. Thus, if an individual is religious or spiritual and is asking questions about the meaning of life, they can consult with a campus minster and develop from those questions, too (Daloz Parks, 2000, as cited in Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010; Fowler, 1981). Whether they recognize it or not, campus ministers support first-generation students in their self-discovery because faith development further contributes to self-authorship.

Faith exploration (Fowler, 1981) can be an empowering process that first-generation students utilize to articulate the skills and competencies they develop inside of the faith community to members outside of it. It is here where a connection between inner-dependence and spiritual formation (Daloz Parks, 2000, as cited in Evans et al., 2010; Fowler, 1981) can be made. Worship and faith community stimulates self-exploration among others so that each first-generation student can begin to feel more confident outside of that faith community (Daloz Parks, 2000). Helping students identify how their identities are inter-connected is just as important as encouraging students to take the time to focus on each identity individually. A faith community accomplishes both (Fowler, 1981), warranting exploration in an environment where first-generation students can sift through their development individually but also surrounded by peers.

More importantly, this research informed how the Jesuit context can so strongly impact first-generation students and how they handle issues of responsibility and faith exploration. The evidence for this study was extracted from survey results and interviews. At the time of this project, the Campus Ministry staff was supporting first-generation students in a number of ways. Three students' interviews shed light on how the staff could continue to respond to their first-generation population through pastoral efforts and programs that promote how to engage in interfaith dialogue with other peers that identify as first-generation. Furthermore, in order to fully explore the intersection between first-generation status and spirituality, it is important to discuss the theories and standards that explain the connection points between these two identities. Such resources support the argument around how a faith community warrants individual and peer exploration.

Frameworks and Benchmarks

Frameworks

Three academic pieces contribute to how faith and the first-generation identity are important, related, and complicated by one another. First, a non-empirical article by Torres, Jones, and Renn (2009) discusses how the examination of individual identities can influence how a person views another one of their identities. Torres et al. (2009) goes on to say that "each conceptualization conveys the way in which the self is understood and measured" (p. 585). The article essentially raises awareness around intersecting identities, but it also broadly generalizes them and does not give the space to explore each identity in full. Therefore, the contribution of spiritual theories (Daloz Parks, 2000; Fowler, 1981) relay an important message about how development should be nurtured within spiritual communities.

Identity development. In drawing attention to intersecting identities, Torres et al.'s (2009) article is unique to the student affairs realm because it recognizes how social status is relative to several factors not just related to the individual but also the person's membership within the larger society (Torres et al., 2009). If SU is the society here, retention specialist, Josh Krawczyk, notes that there is a great deal of financial "other-ing" that happens within the SU culture (J. Krawczyk, personal communication, December 2, 2013). This could be due to the fact that SU is a private university in an urban area, and the cost of living is higher than that of rural areas. Another impeding factor is how perceived race shifts how the society views social status (Torres et al., 2009). For example, SU is a predominately White institution, but Torres et al. (2009) promotes how there can be social status differences that exist among biracial, multiracial, or even, monoracial societies.

Regardless, colleges and universities, no matter the location, have an ethical responsibility to care for students who cannot afford the means for their education. The question then still remains: do institutions keep admitting students who are eligible but have financial burdens? It brings to light a campus climate issue that affects all students but is magnified for marginalized communities such as low-income students, students of color, high-risk students, and first-generation college students (Pizzolato, 2003). According to Pizzolato (2003), the term *high-risk* "suggests risk for withdrawal" because the student falls within a group that does not have a "successful history in higher education" (p. 798). It does not factor in a student's background, their prior performance, or personal attributes; just because a student falls into the high-risk category does not mean they are not high achieving (Pizzolato, 2003). This is tremendously key to the development of first-generation students who are coming to college to be challenged. A number of high-risk students have high aspirations for themselves (Pizzolato, 2003), so although their high-risk status often requires support, they are independently developing self-authorship.

Faith and spirituality. Daloz Parks (2000) and Fowler (1981) are two pinnacle theorists who categorize the dynamic of spiritual formation. Their contribution denotes that people are strengthened in their beliefs through personal discoveries as well as with others they worship or bond with in community (Daloz Parks, 2000, as cited in Evans et al., 2010; Fowler, 1981). Inner-dependence, for example, is when one decides they have authority over their own life and maintains an equal balance between what the self needs and what the world demands (Daloz Parks, 2000). To discover authority and potential is to find people who are like-minded and different, that challenge and support an individual in their growth process (Daloz Parks, 2000, as cited in Evans et al., 2010; Fowler, 1981). Vice versa, connecting theories of faith development (Daloz Parks, 2000, as cited in Evans et al., 2010; Fowler, 1981) to the work of Torres et al. (2009) illustrates why religious or spiritual affiliation is connected to but does not define first-generation persistence.

Benchmarks

There are two documents common to the field of higher education that relate and contribute to spiritual formation. When no promising practices were evident in assessing first-generation spiritual formation, the CAS Standards for Campus Religious and/or Spiritual Programs (2008) and the National Institute on Spirituality (2006) were used to scale how the Campus Ministry was serving first-generation college students at SU.

CAS Standards. *Campus Religious and/or Spiritual Programs* (2008) is one section of the 43 guidelines for providing efficient and effective programs on a college campus. The mission of an office or program that provides opportunities for spiritual formation should "enable interested students to pursue full spiritual growth and development and to foster a campus atmosphere in which interested members of the college community may freely express their religion, spirituality, and faith" (Campus Religious and/or Spiritual Programs, Part 1, Mission).

Program and *diversity* are two CAS standards that are significant to this study. When programming in a pastoral environment, efforts should align with the developmental and demographic profile of the population served while best responding to the needs of those diverse individuals (Campus Religious and/or Spiritual Programs, Part 2, Program). In recognizing the diversity of students who are welcomed to the office and come for guidance, it is important to create and nurture space for groups to come together in an environment that supports commonalities and differences (Campus Religious and/or Spiritual Programs, Part 8, Diversity).

National Institute on Spirituality in Higher Education. This forum was held in 2006 at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) where student affairs professionals (Bryant & Schwartz, 2006) discussed trends that contribute to spiritual formation and how it is found and developed on a college campus. Most of these trends aligned with the argument of warranting an explorative environment, one which allows and supports students in the process of coming to terms with "religious pluralism" (Bryant & Schwartz, 2006). This terminology essentially honors the freedom to inquire and self-select one's own spiritual belief (Bryant & Schwartz, 2006). Curricular and co-curricular programs of spirituality were also emphasized to promote this holistic culture that can create opportunities for students to feel confident in their own meaning-making process (Bryant & Schwartz, 2007). It can therefore be inferred that self-selection contributes to self-authorship and inner-dependence.

METHODOLOGY

Site

SU is a predominately White, religious institution with approximately 7,500 students (SU Fact File, Enrolled Students by Denomination, 2012-2013). For the 2008-2009 academic year, the school retained 87% of their first-generation, first-year students and 90% of their non-first-generation, first-year students (Retention and Graduation Rates, 1997-2012). Four years later in 2012, 56% of those first-generation students graduated, and 62% of the non-first-generation students graduated (Retention and Graduation Rates, 1997-2012).

Nearly 25% of the student body identifies as either Catholic or Roman Catholic, 21% identifies as Christian or non-Catholic, and 6% identifies as non-Christian (SU Fact File, Enrolled Students by Denomination, 2012-2013). The non-Christian identities are broadly categorized as one of the following: Agnostic, Atheist, Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic, Jain, Jewish, and Pagan (SU Fact File, Enrolled Students by Denomination, 2012-2013). It is important to note that an even larger percentage of students (35%) chooses to not identify a religion or spiritual belief (SU Fact File, Enrolled Students by Denomination, 2012-2013). Additionally, the Campus Ministry office is an on-site department that is located in the Student Center. While the office's practices are deeply defined by the Catholic, Jesuit tradition, the staff works to invite and serve many faith backgrounds.

Participants

For this specific study, participants were selected because they self-identified as first-generation college students. Concurrent with this study, the Campus Ministry office was working to create stronger learning objectives and assessment goals. This area of assessment became a priority because the graduate student conducting this research was brought onto the Campus Ministry team for an independent study project. Beforehand, the Campus Ministry staff was not assessing their first-generation population. As a result of this project, they tried different ways of incorporating this type of assessment. A staff member in the Campus Ministry office crafted a survey that asked participants a number of questions, one of which requested that students anonymously self-identify as first-generation. The survey was distributed at two Campus Ministry events and was added as a result of the first-generation assessment that was being conducted simultaneously. Ultimately, assessment materials and a final report better informed the Campus Ministry staff about the intersection of first-generation status and spirituality.

Selection and Outreach

The anonymous surveys were distributed at events and retreats in fall 2013. The graduate student conducting this research would explain the first-generation identity to the audience and then invite self-identified students to come talk to her and fill out a questionnaire, the questionnaire being seven questions long. If the graduate student was unable to make it, a staff member from Campus Ministry would then distribute this information. Participants that filled out the survey were to answer the following questions: what their class standing was, when they came to identify as first-generation, how significant their first-generation identity was to them, if they found Campus Ministry to be a resource, and if they felt that there was a correlation between spirituality and first-generation status. They were also asked to name two systems of support at SU and two ways in which they felt supported by Campus Ministry, if they felt support by the office at all. To extract extra quantitative data, the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) was asked to distribute the survey. Three students were randomly selected to be interviewed after completing the survey. Though the survey itself was anonymous, students were given the option to provide their name and email if interested in participating in further research. Interviewed participants filled out a consent form and chose a pseudonym that would represent them. The interviews ranged from 30-50 minutes.

Data Collection

Of the sixty students who were anonymously surveyed, 10 self-identified as first-generation. Out of those 10 that were assessed, 60% found that their first-generation identity was strongly significant, and 50% of them found that there was a correlation between their first-generation identity and their faith, but only 40% named Campus Ministry as a resource. General responses for SU support included: OMA, Financial Aid, orientation, and being connected (to any department, organization, or office). General responses for Campus Ministry support included: New Student Retreat, the Jesuits and their presence on campus, Sunday Mass, Search Retreat, and immersion trips. For the three who were interviewed, two of them identified as male and one identified as female. Their majors were psychology, mechanical engineering, and civil engineering. There was also a broad scale of ethnicity that included Hispanic Caucasian, Asian Vietnamese, and Greek Caucasian. Two were Catholic and one was Episcopalian.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data was collected in an Excel sheet. Qualitative data was recorded and transcribed. After listening and reviewing the interviews, the three themes of exploration, responsibility, and the Jesuit context were aggregated.

Key Findings

Exploration

William was very dedicated to Catholicism, but after coming to college, he became critical of the doctrine. He found his own truths within the Catholic religion but was also uplifted by the inspiring truths of other religions. “I wonder if other students have the same sort of issues I do. I wonder if there are other students who are first-gen and also challenge the church” (William, personal communication, November 16, 2013). William is naturally inquisitive and has excelled in college because the environment warranted exploration, but at that time, he did not feel comfortable sharing his inquires with his parents. He fears that his parents will disapprove of him seeking out answers to questions that should just be accepted as true. Daloz Parks shed some light on this matter, revealing that “first-generation students make us pay more attention to the parent conversation and how it’s complicated by potential growth in college” (personal communication, October 1, 2014). By choosing a path of spiritual examination, William was finding out more about others, himself, and his family. He said, “Faith is a lot of things: the personality, the thinking…what builds it [is] not just blindly following something” (personal communication, November 16, 2013). His faith then created a complexity with identifying as first-generation because the self-authorship and inner-dependence was developing as a result of talking to his peers that also wanted to challenge the Catholic guidelines.

Responsibility

Jack was also impacted by the pressures of being a first-generation college student. The need to balance academics with his desired social life resulted in time management conflicts. This was a real struggle for Jack when he began his college career. In his second year at SU, Jack learned about managing money and living in an apartment. “The first shock I had was realizing both my roommates were paying full price for the school. As a freshman, it was hard for me to grasp the cost of $42,000” (Jack, personal communication, November 14, 2013). Fortunately, Jack’s transition to college as a first-generation college student was more manageable because of the relationship he had with a counselor at his Jesuit high school. Jack’s spiritual formation brought him support before and during his time at SU. Because he had the background in Jesuit education, he was more willing to go to the Campus Ministry staff for assistance. He also attended retreats, and after his “gratifying experience” at the Search Retreat, he decided to be a student leader for New Student Retreat. Being in this leadership role further defined his responsibilities.

Jesuit Context

A sense of compassion and social justice were strong characteristics named by Hazel. She described her transition as easy because she was eager to explore the responsibilities of college. “I had to experience everything for myself; I wanted to take advantage of college so I fully immersed myself” (Hazel, personal communication, January 29, 2014). Hazel learned from curricular service-learning opportunities and co-curricular immersion trips. She came to college with no defined religion, but because she was able to talk with others about their beliefs, Hazel felt more assured in forming her own spiritual path.

IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study suggest that the Jesuit context is especially helpful in creating a warranted environment (Bryant & Schwartz, 2006); it welcomes spiritual exploration for students who also identify as first-generation. If interfaith dialogue is a priority and a value among Jesuit institutions (AJCU, 2015), and the first-generation population falls into the category of high-risk students from diverse homes and low-income backgrounds (Pizzolato, 2003), then this further advances the Jesuit priority to internationally program and partner. It also demonstrates how to best utilize the CAS Standards (2008) in providing inter-faith or spiritual programming opportunities at public institutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH AND ASSESSMENT EFFORTS

Recommendations were given to Campus Ministry at SU, and then presented at NASPA’s Western Regional Conference (Tullis & Swezey, 2014). The hope would be to eventually apply these findings not just regionally but nationally so that this research could have a greater impact on the larger scope of the student affairs profession.

The first recommendation was to provide more opportunities for direct interfaith dialogue and community building with integrated assessment efforts that are in recognition of spirituality and first-generation status. SU’s Campus Ministry office was already providing many opportunities for interfaith and communal discourse; however, they should utilize the CAS Standards (2008) so as to redefine what diversity means in relation to these two intersecting identities. By bringing solid efforts together to streamline the process, these exertions become more efficient for the staff, faculty, and students involved at SU. Thus, the second suggestion was to create more opportunities for cross-campus collaboration (Bryant & Schwartz, 2006) between offices like New Student and Family Programs, Student Activities, Campus Ministry, and Multicultural Affairs. For instance, we may know that first-generation college students do better at SU, but there are definite departments with more resources for this population.

The third and final recommendation was in response to the lack of the literature found on this intersection. It is possible that a gap in research exists because of what the separation of church and state mandates. No matter the institution type, public or private, spirituality is an identity that students do indeed hold. More attention must be paid to the CAS Standards (2008) and how its rubrics support this type of development in a public setting. Thus, the conversation at NASPA Regional turned into an examination of our professional language (Tullis & Swezey, 2014): how are we asking questions of our students about what matters in life (Nash & Murray, 2010; Wilson, 2005)? Doing so can provide us with the opportunity to talk about how these identities individually or inter-dependently impact a student. We can help students better define their belief system, and this belief system might include spirituality, or we can talk to students about their self-authorship. We even have the choice to challenge students in thinking about how both first-generation status and spirituality can further develop their understanding of themselves.

Conclusion

The provided quantitative and qualitative data gives an explanation as to why first-generation identity and spirituality was inspected. The frameworks and benchmarks support why it is crucial to start creating more opportunities for explicit awareness and support for students who may find this to be a correlation. Students interviewed were molded by exploration, responsibility, and the Jesuit context SU has to offer, which says something about the Jesuit context as a whole. These themes influenced the suggestions for how to begin to respond to the lack of research and assessment efforts around this intersection. Suggestions were given to a single institution's Campus Ministry office and then to a regional audience in the hopes of creating awareness around this intersection.

The ultimate goal of this study is to support a warranted environment of exploration so first-generation, spiritual students can begin to sift through what these two identities contribute to their overall persona. To follow Torres' (2009) description of identity development is to allow for students to recognize all their complex identities, focus in on each individual identity with respect for how they might overlap with other identities, and then establish or find a salient community that empowers students to be bold in declaring who they are as individuals. In a faith community, first-generation students can begin to dialogue with people of separate faiths, further affirming or disrupting personal values and choices.

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Accessible Services for Underserved Populations

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Many student services on college and university campuses cater to the needs of full time, residential students who are 18 to 24 years old and White. These services often do not address the needs of students who do not fit those demographics. This paper investigates what good practices institutions are using to better support traditionally underserved and underrepresented students. These practices include co-location, online services, and targeted programs. By implementing these practices, students are able to feel more integrated into the college environment, which research shows can help support persistence and retention.

Keywords: retention, underserved students, co-location, online, targeted programs

Student affairs professionals know that student learning is related to the quantity and quality of student's involvement in their learning (Astin, 1984/1999). For this involvement to occur, students need to have access to these learning opportunities, and for many students, there are a variety of barriers to using services or participating in activities. Addressing these barriers is important for colleges and universities in order to support students who are traditionally underserved and underrepresented in student services. Supporting these efforts, we chose to observe five different institutions and identified how they adapted their services for underserved student populations. Each institution is unique and has students with varying needs, however certain trends for thinking outside of the mainstream box in serving students emerged as helpful practices.

We sought to understand how these services provide experiences for meaningful involvement and how they could be more inclusive and benefit all students. We were also interested in this topic as it related to retention. Making services accessible increases the opportunity for retention. As Krawczyk (2014) explains, *fit* can be a big factor in retention, and diversity and engagement play a part in whether students feel like they are part of a campus community. We wanted to understand more about how accessibility contributes to how a student finds that fit. Additionally, we looked at models of both quality and convenience, making sure that both factors were addressed, because as a team, we were invested in quality access for all students.

The authors examined five institutions in the greater Seattle-Tacoma area, all very different from each other. They range from 775 students at Cornish College of the Arts to 14,000 students at Tacoma Community College (TCC); from 91% in-state students at University of Washington Bothell (UWB) to 75% out of state students at University of Puget Sound; from 25% students of color at Puget Sound to more than 40% at both TCC and UWB. Cascadia College has the youngest community college student population, with an average age of 21.5, while TCC has both a significant Running Start population as well as many older adults, bringing its average age to 25.1 (Cascadia, 2013a; Cornish, 2013; TCC, n.d.; University of Puget Sound, 2014; UWB, 2013). The student populations at these institutions affect which students are currently underserved at each school. Accordingly, each school has had to adapt its practices to attempt to meet these needs. The good practices we identified as particularly useful at multiple institutions are co-location, online services, and targeted programs.

Good Practices for Underserved Populations

Co-Location

Co-location is one way in which institutions can serve traditionally marginalized populations. During site visits, co-location was examined in a variety of different contexts. The University of Washington Bothell and Cascadia College are both located on the same plot of land in Bothell, Washington. While the institutions, for the most part, have separate campuses and student services, being co-located allows for a unique opportunity for collaboration among students, faculty, and staff. Co-located services in one place are often referred to as one-stop shops and are becoming increasingly popular at institutions of higher education. Students can experience co-location of services at Cascadia's Kodiak Corner. At Kodiak Corner, advising, counseling, enrollment services, financial aid, and disability services are all located in the same office. This space allows for students to come in and get all of their paperwork and questions taken care of in one visit, to one office.

Co-located services, or one-stop shops, exemplify two best practices as outlined by the American College Personnel Association (ACPA): "using resources effectively to achieve institutional missions and goals" and "forging educational partnerships that advance student learning" (Blimling & Whitt, 1999). Although the Cascadia staff did not see combining their student services as a way to save money, they did appreciate the ability to allocate funds more appropriately at Kodiak Corner. Consolidating to one front desk staff member has allowed the services to fund more needed positions to better facilitate student learning. One-stop shops most clearly connect with the ACPA best practice of forging educational partnerships. The creation of Kodiak Corner has allowed for staff in different departments to work together to enhance the student experience. This is another reason why educational partnerships are a necessity for co-located services to be successful.

The aim of co-located services is to add a layer of simplicity to an oftentimes complex institutional process, because "the silo way of doing things creates that runaround for students, and students become frustrated" (Supiano, 2011, p. 18). The convenience of one-stop shops can be felt for all student populations, but are particularly beneficial for traditionally underrepresented and marginalized groups. Populations including student athletes and students with disabilities have especially benefited from having all information pertaining to student services in one location (Monger, 2007; Sims, 2013). Co-location, and in particular, one-stop shops, have provided a great deal of convenience and accessibility to students seeking a variety of services.

Online Resources

Our research from the local section of SDAD 5750: Best Practices in Student Affairs showed online resources as an emerging model to support underserved populations. More specifically, we engaged in discovering the benefits around online services for adult learners using Garrison's (1997) dimensions for self-directed learning. In our observation, based on the research, the benchmark programs moving in the direction to best support this structure include Cascadia's Kodiak Corner and Tacoma Community College's online student newspaper, *The Challenge*.

Guided by the Student Development Administration Program (Learning Outcome #5), adapting student services to specific environments and cultures is a top priority. Kodiak Corner is an example of an emerging and adaptive student service center that models the self-directed adult learning theory. It is both welcoming to students in person–providing a space to interact with advising professionals–and has an engaging and informative website (Cascadia, 2013b). Offering an opportunity for access to all students, their online platform is user-friendly, not constrained by specific hours, and allows for students with a computer and internet access to gain information at their own pace.

Another supportive example of good online student services is Tacoma Community College's student-run newspaper. Better known as *The Challenge*, this resource is housed under the Office of Student Life and is monitored, written, edited, and designed by TCC students (TCC, 2014). Paraphrasing Jen Manley (2014), Student Life Coordinator at TCC, if it takes students more than two clicks to gain access to the answer they need, then the online access model has failed because information is not readily available to the students. The purpose of TCC's online news source speaks to the intentionality behind knowing what the students need in order to find information at their fingertips. Not only does it offer easy access for the TCC community to stay current with information, it is also up-to-date on the latest news and offers a variety of ways for news to be shared–via podcasts, slide shows, and other multi-media presentations (TCC, 2014).

There are multiple adult learning theories that support these examples of online learning. The model of *self-directed learning* (SDL) for changing demographics appeared to be the best illustration showcasing the two online service resources. Tough (1971) and Knowles (1970), as cited in Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner (2007), categorized SDL through exploration of goals, research through formal studies, and reviewing personal attributes of learners.

First, the goals of SDL were broken up into three focal points: (a) to enhance the ability of adult learners to be self-directed in their learning, (b) to foster transformational learning as central to SDL, and (c) to promote emancipatory learning and social action as an integral part of SDL (Merriam et al., 2007). It is our belief that Kodiak Corner at Cascadia College is grounded in humanistic philosophy, which is student-centered around personal growth as an adult learner. Kodiak Corner is also equipped with student-use computers. Access like this is an opportunity for initial introduction to the online management system, and gives students the confidence and experience to look up the information they need the next time they visit Kodiak Corner's online resources.

The shift in this type of system is not yet fully trusted. Some students require coaxing to believe they can gain access to all of the resources they may need either online or in person. Recognizing that all learners have unique needs, the staff at Kodiak Corner has been trained with the knowledge and equipped with the skills to provide the right information to their students.

Second, research was conducted around the process of SDL. Our examples of emerging practices are represented well by The Garrison (1997) Model. Truly collaborative at the core, this model sets the stage for integrating "self-management, self-monitoring, and motivational dimensions" (Merriam et al., 2007, p. 114). The first dimension represents interaction in either a formal or informal setting and encourages learners to take control of the contextual conditions–either in person or online. The next stage represents the opportunity for the learner to reflect critically, applying meaning to the needs at hand. From theory to practice, adult learning and online services go hand in hand. Online services still have their limits in providing access to underserved populations. During our campus visits, professionals articulated that effective assessment allows them to be more intentional with how they engage with students.

Targeted Programs

The third practice that we observed to be successful for supporting underserved populations was creating programs specifically designed for those populations. One student affairs professional pointed out that educators will put a lot of time and energy into creating a program and then realize they might need to be adjusted for another group. Small things, like the time it is held, may then be adjusted. Instead, she suggested, the same kind of dedicated time and energy needs to be put into creating programs that support the needs of these populations (Bergstrom, 2014).

This practice is very evident at Tacoma Community College. One program in particular stood out. Men of Distinction is a cohort program for men of color, specifically African Americans, who participate in a college-bridge program over the summer before they start at TCC (Robertson, 2014). Students learn college success skills, as well as have the opportunity for out-of-class bonding and support. The instructor is a younger male of color who both teaches and mentors the group. TCC identified that this population was not persisting at their institution and developed this program in response.

Another example of this practice at TCC is the way they have identified that they have a lot of older adults who are coming to college for a job or career change. Their student programming board, A.S. Productions, has three teams with specific educational focus areas. One of those teams is dedicated to family programming (Robinson, 2014). They consciously design programs that make it possible for students who are parents to participate in college life, so they do not have to choose between spending time with their families and being active on campus. Furthermore, there is an Early Learning Center on campus, so that students can have their children taken care of while they are in class or on campus. Students who are parents are not afterthoughts but are intentionally programmed for on this campus.

This programming for students who are parents in particular demonstrates good practice in relation to involvement and retention of adult community college students. Chaves (2006) discusses Schlossberg's (1989) marginality and mattering theory to emphasize that educators must recognize that adult students actually matter to the institution. It is our belief that TCC's programs clearly show that. Chaves (2006) also applies Tinto's (1987) interactionalist theory to discuss how student persistence is related to the level at which a student integrates into the social and intellectual life of an institution. Both Men of Distinction and the family programs show that by creating targeted programs, students from these populations can feel more supported on a campus and therefore better integrate into the campus community.

Implications for Better Practice

In addition to naming practices that successfully serve marginalized populations, it is vital to assess the implications that these practices have or can have on the student affairs profession. The various programs articulated above have been identified as good practices that improve access to services for traditionally underserved populations. However, there are ways to further improve these practices in order to best serve students. In addition, we close this section with general implications for better practice as a whole.

In looking at co-location one way these services can improve is by transforming one-stop shops into more inviting and customer-friendly resources. During the visit to Kodiak Corner at Cascadia College, many felt as though the front desk and waiting area resembled a doctor's office. While the idea of the co-located student service center is great, if students do not want to come or do not feel welcomed into the space, the benefits of the one-stop shop are futile. In looking at stronger practices, a one-stop shop that stood out as being particularly welcoming was the student services office at Florida Keys Community College. The institution's website features a large photo on their front page with a welcome table, group seating areas, and computers for students to use (Florida Keys, 2013). Cascadia College's Kodiak Corner could benefit from a simple reorganization of their waiting area to make the space even more inviting, and therefore accessible, for all students.

Another idea to improve the good practices listed above is to combine one-stop shops and other services on campus with online, virtual services. Nearly all institutions have websites, but they are often not user-friendly and their online presence is not as robust as is needed to serve diverse student populations. Pairing one-stop shop services with online services allows many different learners to access the information that they need. Students who work full time and are not able to be on campus to access services, students with families, online learners, and students who appreciate self-directed learning would all benefit from having services available to them online. Online services should not replace in-person services, but would further enhance the availability of information and the speed in which a student could acquire it.

A last implication for better practice can be tied to working with specific, targeted student populations. Although targeting specific populations that struggle with persistence and retention is a good practice to provide accessible services, administrators and staff must be mindful to ensure that targeted and intentional programming is happening for many different populations. Developing programming for different populations is not as simple as adapting one program in different ways to serve a variety of people. Staff must be intentional and mindful, from start to finish, to plan events that cater to specific populations in order to achieve best results.

Ties to Retention

Student development as defined in *Good Practices in Student Affairs* emphasizes the aspect of communities as laboratories for learning (Blimling & Whitt, 1999). Supporting this, Tinto (1993) speaks to *fit* and a sense of belonging. Institutions need to know what *fit* can cater to and serve underserved populations better, and Cascadia and TCC's good practices outlined above are successful in this way.

Krawczyk (2014) identified that a great deal of attention is being given to retention by researchers and theorists. One concept that stands out is Kuh's (1997) portion of *The Role of Student Affairs in Setting High Expectations* in Blimling and Whitt (1999). Kuh outlines the following steps for meeting student needs:

1. Determine what the institution wants to expect of its students.
2. Discover what expectations for student performance the institution actually communicates.
3. Examine gaps between the expectations the institution desires and those that are actually implemented.
4. Develop strategies for addressing gaps between desired institutional expectations and student performance.
5. Cultivate an ethos of learning. (pp. 77-88)

Access and retention are strengthened when students feel at home on a college campus. This feeling can be supported by the services created on each unique campus. Based on our individual experiences as undergraduates and our tours of a variety of college campuses during enrollment in SDAD 5750: Best Practices in Student Affairs, this sense of support was all very real and personal for each of us. The emerging practices that we observed at Cascadia College and Tacoma Community College truly stood out from the work of other institutions. Emerging practices are also based in the understanding that higher education institutions such as TCC define persistence as more than simply the number of students who participate in programming. Krawczyk (2014) acknowledges that real conversations are necessary to have with prospective students in order to confirm that the institution is truly a good *fit* for the student.

Conclusion

Understanding how students find fit on a college campus is an important piece of the retention puzzle, and for students who are traditionally underrepresented by student services, the search for fit can be even more important. The good practices of co-location, online services, and targeted programs can help students understand that they are not only welcome but are important to the institution. These practices can help students feel connected with the campus and encourage persistence and graduation. As student affairs practitioners, we believe that creating these valuable experiences is an essential part of our responsibilities as ethical and holistic educators.

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Reevaluating the Role of White Male Professionals in Higher Education: A Transformative Analysis of Identity Development, Awareness, and Advocacy

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This article focuses on investigating the systematic privilege afforded to White male professionals in higher education by comparing a researcher's personal experiences to the findings of a qualitative research study. This reflective piece enables the author to further investigate how White male privilege impacts his practice while linking his journey to the experiences of five White male student affairs administrators. This comparative analysis illustrates a need for White male professionals to transform and commit to a continual process of learning about racial and gender privilege in higher education.

Keywords: hyperprivilege, White males, identity, advocacy

This reflective narrative calls White males to join me in a meaningful conversation about the privileges afforded to us in the profession and how we can foster a community that encourages all White males to expand their awareness of race- and gender-based privilege as professionals in higher education. This reflective scholarship utilizes my experience as a White male professional in higher education as a tool to actualize findings from my graduate research study, which focused on the multicultural awareness and ally development of five White male student affairs administrators at a predominately White institution (Zagorski, 2012). The comparative process will illustrate the need for a transformation in the current awareness levels of many White male professionals in higher education by focusing on identity development, *hyperprivilege*, and advocacy. Cabrera (2011) uses the term hyperprivilege to explain the privilege given to White males based on our racial and gender identities.

A stronger awareness of privilege is needed among White male professionals in higher education. I have worked with, or heard about, many White men who demonstrate resistance in accepting the idea of privilege and visualizing its role in the marginalization of others. This dynamic became even more apparent while conducting the research study, in which participants demonstrated a restricted ability to visualize ways White males receive preferential treatment. This is why White males have a responsibility to continually learn about hyperprivilege if there is any hope of leveraging it for advocacy. The institution of higher education may have been built for White males, but college campuses across the nation are extending access to more diverse populations than ever before. Along with our colleagues, White men have a responsibility to ensure that campus climates, institutional practices, and cultural norms transform accordingly. White males must join together and collectively grow into the advocates that today's staff, faculty, and students need us to be.

Unpacking the White Male Identity

Living as a White male in America comes with access to my greatest dreams. It is the kind of access that marginalized communities can only dream about. All too often I find that grand opportunities are presented to me even though I grew up in a working-class family. I was the only one to graduate high school and at one point during my first year of college, my father, mother, sister, and I were all in some form of a correctional facility. That being said, I have still had access to living out my dreams. There have certainly been hard times in my life due to other aspects of who I am, but I traveled a privileged path in higher education as a student and continue to as a professional. The intersection of my racial and gender identities is hyperprivilege. I am a cis-gender male, meaning I am afforded the advantage of identifying as the biological sex that I was assigned at birth. This gender identity provided me with a heaping spoon of privilege that I still have yet to fully unpack.

Navigating higher education as a professional and a student has been easier as a White male. For example, I could not afford the flight to college, but my family was able to attain a loan from the local bank. The White male owner has known our family for generations and the bank approved our loan after a conversation with my grandpa. I do not recall this level of support ever being given to my sister. After arriving, I worked several jobs and gained government assistance by filling out the FAFSA to comfortably cover the cost of three years of college. During my final year, government funding was not enough to cover the tuition of my private, liberal arts education. I approached the dean of students to request help because I had no other options. As if by magic, I was given a grant from the school and was able to graduate with my degree. I will never know if my hard work led to those opportunities or if they were due to my white skin or male identity. Not all families of first-generation college students are able to get approved for a bank loan with no collateral. I feel most privileged in my ability to focus all of my energy on my personal and professional life, without noticing how I benefit from the structural racism and sexism embedded in the institutions that others must navigate.

Becoming Aware of Unawareness

Reflection helps me to uncover the oppressive beliefs and assumptions I learned throughout my upbringing and continually find are ingrained in me on a daily basis. For instance, if I pay attention, I realize that staying quiet while female colleagues are talking is not equivalent to actually listening. I notice this each time my partner excitedly tells me about her day and I continue to ponder the stresses of my day. It is this process of reflecting that provokes me to challenge my behaviors and work to act differently in the future.

Reflective learning played a very large role in my growth during graduate school, and the practice became a solidified way that I continually learn about my White male identity. The overall goal of the qualitative study I conducted in graduate school was to prompt five student affairs administrators to reflect upon the same questions I was struggling to answer for myself. When do I notice my White male identity? How would my life be different if I was not White or male? What are illustrative examples of my privilege? Why do I not feel proud to be White? The participants offered truly meaningful stories and experiences that continue to inform my awareness of privilege today.

Fully realizing the significance of hyperprivilege is a struggle that resonated with the study participants. When I asked participants when they had received preferential treatment at the institution, many acknowledged that they have privilege. One participant said, “I think that I do receive privileges that I don’t necessarily notice or always recognize” (Zagorski, 2012, p. 13). The problem is that knowing privilege exists is not the same as understanding its significance. He continued by further explaining that he could not “think of any one experience. There is nothing that comes to mind right away” (Zagorski, 2012, p. 13). Acknowledging that hyperprivilege exists is not enough. White male professionals must be able to recognize their privilege in multiple ways. One participant even said, “I have the privilege of being unaware all of the time” (Zagorski, 2012, p. 14). Those words have stuck with me more than a year after conducting the study. I think that most White male professionals in higher education know they receive a long list of privileges, but they would have great difficulty in telling me what is on the list.

The significance of hyperprivilege is deeply rooted in my upbringing. The teachers in my K-12 school system did not teach me of the true inequity in the country, and the nightly television shows I watched with my family were no different. Growing up seeing so many White men in positions of authority, high government positions, and as the head of my family, led to an ingrained sense of dominance that I still fight to overcome as a professional in higher education. I can look to most upper-level institutional positions and see somebody who looks like me. That over-representation allows me to visualize my potential. It is a privilege to constantly be reminded of my potential each time I look in a mirror, and it resides as just one bullet on a very long list of privileges I have as a White male.

Overcoming the Hyperprivilege Barrier

Higher education is more diverse than ever. People of color, the LGBTQ community, and people across the gender spectrum have greater access to higher education than any former generation experienced. Additionally there is increasing representation of marginalized communities in office spaces across the nation. Although White males are still systemically powerful, the time has come to openly welcome the world’s majority into higher education. White males need to reflect upon the opportunities to which we have grown to feel entitled and extend a supportive environment to marginalized communities. Positive reinforcement, mentorship, and a sense of belonging are all elements of support that followed me through school and to my current place in higher education. This environment continues to foster my growth as a professional. Solely acknowledging privilege and expressing my guilt for having it are not the only components of advocacy. A change in behavior, practice, or attitude is necessary. I have experienced this pitfall myself and witnessed many other White men allow shame to be a barrier to their advocacy. Our responsibility as White males is to overcome that perceived barrier and leverage hyperprivilege by helping each other find ways to extend and build a supportive environment for everyone.

White males in the study demonstrated difficulty in overcoming the shame they feel from holding such hyperprivilege, and it suppressed their ability to challenge racism and sexism. White males often feel voiceless due to a worry that they are going to say the wrong thing. One White male suggested, "We're scared to ask the questions. Um, scared to ask the uncertainty" (Zagorski, 2012, p. 13). Where does that fear come from, though? When White males withdraw from uncomfortable conversations and choose not to engage, advocacy is not possible. Silence serves nobody but ourselves. Reflecting on this reticence is central to welcoming more White men into difficult dialogues about racial and gender inequity. A fascinating finding from the study was that participants did less filtering and were more vulnerable during their interview than they are when working with colleagues who are not White men, which is likely due to them feeling protected in the safe space created by our shared White and male identities.

Learning to Leverage Hyperprivilege

Advocacy is a continuous process of finding ways to use my privilege to empower others. I cannot just simply wish my hyperprivilege away. Instead, I have to focus on preventing it from being a barrier to advocacy. I find that people listen intently when I talk about social justice. I often wonder how many people of color or LGBTQ colleagues of mine have already led an identical effort with no acknowledgment. My advocacy may only repeat the countless unrecognized efforts of marginalized communities, and I will still receive endless affirmation. I am not dismissing the advocacy that many White males have been involved with throughout history, including myself. I just think that White males need to understand hyperprivilege well enough so that it does not silence the voices of others when they are advocating for social justice.

White males have a responsibility to perpetually learn about hyperprivilege. I am responsible for not only accepting that I benefit from loads of privilege, but also tirelessly working to become more aware of how hyperprivilege actually benefits me. My role as a White male is to pay attention to the advocacy in which I participate, and this responsibility is really an opportunity. I get to better understand who I am while I learn how to serve more effectively as an agent of change. During my research study, one participant taught me just how large this opportunity is. This participant, Michael, said, "I think that there's a great tight-knit community among my colleagues of color around issues of identity and I don't really get that as a White person. I think if we had a stronger sense of solidarity there would be more of a commitment to how that would be a present part of our practice" (Zagorski, 2012, p. 14). The distress in his voice illustrated just how isolating the journey to understanding privilege can feel when you are alone.

A Difficult, But Necessary Transformation

We have a beautiful opportunity to change the views of many White males in higher education, to help them leave the isolation of rugged individualism and turn toward understanding privilege as a community of dedicated advocates. A resounding theme throughout the study was that participants felt they were not doing enough. Each time a participant spoke about wishing he was a stronger advocate, I saw a longing in his eyes that reminded me of all the overwhelming times that I felt too tired to continue. I think of all the lonely nights in my graduate student apartment where I just wanted to cry out for help. My study taught me that White males can turn to White male colleagues for help. The support I needed was right at my doorstep, but all I could do was internalize my feelings and hope that I would figure it out on my own. Michael inspired me during his interview to make solidarity a real part of White male identity development by bringing greater vulnerability to the forefront of the movement.

I believe higher education needs a community of White males committed to building a collective understanding of Whiteness, maleness, and privilege. Those with marginalized identities have served as my savior more times than I can count, lifting me up and encouraging me to continue when I doubted myself. While I greatly appreciate their generosity, they should not have the burden of educating me about the very dynamics that oppress them. The transformed community of White males I imagine is one where I feel connected, comfortable enough to share my authentic journey, and open to discussing the overwhelming moments that bring me to tears. I want all White males to take advantage of our opportunity to find support in one another and foster the collaborative environment that will lead to institution-wide transformation.

Only a community can cultivate the ever-growing awareness of hyperprivilege our marginalized colleagues need. The collective struggle will build solidarity among White males and allow us all to reach a level of awareness that is unattainable for any individual alone. As White males, we need to share our most uncomfortable realizations because it is time that we move toward more openly discussing privilege, racism, sexism, and all forms of oppression. I am calling White males to join me in committing to a life-long journey of uncovering the pain and heartache associated with our role in systematic oppression. I believe that collectively we can foster stronger advocacy and support one another through all of the overwhelming realizations. Additionally, I charge my White male colleagues to serve as mentors to White male college students. We must support them, challenge them, and show them love. Together, we can collaboratively grow into the transformed advocates that everyone needs us to be.

Offering My Awareness and Asking For More

There is a wealth of awareness that already exists. Many White males have made a commitment to learning about privilege in hopes of serving as better advocates throughout higher education institutions around the country. My goal is to inspire those folks to continue doing great work while challenging other White males to join along. The following section only scratches the surface of the privileges I have as a White male in the higher education; however, it is a forever-growing list and one that I hope will expand with each additional contribution from other White males.

- I can wear comfortable clothes that fit my body and do not attract unwanted attention from others. There is a double standard where I can wear men's clothing that hides my vulnerabilities while women's acceptable attire is usually more form-fitting and revealing. The privilege is that White men have greater freedom in deciding what attire is acceptable, while people of other genders must conform to what is deemed acceptable.
- I am constantly reminded of my full potential. I wake up to look in the mirror and I see not only my face, but the face of someone who holds the career I aspire to have. I begin most days seeing even my grandest dreams within reach.
- I often do not feel out of place where I live, work, or socialize. Even in institutions that celebrate diversity and promote multiculturalism, I am able to blend in where others must assimilate.
- I find that I can stray from procedure, fail to meet a deadline, or answer a question incorrectly without experiencing much reprimand from leadership. My wrongdoing is not held over my head or attributed to the inadequacy of all White men.
- I can speak in public spaces without putting my race or gender on trial because I never feel as if I have to speak for all White males. I am never confronted with the unrealistic expectations to succeed as much as another White male. Most importantly, the words of other White males are never used against me.
- I can critique an organization's practices or policies without fear of people taking my thoughts as criticism. Furthermore, I am often thanked for my point of view even though I am often bringing up points that people at the other end of the table have already brought forward. I am valued and always leave meetings feeling heard.

Conclusion

Last June marked the beginning of my professional career in higher education, and ever since then, I have experienced situations that cause this list to grow. I believe this ever-expanding awareness will help White men grow into more aware higher education professionals and stronger educators, mentors, and advocates. White males must continually reflect and learn about hyperprivilege while listening to colleagues about what it is like to live without that level of privilege. There is a responsibility for White males to call one another into the conversation and inspire a movement that will surpass our time in the field. This is the opportunity presented by hyperprivilege that will lead White male higher education professionals to transform into the advocates that college campuses need us to be.

I will continue to unpack hyperprivilege, investigate its impact on higher education, and share my learning through the social media platforms that serve as perfect venues for a country full of White male higher education professionals. Together, White males can come to terms with the gravity of hyperprivilege and then mentor students in their identity development journeys, as well. We have an opportunity to share experiences of growth with one another and cultivate a transformative path for other White males to follow. The concluding message I want to relay to my White male colleagues is succinct: It is time for us to challenge ourselves to transform into professionals who support one another in a journey of ever-expanding awareness and advocacy.

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First-Year Experience in Relation to Student Retention

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This paper explores best practice in first-year experience programs and their connection to student retention through universities within Oregon. First, this paper examines theory surrounding first-year experience and retention in higher education focusing on Astin's (1984) Involvement Theory and Tinto's (1993) Model of Retention Theory. In this paper, first-year experience programs at Linn-Benton Community College, Oregon State University, and Reed College are discussed, with a focus on highlights and areas of improvement for each institution. This paper also emphasizes the principles of good practice exemplified by each of these institutions. Lastly, it explores the implications of first-year experience programs and retention on professional practice in student affairs.

Keywords: first-year students, experience, programs

Introduction to First-Year Experience in Relation to Student Retention

Students are most likely to transfer within their first year at a collegiate institution, which makes the first-year experience crucial to retention (Tinto, 1993). Due to the importance of the first-year of college, research on retention and first-year experience programs began to increase in the 1970s, and became a heavy focus area for multiple student affairs researchers in the 1990s. This influx of research highlighted new first-year experience programs that universities began to offer. During our visit to Oregon in our Best Practices in Student Affairs course, we found examples of innovative programs throughout our site visits at Oregon State, Linn-Benton Community College, and Reed College. According to the Policy Center on the First-year of College (2002), 98% of campuses across the U.S. offer orientations and 94% percent offer first-year seminars. The positive implications of research around first-year programs may have caused the mass flux of first-year programming throughout the nation (Policy Center on the First Year of College, 2002).

First-year programs are a common occurrence on campuses today, and many well renowned scholars in student affairs have devoted research to understanding and analyzing these programs. Alexander Astin is a leader in the field of research on retention and student attrition, and his research focused on factors for student persistence, and first-year programs. Astin's (1984) theory of involvement states that the more involved a student is both intellectually and socially, the more likely they are to persist. Astin (1984) also studied the importance of a core curriculum, and how a common curriculum can help students find a sense of belonging.

Vincent Tinto is another researcher who focused his studies on first-year experience and retention. In a 1993 study, Tinto identified three main factors leading to student departure in a 1993 study: academic difficulty, confusion around educational and vocational goals, and failure to get involved or feel involved in the social and intellectual aspects of the institution. Tinto's

(1993) findings correlate with Astin's (1984) theory about student involvement because both studies concluded that student involvement is highly important to retention. After reviewing retention studies by Astin and Tinto, it is evident that first-year programs play a significant role in allowing students to become socially and academically connected to their school community. Tinto recognized the importance of academic integration and social integration, which is what many first-year seminars aim towards. The academic and social aspects of the first-year experience build off of each other and impact a student's ability to thrive at an institution.

Other prominent individuals in this line of research include Ernest Pascarella, Patrick Terenzini and Betsy Barefoot. Pascarella & Terenzini found a positive link between exposure to orientation experiences and persistence in a 1991 study. Taking this 1991 study a step further, Barefoot (2000) evaluated common themes guiding institutions to improve retention. These themes were focused around first-year seminars and orientations similar to those studied by Pascarella & Terenzini. Likewise, Barefoot (2000) also found a positive correlation between retention and first-year seminars. In addition to this positive link, Barefoot (2000) recognized that first-year programming opportunities are typically created to positively impact student retention. These brief descriptions of research convey the positive impact of first-year programming on retention, and are beneficial to understanding first-year experience programs at the three institutions that will be examined.

Campus Visits

Linn-Benton Community College

Programs at Linn Benton Community College are a reminder that first-year experience is not just about taking a first-year class and moving on. At Linn-Benton, a student's first-year experience includes academic and student development resources to help them feel like a part of the community, as well as support them through their first year in the college setting.

Linn-Benton's courses are designed to assist high school students' transition into college. These courses help students start off their first-year experience with the support and guidance that they may need. The College Now program allows students to take high school classes for college credit while receiving high levels of support in order to transition more effectively. The 5th Year Program is designed for students to take a fifth year of high school as their first year of college on Linn-Benton's campus. This program offers guidance for students to make sure they do not fall through the cracks during their first year of college. The 5th Year Program promotes access to the first year of college for students as the high school takes on the cost of their first year of college.

This program opens up the opportunity for more students in the community to attend college. Lastly, Career Academies, which is a free five-week program for high school students to explore different technical programs each week, allows students to get an idea of what they would be learning and doing in a technical program. The Career Academies program allows students to make a more informed decision in their first year about career and major discernment (Linn-Benton, 2014). Linn-Benton's community partnerships with local high schools establish an early connection to higher education, college access, and future retention and completion.

Linn-Benton also has several programs that enhance students' first term experience in college to better ensure completion. The first of these programs is the Dual Enrollment program in partnership with Oregon State University. Through this program, a student can be dually enrolled and take classes at both Linn-Benton Community College and Oregon State University. Eighty-five percent of Linn-Benton's students transfer to Oregon State University (Linn-Benton, 2014). This program creates a way for first-year students to build a relationship with Oregon State University, while also receiving support through small, affordable classes at the community college (Linn-Benton, 2014). Oregon State often refers students to take entry-level classes at Linn-Benton to help with access and cost. This relationship is not seen as competition for students between the two schools; instead, it is viewed as a partnership between the community and the two institutions. Astin's (1984) involvement theory is represented in this partnership; by allowing increased student involvement during the first year at the university, these students are more likely to persist and continue their college education.

Destination Graduation is Linn-Benton's traditional first-year experience course that is mandatory for all students with less than 24 credit hours. This course covers traditional first-year experience topics such as locating and utilizing resources on campus, becoming involved in campus activities, or how to apply for federal financial aid. A unique aspect of Linn Benton's course is that in order to pass this class, a student must meet with an academic adviser and complete an educational plan (Linn-Benton, 2014). This requirement forces students to reflect on their educational experience and set goals for academic and personal achievement.

Tinto (1993) notes that social and academic integration leads to persistence among college students. One suggestion for Linn-Benton to improve its first-year students' experience would be to include social activities into current programs in order to help students find community within their first year. From the first-year programs previously described, Linn-Benton has demonstrated effective integration of first-year students' academic experience into the campus community.

Oregon State University

Oregon State University's (OSU) dedication to its students' first-year experience embodies the importance of attempting to get new students involved and integrated into the community. While the campus visit itself did not necessarily touch on OSU's first-year experience, additional research on its approach to first-year experience yielded clear, easy to navigate information on what it might look like for students of different backgrounds to attend OSU.

First, it is important to note the accessibility of information around OSU's first-year experience, which is vital for individuals to gain a clear understanding of opportunities to transition into the university. OSU has a separate first-year experience website, with information clearly labeled around the New Student and Family Programs office and its relationship to OSU's mission and goals, the programs in place for new students, schedules of required exams and sessions, and resources available for families (Oregon State University, 2014). With the mission to serve as a campus leader in facilitating the transition process for new students and their parent/family members, "[New Student and Family Outreach] promotes and enhances successful transitions through collaborative programs and outreach" (Oregon State University, 2014). New Student and Family Outreach supports OSU's goal of providing persistence and success through graduation, and enhanced retention.

One program that OSU implements to help new students transition into college is the START program, a summer program for newly admitted students. The START program is essentially an orientation to the university, with activities ranging from campus tours to dinner with current and new students and academic sessions with advisors. There are variations of the START program to suit different student populations such as "traditional" first-year students, transfer students, international students, and degree partnership students (Oregon State University, 2014). The First-year and International START are overnight programs, granting students the opportunity to meet and engage with other new students over a longer time span. The Transfer START is a tailored, one-day program designed to touch on the more important topics for students who may already be familiar with higher education structures. Additionally, OSU also offers online versions and "On the Road" sessions in San Francisco, Honolulu, and Anchorage for students who will not be in Corvallis at the time of the scheduled START at OSU, making the information widely accessible (Oregon State University, 2014).

OSU's CONNECT is a compilation of over 75 different activities designed for students to meet peers, find community, and get connected to resources on campus. Events range from exploring Corvallis to gaming nights to college experience sessions. The programs are scheduled over orientation week and into the start of the academic year with a breadth large enough to serve a vast student population. CONNECT exemplifies Astin's (1984) involvement theory in that OSU is providing extensive opportunities for students to become more involved on campus, in the community, and with students, staff, and faculty. Additionally, OSU offers U-Engage, a first-year course designed to create a small classroom experience for students to intimately engage with a chosen current event and discover new campus resources to facilitate a project (Oregon State University, 2014).

OSU's efforts to facilitate students' transition into school inevitably impact retention given that the first-year experience is vital for a student to feel welcomed, engaged, and supported. OSU's first-year experience website also posts a transparent document of OSU's First-Year Experience Task Force findings, which lays out recommendations for the university to improve upon (Brubaker-Cole & Hoffman, 2012). The task force clearly outlines the need to improve residential education programs, first-year experience courses, and provide more opportunities for academic exploration (Brubaker-Cole, 2012). One suggestion for OSU would be to clearly identify its first-year experience programs' impact on retention rates on their first-year experience website. Students and families should have access to the impact that OSU's efforts have on student success and retention.

Reed College

Many first-year courses are foundational in nature and help students with the transition to college, while others are more academic based, preparing students for the rigors of collegiate study. Reed College is a liberal arts institution that provides an academic based first-year experience, rather than traditional college readiness courses. Reed College offers a variety of courses that are discussion based or take place in a lab setting; Reed tailors their first-year experience course to match this style of learning. Reed College requires all freshmen to take a Humanities 110 course that is highly academically focused and covers the topic of ancient civilization. This discussion-based course includes 10 to 12 faculty members from diverse disciplines who provide an array of lectures and guidance each week. Although the content remains the same each year, how the professor chooses to present the material may change. In addition, allowing a different professor to teach each week is unique and helps students acclimate to various teaching styles (Reed College, 2014).

The Humanities 110 course corresponds with the principle of best practice related to setting the bar high to promote student learning (Kuh, 1999). During the final year of study at Reed College, all students are required to submit a formal written thesis in order to graduate. Beginning with this Humanities 110 course is a way for students to understand what will be expected of them academically during their time at Reed. One drawback to this type of first-year experience course is that it offers minimal space for students to learn about campus resources, and explore career goals and major interest or areas of involvement and leadership opportunities.

Aside from the Humanities course, Reed College recognizes the need to provide social support as well by offering an opportunity for students to be welcomed into the community through a mentorship program. The Peer Mentor Program "strives to create spaces, through relationships, programs, and other educational opportunities, for students from a diversity of backgrounds to engage in conversations about the educational experience at Reed" (Reed College, 2014). This Peer Mentor Program is open to all first-year students, but students who come from marginalized backgrounds are the target population for this program. The focus on diversity mentioned in the peer mentor program mission is key. The Office for Inclusive Community recognizes the importance of supporting students and provides programs for first-year students to accept and challenge their identities. The Peer Mentor Program pairs incoming students with a current student during the Peer Mentor Program Odyssey. The Odyssey is a four-day retreat that takes place before the regular freshman summer orientation. Those who have enrolled in the program will attend the retreat, and are allowed to bring a family member or friend with them. This retreat offers a chance for students to bond with their mentors and learn about the campus, academics, student life, and the surrounding Portland area. The ability for parents and friends to attend the retreat is what sets this orientation apart from others. Since students are able to learn about Reed alongside people whom are close to them, students grow comfortable with the transition before they officially become a Reed student.

These two programs at Reed College show how valuable it can be to alter programs for your institution. A highly academic based first-year program may not work for all institutions, but at an academically rigorous institution like Reed it seems to fit well. One area for improvement is offering students a space to learn more about career opportunities and resources on campus through an introduction course, since this is not offered in the current first-year experience course. Another area for improvement is assessment; during the site visit, assessment regarding the Peer Mentor Program and Humanities course was not mentioned. Assessment for the Peer Mentor Program could be highly valuable in order to understand if this program is benefiting freshmen, or if areas of this program need to be improved. Overall, Reed offers programs for first-year students that have been tailored to their needs and the academic nature of the institution.

Principles of Good Practice

The first-year experience programs at the three institutions mentioned above- Oregon State University, Linn-Benton Community College, and Reed College- all exemplify three of the principles of good practice that Blimling and Witt outline in their work *Good Practice in Student Affairs: Principals to Foster Student Learning* (1999). The first is Principle #1: Engaging Students in Active Learning (Blimling & Whitt, 1999). This principle is shown through each institution's ability to create programs that require students to be actively engaged in their first-year experience. Whether that engagement is through a class, an immersion experience, involvement in the community, or engagement with another institution, all of these institutions help their first-year students to actively learn and engage in their experiences. This engagement in active learning makes students responsible for being prepared and ready for their educational experiences and begins the process of students taking responsibility for their own educational journeys.

The second is Principle #6: Forging Educational Partnerships that Advance Student Learning (Blimling & Whitt, 1999). Linn-Benton and Oregon State University's relationship exemplifies educational partnerships that are working to advance their students' learning. By not seeing the other school as competition for students, but instead as a partner who can help to retain and keep students in school, these two institutions have created a relationship that is all about how they can best support their students, even if that means going to a different institution to get that support. First-year experience courses also offer a way for student affairs professionals to partner with those in academics to create relationships that show students how to navigate the university in a more holistic manner. These courses can help students to understand what their resources are within student services as well as what to expect from a college level course academically. Strong partnerships between student affairs professionals and academic professionals allow institutions of higher education to create stronger foundations for their first-year students.

The last is Principle #7: Building Supportive and Inclusive Communities (Blimling & Whitt, 1999). All three of these institutions are working to create first-year experiences for their students that will bring them into a community where they feel welcomed and supported. The first-year experience programs discussed bring students into institutions that actively show them support and care in their educational journeys. This integration into the community is key to students feeling connected enough to want to stay and be a productive member of the community.

Each of the programs mentioned above also work to build more inclusive communities through their first-year experience programs. Each institutional type serves a different type of student body that may attract different types of students. The affordability and flexibility of Linn-Benton Community College may bring more low-income, first generation, and/or adult learners to their institution. The research and land/space/sea/sun grant aspects of Oregon State may bring in more students who are interested in research or the science, technology, and engineering fields. The liberal arts focus of Reed College may bring in more students who are interested in a very academic experience with more personal attention. The first-year experience programs at each institution takes these things into account and work to help students find their place within the institution instead of just leaving students to figure this out on their own.

Implications for the Student Affairs Profession

Through the first-year programs Linn-Benton Community College, Oregon State University, and Reed College implement, it can be seen that there is often a strong link between a positive first-year experience and retention within a particular institution. If a student feels well connected, prepared, and welcomed, they are more likely to remain enrolled (Astin, 1984). With that being said, it will be vital for student affairs professionals to support and continue to develop the first-year experience for students at any institution.

By considering and utilizing Tinto's (1993) theory and Astin's (1984) involvement theory, student affairs practitioners can work to tailor and implement programs that reflect some of the struggles students may face in their first year of college. While the theories certainly do not provide an outline of what needs to be done in order to retain students, they do provide some flexible guidelines that may help to inform program development for students to be successful not only during their first year but through graduation. For instance, Linn-Benton Community College needs to consider Astin's (1984) involvement theory and attempt to implement more social programs into the first-year experience, a change that may allow students to discover community with individuals they may not have the opportunity to connect with otherwise.

Additionally, by creating intentional task force committees that serve to take a critical look at existing programs, assess student engagement, and make recommendations for improved practice, institutions may alter the first-year experience drastically. By being humble and transparent around existing programs, universities have the opportunity to develop and grow the first-year experience to better engage students in areas of the institution that they may not otherwise engage in.

Conclusion

The Linn-Benton Community College, Oregon State University, and Reed College campus visits provided a diverse view into varying styles of first-year engagement. All institutions function around different missions and goals, yet all articulate the importance of students' first-year experience. By facilitating transition into college, institutions are in a unique opportunity to implement, tailor, and expand on historic theories in order to appropriately serve changing student demographics and their accompanying needs. Ultimately, first-year experiences have the weight to drastically influence student retention and success, however success might be defined. Identifying the importance of first-year programs, and consistently striving to better new and existing programs will allow institutions to remain on the forefront of accommodating changing student demographics and enhancing the student experience. It will be necessary for institutions to adopt a culture of inquiry; one that does not simply rest on existing structures and programs, but works to transform the current field to engage students fully in their education from the very beginning of their first-year experience.

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Graduation Rates Among Student-Athletes: Research to Practice

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Student-athlete graduation rates and, in particular, graduation rates for African American male student-athletes are dismal compared to other student populations on college campuses. This text examines factors that have the potential to increase graduation rates among this population through a literature review. These factors include providing student-athletes a scholarship to the institution that they attend, as well as their engagement through career and other support services offered at colleges and universities. In addition, career development with student-athletes and peer mentorship are discussed as ways that a graduate student can intervene with student-athletes to improve the likelihood of obtaining an undergraduate degree. With regard to career development, resume building, creating cover letters, and understanding the importance of informational interviewing and networking are all discussed as ways for student-athletes to engage in their future career trajectory. Peer mentorship is articulated as a way for student-athletes to develop rapport and a relationship with another student who can aid in their academic and future success.

Keywords: student-athletes, African American males, graduation rates

Introduction

African American males who also identify as student-athletes graduate at much lower rates than their same-race counterparts who do not participate in athletics (Harper, Williams, & Blackman, 2013). This information led me to conduct literature-based research to determine ways in which this could be mitigated through engagement between student-athletes and various support services. Research showed that White student-athletes' and Black women student-athletes' graduation rates are not alarmingly low, and thus, I only looked at the African American male subgroup of the student-athlete population. There are a plethora of reasons as to why graduation rates are low among the studied population, such as high emphasis being placed on the *athlete* identity rather than the *student* identity and the commercialization of collegiate sports. It is important to begin delving into ways in which graduation rates for African American male student-athletes can begin to climb. The reality is that less than two percent of college athletes become professional athletes (Harper et al., 2013), which means that it is vital that graduation rates and future career success in fields other than sports become a priority for student-athletes. There are many viable solutions to mend this graduation-rate deficiency, but my purpose was to find a way in which I, as a fellow student peer of student-athletes at Seattle University (SU) could have an impact on the low graduation rates. My literature-based research focused on career support services as a platform to obtain higher graduation rates for student-athletes at a Division I university.

Literature Review

African American Student-Athletes

Racial identity is an important piece to understanding why graduation rates are so dismal for specific student populations. Research shows that African Americans in particular are socialized to prioritize sports over academics at a very young age (Benson, 2000). Young boys are taught to believe that they are better at sports than they are in the classroom, and this heightened level of sports socialization exists in the family, neighborhood, and media within African American communities (Beamon, 2010). This can be seen as a cause to the current overrepresentation of African American males in certain sports, such as basketball and football (Beamon, 2010). With the increased socialization to athletics, African American men are also susceptible to being stereotyped by their collegiate peers as only dedicating time to their athletic endeavors and letting their academics fall by the wayside. One consequence that comes with this stereotyping is stereotype threat. "Stereotype threat is anxiety or stress triggered by the fear that one might fulfill or be associated with a relevant stereotype" (Johnson-Ahorlu, 2013, p. 383). Stereotype threat can affect any social group as long as the corresponding stereotype is contextually relevant. "For student-athletes, the risk of confirming the stereotype of athletes as less engaged and competent academically than other students may hinder their performance on academic tasks" (Yopyk & Prentice, 2005, p. 331). From a young age, African American men are taught to value sports over school. They also are faced with confronting stereotype threat. Both of these factors affect their academic performance and graduation rates.

Graduation Rates

Graduation rates, specifically at Division I schools, for African-American student-athletes who play football and basketball are consistently among the worst in the nation (Lewis, 2010). Even though the "NCAA strives to ensure the academic commitment of student-athletes and increase the likelihood that they will earn degrees" (Southall, 2012, p. 19), this is not happening. One variable as to why the graduation rates for African American male student-athletes are so low is that "American college athletics have become wholly commercialized" (Lewis, 2010, p. 12). This commercialization has drawn attention away from the necessity of these athletes to succeed in the academic realm. Specifically for student-athletes in revenue-generating sports such as basketball and football, "a culture of greed is at the root of [these] pitiful graduation rates" (Lewis, 2010, p. 13). While there are many aspects that can contribute to low graduation rates among the African American male student-athlete population, there are factors that have been attributed to an increase in graduation rates. One factor that has been shown to increase graduation rates among African American males is their ability to secure a scholarship to the institution they attend. African American student-athletes on full scholarship are far more likely to persist through degree attainment because their financial wellbeing is fully dependent on their status as both a student and an athlete (Harper et al., 2013). Unfortunately, doling out scholarships to all student-athletes is not a feasible way to increase graduation rates, so additional alternatives need to be assessed.

Career Services Support

If students are cognizant of their career choices throughout their college experience, it may be more likely that attaining a degree is of utmost priority. In particular, "the importance of engaging student-athletes in educationally purposeful activities and enriching educational experiences, both inside and outside of the classroom, has been well established in literature" (Harper et al., 2013, p. 4). Another way to accomplish this would be to familiarize student-athletes with a career services support network. Student-athletes who utilize support services have found them beneficial towards the success of their academic and future careers (Keim & Strickland, 2004). Due to the positive correlation between support services and student-athlete success, it is crucial to look at the impact that career services support may have on student-athletes' success in completing a degree and graduating.

Using Literature-Based Research To Inform Practice

Because student-athletes were a student population that I had no previous experience working with but was passionate about, I wanted to pursue an opportunity that would allow me to work with this targeted student group. After some searching, I was fortunate to begin an internship with Athletics at SU in the spring of 2014. This internship has provided me the platform to work with student-athletes in a variety of different capacities, but the most exciting has been the ability to work with students as they begin to move through the career discernment process. The research suggests graduation rate deficiency among African American male student-athletes at Division I schools, and while I attempted to pay particular attention to these students, I was charged with working with all student-athletes in my capacity as a graduate intern.

I sat down with my internship site supervisor and expressed my interest in working with students on their career development and progression through their collegiate experience. We developed a project list and the first large project I worked on to accomplish this was to create a SU Student-Athlete Career Development Guide in collaboration with Career Services. This comprehensive manual begins with an introduction about the importance of career discernment for student-athletes. The document serves as a how-to guide for student-athletes to create a resume, write cover letters, network with professionals, and prepare for both informational and job interviews. The document concludes with a list of resources available internally at Seattle University as well as resources that are available outside of SU for student-athletes. This guide, which was introduced to the Athletics' staff and student-athletes in winter quarter 2015, is a great starting point for student-athletes to begin engaging with their career development process. Student-athletes have the ability to use the guide to begin this process and then further engage with staff after they have created drafts of documents and plans for interviews.

The research discussed earlier in this text would suggest that career support services increase the importance of obtaining a degree for a student. The literature review that I conducted informed the importance of finding ways I could provide peer support to student-athletes to work through the career discernment process. Throughout my experience as a graduate intern in Athletics at Seattle University, I have been able to provide this peer support in two specific ways. First, my participation as a content specialist and monitor at student-athlete study hall has given me the opportunity to work with a large number of student-athletes. I have been able to converse with students about their course work and how they are progressing through their athletic and academic endeavors at SU. Additionally, I have spoken with students about career discernment through resume and cover-letter building, beginning the job search process, and the importance of informational interviewing and networking. I have also worked with student-athletes one-on-one as a mentor. Through conversations with students, I not only discuss their academic and athletic goals but really strive to get students thinking about their career discernment process. While I stress the importance of visiting the on-campus career services office to gain even more support, I think that providing this service to the few student-athletes I mentor can have a great impact in the long term on their graduation rates and career development.

Conclusion

Knowing that research has indicated the importance of student-athlete support services beyond their athletic endeavors has given me new energy around working with this population in the future and has affirmed my desire to work within intercollegiate athletics. Albeit brief, the literature-based research that I conducted informed, and will continue to inform, my professional practice. I have learned the importance of not only directing student-athletes to resources and support services on campus that can assist in their student development, but to infuse elements of support services into my personal interactions with student-athletes. For example, having conversations with student-athletes around resume development and career discernment while in academic study hall can provide students with the means to gain information without having to seek out additional support services. It truly highlights the importance of understanding specific student populations and finding ways in which we can best engage these students while they are in college and beyond as they enter the professional world.

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Empathetic Moments: A Student Affairs Reflection

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This reflection piece represents the culmination of my quarter-long exploration of the concept of empathy as it relates to my work within student affairs. Empathy is examined through the lens of my experiences as a college student and as an academic advisor at Bellevue College. The definition of empathy and its challenges and implications for use within academic advising are briefly discussed. This piece was adapted from a workshop that I presented at a department retreat in December 2014.

Keywords: empathy, academic advising

Tired and with a slight headache, I trudged up five flights of stairs to reach my car in the Bellevue College parking garage only to be greeted at the top by a watercolor of misty oranges and pinks in the west. Looking through the trees at the sunset, I reflected on how this is a metaphor for 5:00pm on Friday after the first week of every quarter of my last seven years in the Academic Advising Department at Bellevue College. The days are long, full of back-to-back sessions with students who forgot to register on time, were dropped for missing the tuition payment deadline, or registered two months back, but now want to change their entire schedule. My colleagues lament the loss of the stillness on campus between quarters and the return of the lines at the Bookstore and Coffee Shop. The Internet is always ten times slower than during the rest of the quarter, with the online class schedule lagging behind after each registration transaction. At the end of the week, however, we celebrate the completion of our Advising Marathon and swap stories of the students who came in shaking and breathless, but left smiling and vowing to follow-up before the next quarter. While we work in a profession that relies on businesses-like efficiency and one-stop customer service, it is, above all, true human connection that brings brightness and color to our days and leaves us with our biggest senses of accomplishment. Our success depends on our ability to serve as empathetic team members and educators, however challenging and vulnerable it might be to do so.

My student affairs journey began as a sophomore resident assistant at the University of Puget Sound. Growing up on the East Coast and not knowing anyone on campus, I was the sole proprietor of my story and it took a couple of semesters to ease into the new environment. In our first staff meeting, the resident director invited each of us to bring an item of importance to share. Someone brought a plant, another a drum, and I brought a stuffed dog, which I had been given as a child. I took my turn, explaining how my stuffed animal was about 12 years old and had comforted me through my tonsillectomy. While I do not always enjoy sharing out in a group setting, she had set the stage for that basement lounge area to be a warm, and safe space. Following our initial meeting, the resident director invited the staff members to meet one-on-one with her each week. I liked that she allowed us to venture outside of her office to chat over a cup of coffee in the Student Union Building or sit on a bench looking out over the quad. During these meetings, I felt like she listened to me wholeheartedly, whether I was sharing the frustrations I had in assisting quarreling roommates or connecting to a novel in my literature class. She had the ability to demonstrate genuine empathy; she understood my feelings, communicated them back to me, and allowed me to feel heard and thus, important.

In my current role as Associate Director of Academic Advising and manager of Bellevue College's First Year Experience course, I see themes of grit and resilience trending among topics used in student successes courses and pedagogy. In addition to traditional study skills—Reading for Meaning, Note Taking, and Test Taking—assessments like Henderson's (2014) "Resiliency Quiz" and "Resiliency Wheel" and the Duckworth's (2007) "Grit Scale" are now important early predictors of student success in college. In the literature, grit and resilience are attributed to a variety of factors including, the presence of support structures, personal strategies for success, and the individual's own ability to foster what Dweck (2006) coined a "growth mindset." In my own college experience, resilience existed, as I felt like I had built up enough strategies to successfully complete my coursework and had support from my father, a college professor; however, it was the empathy that I received from student affairs practitioners and faculty on campus that allowed me to flourish—to enjoy college, find my place, begin to share my story, and, in turn, form meaningful relationships with others. Likewise, researcher Brené Brown (2007) found that in her work, "the stories of resilience shared a common core…. empathy is at the center" (p. 33). Empathy, forming genuine connections with students and colleagues, is a common strand running through my own story and continues to inspire my work. I also believe that practicing empathy with students is the true driver for college student success and institutional heart.

The concept of empathy has existed in writing since Adam Smith's (1759) text, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, and yet, it is oftentimes confused for sympathy, feeling pity or sorry for someone else's circumstances. Chances to practice empathy are also tossed aside due to lack of time or fear of traipsing into the unknown. Empathy is, in order of these steps: first, seeing the world as others see it (perspective taking); second, remaining non-judgmental; third, understanding another person's feelings; fourth, communicating your understanding of that person's feelings, either verbally or non-verbally (Brown, 2007, p. 37). There is research, though, that students in our institutions are not as able to move through the steps of empathy as past generations. Sharon Daloz Parks (2011) cites a 2010 study by researcher Sara Konath:

> College students today are 40 percent less empathetic than those of thirty years ago, with the numbers plunging primarily after 2000…. a millennial mixture of video games, social media, reality TV and hyper-

> competition have left young people self-involved, shallow and unfettered in their individualism and ambition. (p. 183)

Imagining an institution, a student affairs division, or student body devoid of empathy conjures visions of mere transactions without learning, growth, or human connection and understanding. I believe that this statistic also leads us to an unwritten responsibility as educators. We need to seek ways in which we can break through the shield of technology and pop culture to get to know our students and how they form connections. At its root, the presence of empathy protects students from isolation, letting them know that they are not alone in their emotions. Additionally, empathy builds a web of connections between individuals so that each person experiences a heightened state of resiliency and cannot metaphorically fall through the cracks.

Breaking through to students and demonstrating care with each other using the power of empathy can be time consuming, especially in a structured office setting with back-to-back 30-minute appointments and the constant chiming of technology. It can be challenging to remain in the moment while students share a piece of themselves when there is a knock at the door, the phone rings, or Outlook announces that the next appointment has arrived. As student affairs practitioners, intentionality is key because**:** "We pay more attention to remaining constantly busy with multiple projects which often lead to burnout, stress and illness than to balance our personal and work lives with activities that nourish our souls—rest, reflection, and caring human connection" (Rendon, 2005, p. 95). Linda Reisser (2002) also talks about "the rewards of working with students" (p. 51) and the "renewal experiences every day at the office, especially if we consciously co-create them. My most important ones involve savoring the relationships with students and staff" (p. 50). In each of their reflections, Rendon and Reisser address the intentionality of making time for relationships. For me, I have to open myself up to the seemingly mundane moments in the office. These moments range from how I choose to follow-up with colleagues in conversation at the coffeemaker—probing into why they may be having a rough day when they say they are doing "fine," but their tone tells another story—to the way I craft email responses to simple student requests (i.e.—asking why they might be interested in learning about the deadline for receiving a Withdrawal in class); I want to consistently leave the door open to developing relationships of care and trust.

About a year ago a student walked into my office wearing a Seahawks sweatshirt, knit cap, and expensive-looking headphones. He slumped down into a chair. This student's goal was to play basketball in Europe, but first he wanted to get a degree to give him a fallback option. His Math and English Assessment placed him into Adult Basic Education. This was his second or third attempt at trying to go to school because he struggled to find the time and transportation, taking care of a younger sibling, and needing to ride multiple buses to get to the college. He mumbled and kept glancing at his iPhone, but when I asked him about what brought him to school this time around, his voice was clearer, and he spoke about wanting to honor the memory of his father who had recently passed away. He felt like he needed to be strong for his family and also step up to the plate and earn his college education. In that moment, I felt myself connecting with his sadness and desire to be strong and resilient in the face of hardship, as the passing away of a parent shapes my own story. For me, it was important to not just launch into his steps for getting started, but to pause and acknowledge the challenges that he faces.

Empathy can also feel risky and leave us vulnerable and exposed when asked to invoke sensitive feelings and emotions and to be hyper-aware of the sensations brought up in our own stories. Advising at a community college, I interact with an incredibly diverse population of students, some who have had powerful experiences that I cannot even imagine. Currently, the Academic Advising and Counseling departments at Bellevue College share a front desk staff and space, so it is easy for students to quickly be referred to a trained counseling professional when they show emotion during an academic advising session. Additionally, recent national events have given rise to powerful conversations, protests, and opportunities to re-examine our own experiences and move beyond our comfort zones. In searching Google images representing empathy for a recent presentation, I found many pictures of worn sneakers and the phrase: "To Walk in Someone Else's Shoes." I do not believe that this is an accurate definition and prefer to side with Brown (2007), who states:

> I don't believe we can fully understand racism, sexism, homophobia, ageism or any other form of oppression, unless we've experienced it. However, I do believe that we are all responsible for constantly developing our understanding of oppression and recognizing our part in perpetuating it. Empathy is a powerful place to start…Ultimately, feeling shame about privilege actually perpetuates racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, ageism, etc. I don't have to know "exactly how you feel"– I just have to touch a part of my life that opens me up to hearing your experience. If I can touch that place, I stay out of judgment and I can reach out with empathy. This is where both personal and social healing begin." (p. 59)

I cannot pretend to understand what it is like to be a first-generation student working nights, caring for children, and taking three buses from south Seattle in order to attend college; those are shoes in which I have never walked. Listening to a student's story, though, I can empathize by hearing and recognizing the emotion in their story--whether it be frustration, exhaustion, confusion, or others--and finding times and places within my own life when I felt that way. As Elsa Barkley (1989) wrote in her essay, *African American Quilting: A Framework for Conceptualizing and Teaching African-American Women's History*, "I believe that all people can learn to center in another experience, validate it, and judge it by its own standards without need of comparison or need to adopt that framework as their own" (p, 922). Both Brown and Barkley recognize that we each carry our own unique lens or standpoint, and their desire is to free us from feeling that the only way to experience empathy is to fully take on another's experience as our own. Instead, Brown speaks to the even greater power of empathy to bring us to a place of healing through recognition of feeling and emotion; empathy lacks the duality that exists within comparison and judgment.

Empathy is an immeasurable soft skill, and many student affairs professionals choose our line of work due to an innate desire to help others and the pre-existence of such skills. Still, it is important to find applications in daily work and to practice empathetic responses with others. Unfortunately, it is impossible to argue that increased student success and retention directly correlate with the experience of receiving empathy; empathy looks and feels differently depending on who receives it. Questions on certain national assessments, such as the Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) allude to the hope that advisors will broach sensitive conversations and connect with students. The 2009 SENSE report by the Center of Community College Engagements lists student responses when asked if, "A college staff member talked with me about my commitments outside of school to help me figure out how many course to take" (p. 10). This question reveals that advisors are expected to move beyond discussing degree requirements listed on paper worksheets and check-in on the lives our students lead outside the classroom. Through discussion and role-playing at a recent department retreat, the Advising staff team explored and practiced empathetic responses to scenarios involving a student's inability to pay their tuition on time, a staff member's feeling that she may have misadvised a student, and a front line staff member's interaction with a student misinformed about which department to visit. During the demonstrations of situations involving the presence of empathy, a certain hush fell over the room, and we could sense a shift that brought the conversations to a deeper level. Within our Academic Advising department, we agreed that the willingness to lean into each conversation with a bit more empathy has the potential to result in a beautiful payoff: more successful and connected students and staff.

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