From Foster Care to College: The Role of Student Affairs Practitioners in Addressing the Challenges Foster Youth Face in Accessing Higher Education

For years, the number of former foster youth in the United States has grown while the number of former foster youth enrolled and graduating from higher education institutions continues to be disproportionately lower than that of their non-foster youth peers. The disparity in college-going rates is a result of the unique challenges that many former foster youth face in accessing and persisting in higher education. These challenges include the residual effects of the foster care experience, being an unseen population, lacking preparation for college, barriers to meeting essential needs, and navigating the intersection of multiple minority identities. This paper considers how student affairs professionals can minimize the challenges former foster youth encounter in pursuing higher education through the development of an increased understanding and acknowledgement of the unique needs and lived experiences of foster youth. This paper also offers recommendations for the implementation and improvement of services and programs to support former foster youth in accessing and persisting in higher education.

Asian International Students’ non-seeking behavior and institutional shortcomings regarding Mental Health Counseling

Since U.S. institutions of higher education welcome and actively recruit international students, the number of Asian international students on U.S. college campuses has increased and will continue to increase. Asian international students experience unique stressors which are more complicated and difficult compared to stressors of their American peers. However, U.S. institutions do not pay attention to Asian International students’ needs for psychological health counseling. Even though there is a need for mental health counseling to help these populations to adjust to U.S. campus culture, they tend to underutilize formal mental health counseling from universities because of their cognitive and cultural resistance, language barriers, as well as institutional ignorance and neglect in addressing their unique needs. Instead of blaming Asian international students for non-seeking behavior in mental health counseling, it is time for institutions to take ownership for actively promoting psychological health counseling services and creating a hiring policy on multiculturally and linguistically competent student affairs professionals including counselors in order to lessen AISs’ stress and enhance their success.

Supporting Graduate and Professional Students: Best Practices for Student Affairs Practitioners

Although graduate and professional students represent 14% of higher education enrollment in the United States, student affairs and higher education literature often overlook this population (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2011a; NCES, 2011b). The needs of postbaccalaureate students vary by both institution and academic discipline and it is important for student affairs professionals to understand how they can best support the population. This paper examines literature relating to the diverse needs of graduate and professional students, factors influencing retention of the population, the importance of academic and student affairs partnerships, and the role of the student affairs professional working with graduate and professional education. Recommendations include assessment of postbaccalaureate students’ needs and engagement, orientation programs for graduate and professional students, the establishment of graduate community centers, and developing a network of resources for student affairs professionals working with postbaccalaureate students.
Making the Unseen, Seen: Recruitment and Tracking of LGBT Populations

Ever-diversified student populations make up higher education universities. Among the many diverse groups, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) populations may be overlooked. This is due widely to the fact that students in this population define their diverse experience based on sexuality and identity, characteristics difficult to define based on traditional university tracking methods. In other words, these students make up an invisible population in terms of tracking and retention on most campuses.

Currently, most universities have no concrete way to identify an LGBT population. While some institutions make strides in funding and organizing LGBT Resource Centers, student government organizations, or clubs as a way to better represent the needs of LGBT students, very little data are collected to determine the number of students actually needing, utilizing, or assessing these resources. In fact, most of these organizations do not ask participants to even identify as part of the LGBT population.

Supporting Veteran Students: How Institutions of Higher Education can Bridge the Gap from Service Member to Civilian

Education benefits for returning military service members have been provided by the government for over 50 years. With a recent increase to those benefits, along with the end of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, institutions of higher education may soon experience, or may already be experiencing, an influx of enrollment from returning service members. However, the number of students utilizing their education benefits is far less than those who are eligible. This may, in part, be a result of colleges and universities not having done more to accommodate this population of students. This study was conducted to better inform higher education student affairs administrators and faculty about current veteran student issues and to suggest ways to excel in their support to veteran students, because they are a growing, underserved population with unique needs.

The role of student affairs in the collegiate press: Lessons from the campus newsroom

Campus newspapers have been fixtures at American colleges and universities since before the Civil War. For most professional journalists who attended postsecondary education working in their campus newsroom was an occupational rite of passage. But for all of the hands-on experience that the campus newspaper provides the academics that study journalism education have myopically focused on the student paper’s role in defining press freedoms and have largely ignored the learning outcomes that result when students engage in the news making process. This paper makes the argument that student affairs—the division that focuses on student experience outside of the classroom—is uniquely positioned to assess the learning outcomes of student media programs and provide best practices that will increase their effectiveness.

The Higher Education Experience for Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Students and Implications for Student Affairs Professionals

Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) students are a group that are extremely variable and often times invisible. They are invisible because the only way to identify them as LGB is if they self-identify. Students that identify as LGB or non-heterosexual may have unique needs and challenges like other underrepresented groups of students. It is the nature of the student affairs profession to address the
needs and challenges of all students in an effort to facilitate students’ academic success and development while seeking higher education. As an extension of that principle, it is the responsibility of student affairs professionals to understand how LGB students experience higher education and what that means in regards to their academic persistence and personal development while at an institution of higher education. There are many implications for student affairs professionals. They should understand the general climate of institutions of higher education for LGB students, the challenges that can arise for LGB students when facing negative climates, and the common challenges in formalizing an LGB identity. Student affairs professionals should understand these concepts in order to better serve LGB students. In order to understand these concepts it is important to look at how higher education has and continues to serve LGB students.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals: The Role of Community Colleges and Their Impact on Potential Beneficiaries

Annually, over 65,000 undocumented students graduate from high school and face limited higher education opportunities due to their undocumented status in the United States. For many, the most feasible option of participating in higher education consists of the community college due to several of its features such as affordability and proximity to home. As of June, 2012 President Barack Obama implemented a Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy for undocumented youth in the United States which provides the recipients protection from deportation. Yet, there are 350,000 potential beneficiaries who need to re-enroll in school in order to be eligible for this policy. In this paper, an analysis of the role of the community college sector in serving the potential beneficiaries who need to enroll or re-enroll in school to meet the DACA education eligibility requirements is provided. Recommendations are also made for community colleges to further encourage these institutions to better serve the needs of this particular community.

Campus Safety: Defining Campus Safety and Determining Who is Responsible

Campus crises have begged the attention of student affairs and other campus leaders for several decades. Campuses are more proactively modifying policies and procedures in response to catastrophic campus crises during the past 10 years, which include such notable crises as the shooting at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and the child rape scandal at Pennsylvania State University. The number of campus crises and their severity continues to increase for many reasons, including an increased pressure for open enrollment and the campuses’ improved ability to serve students with disabilities and mental illnesses. Unfortunately, not all campuses have clearly defined policies, specifically policies indicating who should be responsible to handle these sensitive situations, how to properly manage them, and what constitutes a crisis. Frankly, a clear definition of campus safety rarely exists on most campuses. This paper reviews the scholarly literature pertinent to campus safety in an effort to determine who, in general, should be responsible for campus safety and it identifies key trends related to campus safety that can inform policymaking, planning, and programming. This paper concludes with the recommendation that the student-affairs division is properly positioned, in most cases, to manage campus safety. Additionally, I suggest that by understanding, preparing and planning for crises, campuses can prevent some of these tragedies from occurring and more effectively manage them.

Papers without Abstracts
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Signature Experiences for All: Creating Inclusivity for Students of Color on Campus

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Weaving connections in Higher Education to create an inclusive community: Implications for Student Affairs Practitioners

Restorative Justice in Higher Education: Updating Student Codes and the Student Conduct Process to Best Serve Students

First-Year Student Engagement: Practices, Programs, and Services That Keep Students Retained at Institutions of Higher Education

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 Persistence of Low-Income Students of Color Attending Predominantly White Institutions

Why Wasn’t I Taught About My White Privilege?: Recommendations for Student Affairs Professionals