

ABSTRACT

HOW FACULTY SOCIALIZATION OCCURS: THE FACULTY MEMBERS' PERSPECTIVE

By

Connell Alsup

Considerable research has been done in an attempt to understand how socialization occurs for new faculty who have been trained in graduate programs. Little is found in the literature that helps in understanding how new law faculty, who have been only professionally trained, become socialized. Despite the fact that law students of today are more diverse than a century ago, the legal academy continues to be heavily influenced by Langdell, dean of Harvard Law School in the late nineteenth century, in its approach to law faculty hiring and use of the Socratic dialogue, using the case method, to teach law. Langdell believed that new law faculty, who happened to be from the same socioeconomic background as their students, required no experience in the practice of law and only needed to be legal scholars with potential to teach law. The purpose of this exploratory qualitative study was to find answers, from the perspective of new law faculty, how socialization occurs for law faculty who had been only professionally trained for the practice of law.

Research of faculty in other disciplines reveals that the promotion and tenure process provides the best example of how socialization occurs for new faculty. To that end, socialization theory as it relates to the promotion and tenure of faculty with Ph.D.s was the framework used in this exploratory study. Fourteen recently tenured and tenure-track law faculty at 10 ABA-approved law schools, who did not possess Ph.D.s were interviewed. This study reports findings that can provide deans, tenure advisory

committees, and university provosts with insight into how tenure-track law faculty perceive their socialization experiences. This study also compares law faculty socialization experiences to other disciplines, suggestions to improve law faculty socialization, and the impact that *U.S. News and World Report* rankings and law faculty socialization have on a diverse student body.

ABSTRACT

GENDERISM: TRANSGENDER STUDENTS, BINARY SYSTEMS AND HIGHER EDUCATION

By

Brent Laurence Bilodeau

The goal of this study was to make visible the practical issues and unseen power structures of binary gender systems on campus through the experiences of transgender students. My primary research question was: What could the experiences of transgender students reveal about the nature of genderism and its characteristics in higher education? During the 2005-2006 academic year, ten transgender students from two large Midwestern universities chose to volunteer for the study. Participants were white, graduate and undergraduate students, with ages from 18 to 50. In terms of gender identity, they used a broad range of self identifying terms: *transsexual*, *tranny boy*, *genderqueer* or *androgynous*, *M to S (male to something else)*, *two-spirit*, *third gender* and *still defining* (gender identity was still not known). I conducted semi-structured interviews with the participants and used the constant comparative method and grounded theory to interpret data. The study's emerging themes were generally informed by postmodern feminist, queer theory, and critical postmodern perspectives.

As enacted at the two universities, genderism emerged as a social system of structural inequality with an underlying assumption that there are two, and only two genders. This binary system had four primary characteristics: (1) There was a forced social labeling process that sorts and categorizes all individuals into male or female

identities, often at an institutionalized level. (2) There was social accountability for conforming to binary gender norms with related punishments. Individuals who failed to conform were viewed as deviant and/or having a disorder. (3) Marginalization was enacted through an overt and covert privileging of binary systems. (4) Binary systems promoted invisibility of gender non-conforming identities and isolation of transgender persons, making transgender identities inaccessible.

ABSTRACT

EXAMINING THE VALUE FACULTY SEARCH COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS PLACE ON FORMAL TEACHER TRAINING IN THE SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS FIELDS RESULTS OF A NATIONAL STUDY

By Jeremy Hernandez

The use of formal teacher preparation programs are seen by many as a means to better develop the teaching skills of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) doctoral students as well as to promote the ideals of the scholarship of teaching and learning. No one has addressed whether participation in these programs are advantageous during the STEM faculty hiring process, however. This study sought to address this gap. I examined the value placed on participation in these programs by STEM faculty search committee chairpersons during the pre-interview stages of the hiring process within the context of the last search they chaired. This was accomplished in two ways. First, I conducted an archival search of *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and collected data on 1387 tenure-track, assistant professor level STEM job postings from across academia. I used analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Tukey HSD post hoc tests to look for differences between teaching duties mentioned and for requirements of statements/evidence of teaching. Second, I invited 705 of the STEM faculty search committee chairpersons identified in the *Chronicle* search to take a quantitative 20-question survey online of which 206 participated. Participants were first asked about themselves and their institutions as well as the context of the last search they chaired. Participants were then asked to evaluate the teaching credentials of different pairings of fictional candidates' vita and to rank order five fictional candidates with varying

credentials within the context of the last search they chaired. I performed chi-square tests to evaluate the two fictional candidate comparison responses and a combination of Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA tests and Mann-Whitney U-tests to evaluate responses to the five candidate rank order question. The findings indicate that STEM search committee chairpersons place value on formal teacher training experiences, although the value given is dependent on many different factors such as STEM discipline, institution type, whether postdoctoral experience was required, the experience level of the chairperson, and expectation of time commitments to research and teaching.

ABSTRACT

COLLEGE STUDENTS' REASONS TO ATTEND COLLEGE AND LEARNING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

By

Jennifer P. Hodges

The purpose of the current study was to investigate the potential relationship between reasons for attending college and participation in a learning community. I was particularly interested in investigating the processes by which students shaped their own educational environments through the choices they made regarding curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular opportunities and the role reasons for attending college played in those processes. The specific focus of the study was the question: What relationship, if any, exists between Michigan State University College of Natural Science students' reasons to attend college and whether or not they participate in the Lyman Briggs School (LBS), a residential learning community. I used a mixed method approach, utilizing both a survey and semi-structured interviews.

The primary purpose of the survey was to explore the importance that participants placed on 30 specific reasons for attending college and whether or not those reasons were related to participation in a residential learning community. Factor analysis suggested five subscales of reasons for attending college: Individual Development, Civic Leadership, Personal Connections, Default-Indifferent, and Expectation-Driven. Demographic characteristics were examined for significant differences in learning community participation. There were no differences in participation based on sex, racial/ethnic identification, or social class. Degree aspiration and parent's educational attainment did show a significant difference between those who chose to participate in a

learning community program and those who did not. Both the individual survey questions and the subscales were examined to determine if any of these items was related to the decision to participate in a learning community program. Five individual items were significantly different.

The 23 semi-structured interviews resulted in four themes about the purpose of college: preparing for life after college, broadening horizons, meeting new people, and taking advantage of the opportunity in order to be a role model to others. The first theme had five components: determining their calling, learning to be an adult/growing up, acquiring general knowledge needed for life after college, gaining the credential necessary for their chosen career, and learning specific skills/knowledge. The participants also talked about how their ideas about the purpose of college were shaped by parents and other family members, high school teachers and counselors, peers, higher education institution official representatives, the media, and current college students.

In addition to talking about their goals for college, participants also shared their reasons for participation in a number of different curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities. These decisions were shaped by not only their reasons for attending college, but also by the perceptions they had about the value of the opportunities and the formulas they had developed for being a college student and for preparing for medical and/or graduate school. Regarding participation in the learning community, participants said that the LBS provided prestige, educational benefits, and logistical benefits. Non-participants expressed concern about not experiencing diversity of thought, the perceived difficulty of the LBS program, and the extra courses that would be involved.

ABSTRACT

CRITICAL FACTORS AFFECTING AFRICAN AMERICAN COLLEGE COMPLETION AT TWO SELECTIVE RESEARCH INSTITUTION

By

Vanessa M. Holmes

This exploratory study examined those critical factors associated with increasing the quality of the academic experience for the Black collegian. Additionally, this investigation considered how these factors may be replicated at similar postsecondary institutions. Two public flagship state universities, recognized as most selective, were identified for inclusion based upon their demonstration of academic success with African American college students. This study relied on the interviews of 17 participants. The analysis of the data was conducted utilizing a qualitative design that included both within-case analysis and cross-case analysis (Merriam, 1998) and (Miles and Huberman, 1994). This study exposed eight critical factors that have positively influenced the educational attainment and graduation of African American students at the two public flagship universities used in this investigation. The eight factors are: (a) Faculty Initiatives, (b) Institutional Expectations, (c) Institutional-Unit Response, (d) Presidential Priorities, (e) Retention/Support Programs, (f) Special Purpose Offices, (g) Student Affairs, and (h) Valuing Diversity through Collaboration. These factors should be employed in conjunction with one another. Thus, in order to effectively heighten the achievement of Black collegians, the institution should implement as many of the factors as possible to enable an amalgamation of the specified factors.

ABSTRACT

IN THE MIDDLE: HOW THE EXPERIENCE DEFINES MID-CAREER FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS

By

Michael E. Houdyshell

The mid-career time-frame in student affairs is often defined by title, position, and responsibility. It is also the most under-researched and misunderstood time-frame in student affairs (Benke & Disque, 1990; Carpenter, Guido-DiBrito, & Kelly, 1987; Evans, 1988). Missing in the mid-career definition and research is an examination and understanding of the broader mid-career experience. This study uses data from surveys and interviews of mid-career student affairs professionals to redefine and refocus the mid-career experience. It offers an expanded view of mid-career that includes descriptors such as titles and positions, but also includes an examination of the challenges and supports present for many professionals during this time-frame. Included in this examination is how complicated and yet satisfying this time-frame can be for mid-career professionals in student affairs, and its impact on their professional and personal lives.

ABSTRACT

TRANSNATIONAL TWINNING PARTICIPATION: INDIAN STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF ETHNIC IDENTITY

By

Jonathan Andrew Lembright

This dissertation utilized grounded theory to examine the experience of seven Indian students in their final year of enrollment in an academic twinning program offered by a regional state-run university in the Midwestern United States. The study collected data through extended semi-structured interviews to address the following research question: How do Indian students perceive and understand their ethnic identity as it relates to their participation in a twinning program?

Based on the experiences of the students, a theory emerged from the data titled engagement theory, which associates higher levels of host culture engagement with greater change to ethnic identity--change described as new and/or divergent values, traditions, beliefs, and lifestyle choices. The key factors associated with the emergence of the theory were the foundation of family, attitudes of predisposition, sociocultural safety net, host culture engagement, and cultural change/variation.

ABSTRACT

SUPERVISION IN STUDENT AFFAIRS: SYNERGISTIC SUPERVISION, PERSISTENCE IN AND COMMITMENT TO THE STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSION

By

Virginia E. Randall

This study explored areas of synergistic supervision, persistence in and commitment to the student affairs profession. Persistence was defined by an employee's intention to continue a career in student affairs, regardless of the institution in which they were employed. Commitment to the profession was defined by employee membership in professional organizations, conference attendance, conference participation such as presentations, and involvement in research and publication.

A two-part study was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative data gathering methods. Two hundred thirty-seven student affairs professionals working at public Michigan universities responded to an on-line survey. Regardless of their position title, gender, race/ethnicity, age, the length of time they had worked in the profession or professional organization membership, survey respondents reported that the actions of their supervisors were consistent with components of Winston and Creamer's (1997) synergistic supervision.

Interviews were conducted with nine student affairs professionals working in the functional areas of student life, career services or housing at public Michigan universities. Four discernable themes and patterns emerged related to

the interview participants' experiences as student affairs professionals and as supervisors: (a) mentoring, (b) balance, (c) focus on students, and (d) creating opportunities. Even though interview participants may not have been aware of the term, they participated in many of the elements of synergistic supervision. Interview participants perceived that the synergistic supervision they received gave them the opportunity to develop both personally and professionally and contributed to their persistence in the student affairs profession.

A different definition of commitment to the student affairs profession emerged through the interviews in the qualitative portion of this study. The new definition of commitment was based in a commitment to students and in making a difference in the lives of students and staff and was supported by synergistic supervision. Commitment to the profession was complimented by mentoring, finding balance between personal and professional goals and lives, and by creating opportunities for others to grow. The components of synergistic supervision received allowed both survey respondents and interview participants to demonstrate their commitment to the profession.

ABSTRACT

THE HEADSCARF BAN IN THE TURKISH UNIVERSITY: EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL EXPERIENCES OF PART-TIME UNVEILERS

By

Fatma Nevra Seggie

Chair: Ann E. Austin

This dissertation examines the impact of the higher education headscarf ban policy on the educational and cultural experiences of part-time unveilers. The term “part-time unveiler” is coined to refer to undergraduate female students who cover their hair in their private lives in line with the tenets of Islam, but who remove the headscarf while at a Turkish university as a result of the higher education headscarf ban policy. This is a qualitative study based on one-on-one interviews with thirty participants and informed by grounded theory. The study highlights how part-time unveilers understand and negotiate the policy, the challenges and opportunities associated with unveiling and the strategies they use in response to these, and the impact of the headscarf ban on part-time unveilers’ sense of identity. Based on the findings, one conclusion of the research is that the headscarf ban is more than just a policy of assess. It appears to be a value-laden, multifaceted, and complex policy with many layers, interpretations, and implications, and with multiple intended and/or unintended outcomes. Another conclusion to be drawn from the study is that the ban appears to impact part-time unveilers at different levels. It seems to affect their daily lives on campus, their personalities, and their identity development in numerous ways. The effects of the ban have long-term and short-term implicit and explicit implications for higher education, society, and the role of Islam, democracy, and secularism in Turkey, which may have an overall impact on the social, political, and economic contexts of the country. The dissertation makes recommendations for policy makers, administrators, and faculty. It also offers suggestions for future research.

ABSTRACT

A QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION OF OUT-OF-CLASS STUDENT-FACULTY INTERACTION IN AN UNDERGRADUATE RESIDENTIAL LEARNING COMMUNITY

By

Philip E. Strong

The central question of this study was to investigate the nature of and outcomes associated with out-of-class student-faculty interaction in a residential learning community (RLC). There exists a strong national movement in residential higher education for the development of residential learning communities. Using qualitative methodology, I interviewed 14 second-year undergraduate students who were pursuing a bachelor degree in the sciences. Ten of the 14 students were members of the same RLC.

From the analysis of the interview data, I found that the students interacted with their faculty outside of class at two distinct levels – rudimentary and heightened – as interpreted through four primary variables – frequency of interactions, quality of the interaction experiences, the intensity of interactions, and location of interactions. Students reported significant impacts on their academic, social, and personal development with the specific outcomes of increased student learning, motivation, self-worth, effort, and comfort level. Students also identified their perceptions of faculty members' roles at the institution as well as preferred characteristics of a 'good' faculty member. The residential learning community at the center of this study, and other institutionally developed programs, were shown to have positive impacts on students in their academic, personal, and social development as well as their access to heightened-level interactions with faculty.