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The Needs of Non-minority Students

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Western Kentucky University

Many students first enter into college not knowing what it is they are doing. Usually college is a place for students to find themselves, personally and socially. Before we can truly address the specific needs of students, we first need to aid them in the process of self exploration. Our non-minority students usually come from homes where decisions have been made for them, they really don't know how it feels to think and act for themselves. When they first step foot on a college campus, they are presented with many different cultures and ethnicities. In order for these students to appreciate and respect the differences around them, they must first understand their own culture and ethnicity, develop a sense of belonging, debunk the negative stereotypes, and come to terms with white privilege.

<div align="center">White Identity Development Model</div>

One can't truly understand and appreciate the differences of others if they aren't aware of their current prejudices about other cultures. An identity development model was created by Janet Helms in 1993 (Evans, 1998). This model was based on the process of moving toward a nonracist white identity and the abandonment of racism. The model is comprised of two phases: Abandonment of racism and Defining a nonracist white identity. Both phases included three statuses or stages that the individual will go through before reaching the nonracist white identity. Helm preferred to call the term status because stage places a limitation on the progress when

individuals are struggling with their racial identity. It can be in more than one stage at a given time.

During the development of this model, racism became the recurring theme, three types of racism was identified during the development. The first type of racism is individual racism, which is when personal attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors are designed to assure the individual of the superiority of whites and the inferiority of non-whites. The second type is institutional racism, which is where the social policies, laws, and regulations maintain the economic and social privileges of whites over non-whites. The last type of racism identified through the development of the White Identity Model is cultural racism. This particular type of racism is where the social beliefs and customs promote the idea that white culture is superior to non-white cultures (Evans, 1998).

Phase I: Abandonment of Racism

The first status of the identity development model is the *Abandonment of Racism* phase. This phase includes three stages: contact, disintegration, and reintegration. The first phase is contact. In the contact status, the individual first encounters the idea or actuality of black people. With given respect to their family background, the student may be ignorant in knowledge about black people and may not be fully aware of their whiteness and how it affects other cultures. This person also isn't aware of how they are benefited by racism and how it has oppressed others. The student in this status may have limited interactions with black people with interaction being mainly occupational. There is a very limited social interaction with people who are not white. During this stage, the individual will keep distant because they are in denial or trying to avoid sensitive racial information (Mercer, 2003). They are afraid of confrontation from nonwhites about the oppression whites have put them through.

The second status of the White Identity Development Model is the disintegration. In this phase, the student may begin to acknowledge their whiteness. This will cause emotional discomfort as they are starting to understand the moral dilemmas associated with being white. The emotional discomfort is also caused by the incongruence between how they feel and what society has taught them to feel about being white. To avoid the uncomfortable feelings, the individual may avoid contact with blacks. This person will also try to explain to family and friends that blacks aren't so bad while trying to state that racism doesn't exist and that is not the fault of whites.

The last status is reintegration. During this status, the individual is now recognizing a white identity. They recognize the societal stereotypes of minorities. The feelings of guilt and shame are now turned to feelings of fear and anger. The emotional dissonance from the last status may be expressed through the individual assuming white superiority (Mercer, 2003). The individual has now accepted their white identity and may express their feelings passively. Examples of how they will show their emotions are: removing themselves from situations where blacks are present, actively treating blacks as inferior, and participating in acts of violence to protect white privilege. The person in this stage now feels compelled to express their true emotion to nonwhites whether it is passively or actively. A person can stay in this status until something happens that causes abandonment of racism.

In the movie, *Higher Learning*, there was a character that tried his best to fit into every social clique. When he tried to interact with the minority students, he was treated poorly so he tried another group. It got to the point to where he was unable to find a group to fit into. He was approached by a guy, which happened to be a Neo-Nazi, about going to the bar with his friends. These guys accepted him as he was. He felt a sense of belonging so he began to act just like

these guys. Since he began to surround himself around these types of people, he began to acknowledge his whiteness and what it meant to be white. He even began to treat his peers as though they were inferior to him because he was white. At the end of the movie, he felt the need to actively prove his allegiance to the white race by killing someone of African American decent. After he committed the vicious crime, he began to feel guilty for what he had done and realized it was wrong. Instead of working his way through it, he took his own life. This tragedy caused him to move from the racist identity he had adapted to.

Phase II: Defining a Nonracist White Identity

The first status in Phase II is pseudo-independence. This is the first step in defining a positive white identity. The individual begins to recognize the white race's contribution to racism while questioning the assumptions about the black race being inferior. The person now understands what being white is and how it affects others. White people are treated as superior everyday while blacks have to do more just to be a step behind the superior race. In the process of trying to involve themselves with blacks, they may try to persuade blacks to act more like whites according to what society feels is acceptable for success. Individuals in this status view racism through a white standpoint while encouraging blacks to create solutions to racism instead of contributing to it.

The next status in Phase II is immersion-emersion. During this status, white people replace stereotypes of black and white people with accurate information. During this time the individual will do some deep self-exploration and ask themselves not only "Who am I?" but "Who am I racially?" They begin to examine how their racial identity makes up their values and beliefs and how they apply that to how they choose to live their daily lives. The focus in the status shifts from trying to change blacks to conform to acting white but trying to change the

whites. The individual wants to change the mindset of other whites to acknowledge racism and create solutions.

The last status in Phase II is autonomy. In this stage, the individual has internalized their new definition of being white. They are aware of racism and oppression and now want to work towards creating equality for all not paying attention to race. Their views are now changed to accept nonwhites; they are no longer compelled to oppress nonwhites because they feel are equal. Although this is the last stage in the White Identity Development Model, a person can go higher in self exploration of their racial identity. This is an ongoing process but this is where a nonracist identity is acquired. A person can now see others for who they are not paying attention to race but to the values and beliefs of that person.

This model will be useful in the Student Affairs profession when addressing the student of our non-minority students. Our students may come from backgrounds where they weren't allowed to think on their own. Their parents may have controlled their personal lives by saying who they were allowed to hang around and/or date. This model will allow the student to form their own racial identity other than the one placed on them by their families and/or peers when growing up. Throughout each stage, the student will explore their own values and beliefs to form their own judgment how they feel about nonwhites. Not knowing about different cultures can hinder our growth while in college. These students will be exposed to every culture and ethnicity and they need to be able to accept and deal with those differences.

<center>Sense of Belonging</center>

The desire to feel part of something and have a sense of belonging spans all racial and ethnic groups. Black and white students alike often have the desire to feel as if they are part of something when attending a college or university. By creating a sense of belonging, an identity

is created for the student which helps assist them in having a successful collegiate career (Hoffman, 232). Their success ranges from involvement in extracurricular activities to the retention of the non-minority student.

Going Greek

One of the biggest ways for non-minority students to create an identity and have a sense of belonging while in college is by joining a Greek organization. Greek organizations, social or service, can be found at almost all mainstream colleges or universities. By joining a Greek organization a non-minority student adds many positive aspects into their college life. Benefits of being Greek are involvement on campus, more interaction with students, faculty and community members, networking possibilities, and learned responsibilities. Greeks are some of the most involved students on college campuses. They host or help out with many campus and community events that allow them to work with a wide and diverse array of people (California State University, Fullerton).

All of these skills can help the non-minority student be successful once they have completed their collegiate career, because these skills are what is used and needed in the "real world." Statistics have proven that students who join a Greek organization tend to be more successful than their counterparts who choose to not go Greek. Some statistics that prove the positives of being Greek are:

- Nationally 71 percent of all Greeks graduate, while only 50 percent of non-Greeks graduate

- Since 1910, about 85 percent of all the Supreme court Justices have been members of Greek organizations

- About 85 percent of all the Fortune 500 key executives have been members of Greek organizations

- Since 1825, all but two of the U.S. presidents have not been Greek

- Since 1990, 70 percent of the U.S. President's cabinet members have been Greek

- About 76 percent of U.S. Senators have been members of Greek organizations

- Greeks form the largest network of volunteers in the U.S.; they volunteer about 10 million community service hours annually.

statistics from Washburn Universities Student Activities and Greek Life

Some of society's most prominent and recognized people are also members of Greek organizations. The attention that comes with being Greek may appeal to the non-minority student for superficial reasons as well as for improving their social and business skills. Below is a list of some famous non-minority Greeks:

- Atoosa Rubenstein, editor-in chief of *Seventeen* magazine, Alpha Chi Omega sorority

- John Stennis, Mississippi Senator, Alpha Chi Rho fraternity

- Jimmy Buffet, actor/singer, Kappa Sigma fraternity

- Neil Armstrong, astronaut, Phi Delta Theta fraternity

- Sandra Palmer, professional golfer, Alpha Delta Pi sorority

- Colonel Sanders, creator of KFC, Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity

- Tim Johnson, CEO of CNN, Sigma Nu fraternity

- Katie Couric, news anchor, Delta Delta Delta sorority

- John Elway, NFL quarterback, Delta Tau Delta fraternity

- Sheryl Crow, singer, Kappa Alpha Theta sorority

information from Greek 101

Above were lists of social Greek organizations, but there are also many businesses, musical, art, etc. Greek organizations. These Greek organizations are designed to attract the non-minority student through a specific interest. Like the social Greek organizations, these organizations also positively impact the non-minority student. Some examples of these types of organizations at Western Kentucky University are Alpha Kappa Psi business fraternity, Phi Mu Alpha music fraternity, and Delta Sigma Pi business fraternity.

Service Organizations

Aside from going Greek, involvement in campus service organizations can also be key in the success of the non-minority student. Like Greek life, service organizations create an identity for the non-minority student while bringing them around people they feel are like them. Service organizations are typically clubs on campus that are geared specifically to giving back to the community, campus, or a specific cause.

Western Kentucky University has eight service organizations that are listed as being active on its campus. Two of these organizations are also Greek organizations, Gamma Sigma

Sigma service sorority and Omega Phi Alpha service sorority. Some other service organizations at Western Kentucky University are the Student Volunteer Bureau, Unite for Sight, Circle K, and the Green Toppers. If a non-minority student got involved with a service organization they would get all the benefits of going Greek, while also earning a sense of accomplishment. They are doing a service to a particular cause to better their community, which can give the non-minority student a sense of purpose (WKU Student Handbook). Students who typically participate in service organizations are often involved with many other organizations on their college campus too.

University Organizations

Another way the non-minority student can create a sense of belonging is by joining university sanctioned organizations. University organizations are clubs or groups specifically tied to the university. University organizations are typically towards a specific cause or theme which allows the non-minority student to get involved with something that strongly interests them. Some examples of university organizations are College Republicans, College Democrats, Student Government Association, and student newspapers. It is by choice whether or not the non-minority student joins these organizations, so if they decide to join they are usually more satisfied with their experience (Fayetteville State University).

There are several pros and a few cons to the non-minority student joining university organizations. One of the biggest negatives of joining a university organization is that they can be exclusive. Some university organizations are not open to all students, so they may have to be accepted, try out, or invited to the club. For example, at Western Kentucky University the student newspaper, the College Heights Herald, is not open to all students. To be a staff member

of the Herald a student must submit an application and also have at least a 2.0 GPA. Another example is SGA. Any student can attend SGA meetings and be part of the student government, but to have a specific role, one has to be elected. Not every student can be am SGA Senator or Representative. Another negative of university organizations is the time constraint. They often take up a lot of time, like other clubs or groups. However, they tend to take up more time than normal, because the non-minority student may choose to dedicate more time since it is within their area of interest.

With all the negatives, there are far more positives for the non-minority student to join a university organization. One of the biggest benefits for the non-minority student is the real life work experience they can gain. Since joining a university organization is a choice and usually within their area of interest, it can often prepare them for their future careers. The non-minority student is within an organization that can teach them the real life skills necessary to succeed in the business world. This also helps them network since they are with others who are interested in the same things as them. Being in a university organization can often be more enjoyable since membership within it is by choice.

Belonging is Retention

When the non-minority student feels as if they belong on their college campus it is more likely that they will stay at that particular university. By being part of some type of campus organization they have established a zone of comfort and friends who will help ease them into a successful college life. Statistics also show that they are usually more successful in their academic affairs. Students who are actively involved in their college or university are twice as likely to have above a 2.5 GPA (Anderman 33).

Stereotypes

As humans, it is our natural inclination to assess others just as doctors assess their clients. In an office visit doctors typically look the patient over and do a quick diagnosis of what they think the patient may be experiencing and based on their symptoms. People typically do the same thing when they encounter animals. Let's say a Pit Bull is walking down the street. Naturally one will become scared because there is a Pit Bull, known for aggression and being overly vicious. The individual begins to sweat and skim their surroundings to see how they can escape the situation. During that time their brain was interpreting the threat that the Pit Bull presented to them. Walking up on a Pit Bull would probably scare anyone depending on what characteristics the Pit Bull had. If the Pit Bull was young and scrawny one would fear him less. If the Pit Bull was fully grown, very muscular and showing his teeth one would be naturally more inclined to show fear and begin to react based on the level of fear they felt.

When a human encounters a Pit Bull, is it accurate to say that just because he looks fully grown, with a very muscular exterior and his teeth showing that he is a mean dog and will attack you? No, it doesn't. But in order to understand the threat the dog presented to that person, as a human they sized him up. This reaction is known as the "fight or flight response." This is our body's primitive, automatic, inborn response that prepares the body to "fight" or "flee" from perceived attack, harm or threat to our survival (Curtis, 2002).

> "When our fight or flight system is activated, we tend to perceive everything in
> our environment as a possible threat to our survival. By its very nature, the fight
> or flight system bypasses our rational mind—where our more well thought out
> beliefs exist—and moves us into "attack" mode. This state of alert causes us to

perceive almost everything in our world as a possible threat to our survival. As

such, we tend to see everyone and everything as a possible enemy. Like airport

security during a terrorist threat, we are on the look out for every possible danger.

We may overreact to the slightest comment. Our fear is exaggerated. Our thinking

is distorted. We see everything through the filter of possible danger. We narrow

our focus to those things that can harm us. Fear becomes the lens through which

we see the world (Curtis, 2002)."

Just as doctors inspect patients, and humans scale the threat of an animal, humans also

scan each other by race, gender, and even socially. The non-minority student is no different.

Stereotypes are fixed impressions, exaggerated or preconceived ideas about a particular social

group, usually based solely on physical appearance (about.com/racerelations). Judgments are

formed about a group of people before the facts are known about their race or culture. We then

begin to generalize and categorize people based on those judgments. Somewhere there was an

idea formed that represented a social group and these ideas were believed to be true.

Some common stereotypes for whites are that they are assertive, dishonest, evil, greedy,

lacking athleticism, lusting for power, racist, untrustworthy, smart, have no rhythm and are un-

clean. Some of these adjectives are true of some white people but they are also true of other

ethnic groups (Media Issues). These adjectives cannot be used to describe an entire race because

each person in the race does not possess these same attributes. For example, some whites are

smart or greedy, yet there are blacks, Hispanics, Asians, etc. who are also smart or greedy. An

entire race cannot be generalized by the actions of a group within that racial group.

As humans we tend to feel like other cultures are different and therefore we observe them as being wrong and thus develop negative stereotypes. We want to eliminate the challenge of understanding if someone isn't like us. Somehow we form a general overview for whole groups of people, dictating how we must act and what to expect (Martinez, 2006). Stereotypes, when used in a positive or negative connotation are generally inaccurate and used as a method of avoiding certain issues or situations. Stereotypes prevent us from identifying the feelings that are inside of us. Usually the problem does not lie within the group but within each one of us individually. So we must ask ourselves what is the "not me" part of me that I don't want to deal with? Sometimes there are parts of us that we don't want to go to; we don't want to admit that we have something we need to deal with internally. It may be painful so we don't want to go to it but instead we want to ignore the deep problem we are having by using stereotypes (Curtis, 2002).

We are now preventing ourselves from identifying our own problem and then we develop this concept of "their" behavior and "my" behavior. So we carry on as if someone did something to us or me rather than coming to terms with the problem, fear, and the close-mindedness we have within ourselves. Many times we are influenced by the media and the idea that the media makes us the way we are has become cliché. In all reality the media does brainwash some people into sometimes taking what they see and immediately believing it. The same goes for church, professors at a university, or even doctors. If someone or something with a sense of authority tells us something we believe it, we don't take the time to search for the answer ourselves. We take them at their word and we leave it at that. This is one of the main causes of false stereotypes (Media Issues). Responsibility and ownership needs to be taken.

Negative and false stereotypes come from ignorance and having no awareness of the quality that those preconceived ideas are stemming from. Stereotypes act as a very quick reference book, such as a text book for a class or the dictionary for the spelling of a word. We access the codes quickly to understand a person and it usually relates to their class, race, gender, sexual orientation or occupation. Based on those categories we then formulate what we think to be true about someone (Curtis, 2002). Many times television personifies these incorrect and sad stereotypes we have generated and then forms them into realities for many people. One example of how the media stereotypes people into categories the media portrayal of blacks on most television shows. Most popular television shows do not have positive black characters. Instead, they have blacks as criminals, as being aggressive, or being ignorant and shown as "ghetto." Asian characters are usually the hapless side kick that is simply happy to be there. They are typically shown with the common Asian stereotypes as being superior in math and terrible drivers (Media Issues.)

Many foreign distributors have no interest in movies with African Americans and other minorities. Studios are highly interested in foreign entertainment, and their market believes films with white characters are what the box office wants. Usually they don't cast African Americans because they are scared that the foreign entertainment people will not be happy and therefore not invest. In most Asian countries the white image is viewed as beautiful, meaning blonde hair, blue eyes, etc. are seen as being attractive. Foreign distributors are attracted to white actors, because the public views as them being more visually appealing (Media Issues).

Stereotyping has become an epidemic and society is constantly spreading it. Many stereotypes have become engrained in our heads and part of our mentality. People often state

stereotypes about others as factual information, however they have no basis for their statements (Martinez, 2006). Everyone holds stereotypes in one form or another. When the non-minority student is bombarded by so many stereotypes on a constant daily routine, it is almost natural for them to start to believe these stereotypes. It becomes even easier for the non-minority student to believe stereotypes when they encounter people within a certain group that portrays certain stereotypes accurately. However, just because a few individuals fit within a stereotype does not mean the group as a whole fits that stereotype as well. For example, if a non-minority student rooms with a black student who comes from a low-income family, eats a lot of chicken, and never goes to class, that does not mean all blacks are like that. Yet, being around that type of person may make them believe all blacks fit within that category.

Having a positive attitude and an open heart can allow the non-minority student not to stereotype. When one chooses to stereotype they have a closed mind and they are focused on fear. When this part of us is turned on it becomes very hard to see the good side of people. In the moment the other person's feeling and thoughts are of no importance and this reaction to them is part of the flight or fight response. The mind is telling us to stay in the fight mode, but remembering that you don't have to be a fighter all the time is key in life. During this time of fight mode the choices we make and the consequences that may follow are not of importance. Enjoying life is about seeing all aspects of life and being able to examine our on values and beliefs in order to make a difference in the world (Curtis, 2002).

Though stereotypes are not all bad, that still does make it okay for the non-minority student to believe them. There are certain situations where stereotypes are meant to be positive, but they still can negatively affect a certain ethnic group. For example, it is a common

stereotype that Asian students are very smart and great in math. This may cause extended pressure on Asian students to feel the need to be seen as the smartest kid in class. This can also lower the self-esteem of those Asian students who aren't superior in their academics and they may feel like an outcast or failure to their race. Another example is that Hispanics are very hard-working and hold multiple jobs. To be seen as hard-working is usually a positive characteristic, but this stereotype has turned into a joke about Hispanics. They are stereotyped as always working, willing to do any job (probably because they are an illegal immigrant), and willing to work at extremely meager wages (Martinez, 2006). Keeping a positive attitude and an open heart will also be helpful with dealing with stereotypes and as Virginia Satire once said, "We must not allow other peoples' limited perceptions to define us."

Teaching Whiteness and Understanding Privilege

Through years of cultural growth and understanding, most of us have come to learn the term white is given to Americans of European descents that are assimilated to the "American way of life." This term has given privilege, while yet creating cultural oppression and segregation. It has also caused great consternation among many white students in their attempt to assimilate into the world of responsibility, opportunity, and diversity; otherwise known as college. Our part as student affairs practitioners is to help non-minority students come to gain an understanding for white privilege, identify their whiteness, comprehend cultural diversity in its entirety, and identify seven of the best suggested practices we should do in order to better prepare ourselves to be successful in this attempt.

Defining White Privilege

As administrators we often come into this great power, and with this great power come responsibility. This power we have is the power to teach and influence. One of the hardest things to teach is white privilege. Peggy McIntosh, an associate director of the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, stated "I have come to see white privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was "meant" to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools, and blank checks," (McIntosh, 1988). Many would argue that too often it is assumed by both faculty teachers and administrators that students have taken a prior course on race relations. "Too often when we think about these topics, we focus only on the victims of inequality, those who have been historically excluded, marginalized and punished as others" (Cheng, 2005). Like Dr. Chen, while this is an essential first step, it can become awfully difficult to fully comprehend inequality and oppression without delving into the various levels of privilege.

In a journal article that first appeared in the Baltimore Sun, Robert Jensen, a professor in the Department of Journalism in the University of Texas at Austin, described his encounter with a very intelligent white student about affirmative action in college admissions, which he opposed but the student supported (Jensen, 1998). The student stated he wanted a level playing field with no unearned advantages for anyone. Professor Jensen then asked, "Do you think that in the United States being white has advantages" (Jensen). The student responded, "That doesn't really matter." It was then the professor attempted to help the student have a learning moment. He explained, "That statement… reveals the ultimate white privilege: the privilege to acknowledge that you have an unearned privilege but ignore what it means" (Jensen). It is important that young people be made aware of how sleep walking through privilege can really impact their

lives in just the smallest ways. When a white student applies for admission to a university, a job, or maybe even an apartment, that white student does not look intimidating, however an African American or Hispanic individual may. Most of the people who will be doing the hiring for that job will also look like him/her. With that being said, both of those experiences will be very difficult to handle. There are general patterns, but such privilege plays out differently depending on context and other aspects of one's identity (Jensen). With white privilege, this term still carries heavy weight. Professor Jensen explains how every time he walks into a store at the same time as a black man, the security guard follows the black man and leaves him alone to shop. It is in that very moment when he realizes that he is benefiting from being white.

With this knowledge, we must first come to understand that in order for us to share this teaching with the millennial young minds of today, us as an institution must first be able to explain the white privilege concept to our white professors and faculty. In an interview with Christine Sleeter, director of the Institute for Advanced Studies in Education, she explains how we can begin to help educate white teachers, in an effort to help educate young non-minorities in college. "If I do well at something, nobody is going to say, "You're a credit to your race." Saying that presumes that the race that the person is a member of ordinarily doesn't do very well," says Sleeter (Rethinking Schools Online, 2000). "Because I am white, nobody says that about me. Yet such statements frequently surround kids of color. She also stated, "People make assumptions about their intellectual ability, about their family support, and simply on the basis of their skin color" (p.1). With the teaching of understanding whiteness and white privilege, there tends to also be this defensiveness that is exhibited by whites. We cannot meet this defensiveness with another offensive attack. One method is to listen to the stories they share about how their family grew up, and put those stories into a historical perspective. When we are able to do this, we will

then find that not every white student has benefited from white privilege in such significant extremes as many others have.

In many cases it easy to find those individuals who use a color-blind approach. The pretense by White Americans that they do not see color is motivated by the need to appear free of bias and prejudice, fears that what they say or do may appear racist or as an attempt to cover up hidden biases. Using this approach causes one to miss a whole lot about a student that one is not seeing. Christine Sleeter used the example of a kid from Mexico. "If you take a kid who is of Mexican descent and you say, "I don't see a Mexican kid I just see a kid." you are preventing yourself from knowing something about that student's culture and community - and an important part of the student" (Rethinking Schools Online, 2000). As an institution of higher learning we must be able to recognize that taking a color-blind approach not only denies the central importance of racial differences in the emotional experience of minorities (racism and discrimination), but also allows the non-minorities to deny how his or her whiteness intrudes upon the person of color. This fear we have about openly talking about those things which hinder us from moving forward is absurd.

Understanding Whiteness

English Professor Gregory Jay, at the University of Wisconsin, explained how studying whiteness means studying institutional racism, especially practices that create "white privilege." Since white privilege is systemic and not personal, this approach can combat the tendency to get stuck in the "white guilt" syndrome" (Teaching Effectiveness, 2000). For his research, Dr. Derald Wing Sue, who is a professor of psychology and education in the department of counseling and clinical psychology at Teachers College and the School of Social Work,

Columbia University, stopped pedestrians at random around the San Francisco area and asked them the question: "What Does It Mean to be White?" He also presented a series of interviews with White Folks and People of Color. The variety of reactions is both provocative and powerful as they reveal how unaware and uncomfortable many White folks are in answering the question. A 34year old female stockbroker responded by saying, "It doesn't enter into my mind because it doesn't affect my life. Besides, we are all individuals. Color isn't important, (White Privilege). When asked the same question, a 21yr. old Chinese American male student responded by saying, " …You can flag down a cab without the thought they won't pick you up because you are a minority. You can study in school and be assured your group will be portrayed positively. You don't have to deal with race or think about it," (White privilege). This is why we must educate; not just the students, but the entire curriculum itself. So many of our non-minority students come to college with no notion of what it means to be a member of the race they are. Being white is not something they have had to think of, which results in a privilege. A minority has had to deal with the color of his/her skin since the beginning of time. Throughout his presentations, Dr. Sue defines white privilege and uses examples to indicate how white privilege serves to keep whites relatively oblivious to how it has the opposite effect on persons of color: harms, intimidates, oppresses and alienates. The non-minority culture was never oppressed, thus they by large have never had to explain themselves. However, one must be careful in approaching this subject. While we must not be afraid to step on ones toes, we must first find ways to begin the conversations without causing non-minorities to lose interest or the will to want to learn; included needs to be just as much listening as there is sharing.

Defining Diversity

Have you ever received a brochure in the mail from a college or university in an attempt to recruit you to their institution, and in this pamphlet or brochure you see all of these wonderful pictures of mixed cultural groups hanging out in the student center, eating lunch on the patio, or throwing the Frisbee out on the campus lawn? So that's got you intrigued to take a visit, but then when you arrive on campus and you suddenly find yourself wondering where are all of those culturally mixed groups at now. This is very common for many of our students today. Those brochures are the institutions attempt at selling a student their culturally diverse campus climate that doesn't really exist as they have it depicted in the colorful layout of the brochure. Many times the same black kid is seen in several different photos. Students from across the globe pick those brochures up and find the word diversity stamped all over them, but yet no two racial groups define diversity the same way as another. For many minority high school students, "diversity" is a code word in recruiting materials reassuring them that they will enjoy some ethnic homogeneity on campus, that there will be others just like themselves to hang out with. For white teens, however, "diversity" promises the prestige of the exotic, an escape from the vast white middle class suburbs where they grew up to a more exciting and elite world.

Diversity has nearly become this safe word that means yes, we will tolerate you, but that does not mean that we will treat you as equal. True equality does not mean tolerance but acceptance. This is an area that directly affects student affairs as well as the academic world. Many times institutions of higher education may simply have one course of training that tackles the issue of diversity, and when this happens stereotypes often become reinforced and the concept of diversity gets pushed to being an area of something studied, as opposed to a life style.

Best Practices

While yes we are bound by our respective institutions' regulations, this does not waive us as student affairs professionals from helping to shape our living and learning campus community that promotes, embraces, celebrates, and engages cultural diversity and civility (Varlotta, 1997, p.123). In order for us to do this on a unified front we must initiate some best practices:

- Create a mechanism whereby entry-level professionals and paraprofessionals are made aware of the unique relationship they have with students.

- Evaluate the mission statement and policies of the institution to determine whether they are inclusive of issues related to diversity and to students from diverse backgrounds.

- Design and implement student affairs educational programs that promote interpersonal understanding, cooperation, conflict resolution, and crisis intervention.

- Create training programs to address multicultural issues and prepare culturally sensitive and skilled student affairs practitioners

- Be aware of equity issues. Understand that "treating everyone the same" may not lead to equity

Pope and Reynolds also discuss seven core competencies necessary for effective student affairs practice, and they are theory and translation, administrative and management skills, helping and interpersonal skills, assessment and evaluation, teaching and training, ethical and legal experience, and multicultural awareness (Pope and Reynolds, 1997).

Conclusion

We are all a part of the problem and the solution. This should be seen as empowering- we can all make a difference. We all must take ownership for these issues and we should all be involved in trying to create change and do our part as student affairs practitioners is to help non-

minority students come to gain an understanding for white privilege, identify their whiteness, comprehend cultural diversity in its entirety, and identify seven of the best suggested practices we should do in order to better prepare ourselves to be successful in this attempt. By being part of some type of campus organization they have established a zone of comfort and friends who will help ease them into a successful college life. Having a sense of belonging is important for any student's success, but it is essential for the non-minority student because when in a new environment they need to have a sense of identity. The non-minority student needs to feel as if they belong which then lead them to a successful collegiate career.

As Professor Gregory Jay once stated, "Silence about whiteness lets everyone continue to harbor prejudices and misconceptions, beginning with the notion that "white" equals normal. Whiteness oppresses when it operates as the invisible regime of normality, and thus making whiteness visible is a principal goal of anti-racist pedagogy," (Teaching About Whiteness, 2006).

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