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One Book, One Campus: Exploring Common Reading Programs



Author Julie Otsuka signs copies of her book, *When the Emperor Was Divine*, during the first-year reading experience at the University of South Carolina on Aug. 20. Courtesy Bert Easter, University 101, USC.

Inspired by the popularity of book clubs, a growing number of college campuses are adopting common reading programs. These programs take various forms: Some assign a book to be read by incoming first-year students for a discussion during orientation; others use the book in first-year seminars or hold a campus-wide event for the entire community. This kind of reading bridges the personal identification and emotional responses typical of popular literacy while preparing students for academic work.

Choosing a book and creating a conversation about it generally involves a number of players with different agendas. It can create common ground—or, in some cases, be a source of friction as the very nature of

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reading is contested. A recent monograph, *Common Reading Programs: Going Beyond the Book* (Laufgraben, 2006), provides an introduction to establishing and improving common reading programs, but very little research has been published on the subject.

As a step toward understanding this phenomenon, Andi Twiton, a philosophy major at Gustavus Adolphus College, conducted a literature review and surveyed faculty and administrators involved in campus

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The Big Picture

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Implementing the Central Principles of Student Success: Key First-Year Programs and Practices

This column is the last in a three-part series. In the first part, I argued that all effective programmatic efforts to promote student success should begin with an attempt to define success clearly in terms of specific, positive student outcomes, such as (a) student retention (persistence), (b) academic achievement, (c) holistic development, (d) educational attainment, and (e) student advancement. In the second part of this series, I identified seven research-based principles that play a key role in promoting the student outcomes. In this column, I describe first-year programs or practices that effectively implement the seven central principles of student success.

1. Personal Validation

Student success is promoted when students feel personally significant and welcomed by the college. This principle is implemented when (a) members of the college community assemble at first-year convocation ceremonies to officially welcome and celebrate new students; (b) advisors and instructors know and refer to their students by name and know about their educational plans and personal interests; and (c) the college communicates with

students in a personalized manner, acknowledging their individual achievements inside and outside the classroom (e.g., personal e-mail messages congratulating students for contributing to cocurricular activities, attaining academic excellence, or regaining good academic standing following academic probation).

2. Self-Efficacy

Student success is more likely to be experienced when students believe that their individual effort matters, that they can exert significant influence or control over their personal success. This principle is exemplified by practices that balance challenge with support so that students are neither overwhelmed nor underchallenged. Such practices include (a) college-entry assessment for initial student placement in skill-building courses and careful attention to course prerequisites in the first-year curriculum, (b) summer bridge programs for students who are academically underprepared, (c) first-year seminars that extend beyond new-student orientation to provide timely support for college-adjustment issues encountered during the critical first term, (d) Supplemental Instruction in

first-year courses that have disproportionately high failure and withdrawal rates, and (e) honors courses and programs that provide optimal challenges for high-achieving students.

3. Sense of Purpose

Student success is enhanced when students find purpose in their college experience and perceive relevant connections between school and their personal life. This principle is implemented by (a) academic advising programs that help students see the connection between their present academic experience and their future life plans and that broaden students' perspectives with respect to their personal life choices; (b) first-year seminars that actively engage students in connecting their current college experience with their future educational and life goals (e.g., assignments in which students develop an undergraduate educational plan for general education, explore or confirm an academic major, and make tentative career plans); (c) reality-based learning experiences, such as cases, problem-based or project-based learning, role plays, and simulations; and (d) experiential learning opportunities for first-year students in which they learn through direct, first-hand personal experience and self-discovery (e.g., service-learning programs that are relevant to their intended or potential vocational plans).

4. Active Involvement

The likelihood of student success increases with greater student engagement in the learning process, i.e., with the amount and quality of time and energy students invest in the college experience—both inside and outside the classroom (Astin, 1999). This

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common reading programs in January 2007. Highlights from her research are reported here.

Twiton's online survey, taken by 130 participants who administer common reading programs, explored who is involved, how books are chosen, how the programs are received on campus, what the goals of the programs are, and whether those goals are met. Responses were gathered from program coordinators listed on the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition web site (www.sc.edu/fye) and through electronic discussion lists.

Program Administration

The majority of respondents reported that their programs had been started within the past four years, though about 18% had been in existence for seven years or more. Respondents reported a majority of programs are based in academic affairs or are a collaboration between units in academic affairs and student affairs, with 20% based solely in student affairs. In many cases, programs were administered through a first-year experience office. Faculty were most likely to be involved in book selection, though it is common for students and staff to also be included in the choice.

Participants

First-year students are the primary participants, with faculty and staff also involved. About 10% of respondents reported that upper-division students and/or the local community also participated in the program.

Program Goals

The most frequent goals for common reading programs, according to respondents, were to model intellectual engagement and to develop a sense of community. Also frequently cited were (a) encouraging reading, (b) providing an opportunity to understand diverse perspectives, and (c) adding an academic component to orientation. Over half of respondents reported the book was often used as a reading in first-year courses. In narrative comments, several respondents mentioned the value of approaching a text from interdisciplinary perspectives and encouraging critical thinking. While twice as many respondents felt their programs were largely or very successful as those who felt they were only moderately successful, many respondents said their programs were too new to tell.

Book Selection

When choosing a book, finding one that will stir discussion was most important to respondents. Also important were selecting a book that students would enjoy reading and, to a lesser extent, choosing one that raises questions of meaning and value. Interestingly, literary value and providing an intellectual challenge were considered less important qualities. That said, respondents reported that only occasionally or rarely did they hear people say they felt the wrong book was chosen. For the most part, campus response was positive.

Strengths and Challenges

The survey also asked for narrative responses on the strengths and challenges of their programs. Creating

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principle is most effectively implemented inside the classroom through the use of engaging, student-centered pedagogy, which gives more opportunity for student talking and shifts the responsibility for learning to the students (e.g., interactive class discussions and small-group learning experiences that allow all students—not just the most assertive or most verbal—to become more actively involved in the classroom). Active involvement in campus life outside the classroom is promoted by practices that deliver academic support intrusively, i.e., the college initiates supportive action by reaching out to students and bringing or delivering support to them, rather than passively waiting and hoping that students take advantage of these services on their own. This would include first-year seminars that bring campus-support professionals to class as guest speakers or course assignments that connect new students with key academic support and student development services.

5. Reflective Thinking

Students are more likely to be successful when they make conceptual connections between what they are attempting to learn and what they already know or have previously experienced.

This principle is most effectively implemented by writing-to-learn assignments (e.g., one-minute papers, learning logs, learning journals, and student portfolios) that encourage students to reflect on what they are learning and connect it to their personal experiences or what they have previously learned.

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The Impact of Appreciative Advising on Student Success

Appreciative advising is a powerful tool for building rapport with students, discovering their strengths, unleashing their hopes and dreams, and devising plans to make those hopes and dreams come true. Built on the organizational development theory of appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider, 1990), appreciative advising emerged from a 2002 article by Bloom and Martin titled “Incorporating Appreciative Inquiry into Academic Advising.” Hutson (2004, 2006) later coined the term appreciative advising, and, in 2006, an Appreciative Advising Interest Group was formed within the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA). This article describes appreciative advising and the successful infusion of these concepts into a program for academic probation students, students changing their majors, and students who have been readmitted to the institution.

Through a process of positive questioning, appreciative advising aims to identify personal strengths and sources of motivation to heighten individual potential. It is predicated on two premises. First, students’ motivation to achieve tends to peak when institutional expectations and student perceptions of ability and personal strengths align. Second, academic advisors can assist students in identifying these strengths and aligning them with institutional expectations through positive questioning (Hutson, 2006).

There are four stages in appreciative advising: (a) discovery, (b) dream, (c) design, and (d) destiny. The discovery stage involves build-

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ing rapport with the student through positive, open-ended questions, soliciting a narrative in which the student describes a successful experience. The advisor listens for areas in which the student reveals strengths and passions, asking questions that lead the student to describe them in detail. The dream phase is focused on learning about the student’s hopes and dreams. Subsequently, in the design phase, the advisor and student work together to align the student’s strengths and passions with a course of study and career path. The destiny phase takes into account that students’ dreams often change over time and that there are often unexpected roadblocks. The advisor supports and helps the student devise creative solutions to impediments along his or her journey. Ultimately, students become *appreciative* of their strengths and how they may be aligned with academic and personal plans.

The Student Academic Services (SAS) office at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro

(UNCG) has used appreciative advising with a wide range of populations over the past several years, including students who have been required to change majors, probation students, and readmitted students. SAS has used appreciative Advising to assist declared prenursing majors who have not met entrance or continuance requirements for their program. These students frequently struggle to identify an alternative major. SAS began using appreciative advising interviews with these students in spring 2005 and currently includes all prenursing majors who have a cumulative GPA below 2.7. Of the 145 program participants, 30% have changed their major, while an additional 43% continue to be advised through SAS. Additionally, participants have reported an improved sense of empowerment and control over their academic situation.

Appreciative advising can also be a powerful tool for providing insight into areas of strength when students feel academically discouraged, such as when they are placed on academic probation. Frequently, students are reminded of what motivated them to go to college and why family and teachers supported them to do so. A program in which appreciative advising has evidenced great success is UNCG’s SAS 100 program, an eight-week course that combines mandatory classroom attendance with regular face-to-face meetings with the instructor. SAS 100 is required for all students who are placed on academic probation at the end of their first degree-seeking semester at UNCG. Initially, the SAS 100 program used a deficit-based approach that emphasized the im-

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common ground or developing a sense of community were often mentioned as strengths, as were strong support from upper administration and faculty. In some cases, connections with alumni, parents, and the greater community were mentioned. In others, the bridges built between student affairs and the academic program were particularly valued. In many cases, having the author on campus was seen as a benefit.

A commonly mentioned weakness of common reading programs was that students didn't always read the book. According to one respondent, "Once they realize it isn't tied to a grade, they blow it off." Integrating the reading into courses and getting buy-in from faculty were frequent issues. Two respondents found that support from higher administration was actually a drawback: "Unfortunately, some English faculty believed it was the administrator's idea so they do not support it. Our greatest challenge is to overcome that particular political issue." Choosing the right text was also challenging. As one respondent said, "By far, the greatest challenge is choosing the book. Everyone knows better than you!"

Though the number of common reading programs has increased in recent years, a few institutions have chosen to use a packet of readings or essays written by faculty around a common theme instead of a book. At least one institution has dropped a

book in favor of a common film. Still, common reading programs offer an intriguing opportunity to explore as a campus what books, reading, and community really mean.

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Laufgraben, J. L. (2006). *Common reading programs: Going beyond the book* (Monograph No. 44). Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition.

For a list of common reading programs and selected books visit Summer Reading Programs at <http://sc.edu/fye/resources/fyr/index.html>

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Related article in E-Source

Bukics, R.M., & Clemence, K. (2007). *Lafayette's first-year students analyze a film for their common reading*. 4(4), 8-9, 15.

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6. Social Integration

Student success is augmented by human interaction, collaboration, and the formation of interpersonal connections between the student and other members of the college community—peers, faculty, staff, and administrators. This principle is exemplified by (a) new-student orientation programs that move beyond information dissemination and campus tours and moves toward community-building practices that connect new students with each other, with peer leaders and role models, with student development professionals, and with the college faculty; (b) use of collaborative and cooperative learning practices inside the classroom that transform group work into team work by intentionally forming diverse learning teams composed of students who can learn the most from each other and by assigning teammates complementary roles that enable them to work interdependently toward completion of a common work product; and (c) learning communities in which cohorts of students coregister for the same block of courses during the same academic term to create a supportive peer community.

7. Self-Awareness

Student success is promoted when students gain greater awareness of their own attitudes and values, their learning styles and thinking patterns, and their personal attitudes and habits. This principle is implemented by practices that promote students' mindfulness about who they are and how they learn, such as (a) self-assessment inventories that increase self-

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First-Year Peer Mentoring Helps Ease Student Transition to College



Mentor Kaitlin Taber-Miller responds to a first-year student who posted questions on the HelloWilkes web site. Courtesy Mark Golaszewski, marketing communications manager, Wilkes University.

In the summer of 2006, Wilkes University in Pennsylvania implemented a new mentoring program designed to aid its incoming class of 560 students in their transition to college. This initiative used peer mentors to create an exceptional support environment for first-year students and was based on three fundamental tenets: (a) start early, (b) provide an online social community, and (c) link mentoring to orientation. The decision to start the program was based on an online student survey conducted in fall 2005 in which 77% of all respondents ($N = 466$) indicated that having a peer mentor would have been extremely beneficial during their first semester in college.

Starting Early

The Office of Student Development matches each incoming first-year

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student with a peer mentor from a similar major, who has been trained to provide extra student support and serve as an additional source of advice, motivation, and encouragement. One of the unique features of the program is that the mentoring relationship is initiated three months prior to the beginning of the fall semester when all incoming students receive a personalized letter from their mentor. Although the mentors are given creative freedom in drafting their letters, each mentor is asked to include (a) a personal e-mail/instant message account

where their students can reach them to ask questions and receive personal advice and (b) instructions on how to access the online mentoring community, an electronic forum where incoming students and all the mentors can communicate. Providing first-year students with a student-level outlet for advice several months in advance of the start of their first semester allows them to get a head start on common first-year challenges that would normally not surface until the beginning of the semester. In a recent survey of Freshman Summer Orientation students ($N = 354$), 52% of the respondents indicated that they had contact with their mentors prior to summer orientation in the months of May and June.

Offering Online Social Communities

In addition to the one-on-one mentoring that is inherent to the program, Wilkes also uses an online social community designed to allow first-year students to interact with all of the mentors. The online social community provides incoming students with a convenient channel for information and allows students to participate in discussions on general first-year topics and those specific to Wilkes and the surrounding community. The Wilkes mentoring community (www.hellowilkes.com) is monitored by mentors who respond to questions and prompt online discussions on pre-selected topics such as roommate relationships, safety, campus resources, student activities, time management, study strategies, and new student orientation. The discussion topics are generated by the

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provement of study skills, but increases in retention and academic performance for participants were negligible. After the appreciative advising approach was introduced, retention of first-time probation students improved 18%. Additionally, when control and treatment groups were compared, the treatment group achieved a statistically significant GPA gain of .73 ($p = .03$) compared to the control group at .42 (Hutson, 2006).

At UNCG, students who have been dismissed for academic reasons may appeal for readmission after one year. In a fall 2006 pilot, readmitted students were asked to voluntarily sign a contract with SAS committing to several appreciative advising sessions in which they identified personal strengths and interests, developed a personal academic recovery plan, and found sources of academic and personal support. At the end of the fall 2006 semester, 90% of the participants in the program were eligible to continue in the spring 2007 semester, and 58% earned term GPAs of more than 3.00. The mean GPA among participants was 2.86. Conversely, among students who did not participate, 33% were eligible to continue, and the mean GPA was 1.29.

The field of appreciative advising is still young, yet it has proven to be a powerful mechanism for increasing student retention and achievement at UNCG. The results of the UNCG studies indicate great potential of appreciative advising principles. They can be infused into first-year experience programs, student retention programs, early warning systems, and more. Appreciative advising guides students to uncover and appreciate the strengths and passions that they

have brought with them to the institution. It is perhaps the best example of a fully student-centered approach.

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awareness and self-insight by giving students a comparative perspective on their learning styles, learning habits, personal interests, and personal values and (b) self-monitoring and meta-cognition (thinking about thinking) practices, such as having students reflect and record the conceptual steps they take while solving problems, making choices, and reaching decisions.

In summary, first-year programs and practices that most effectively implement the central principles of student success are those that validate students as individuals; balance challenge with support; provide relevance and purpose; and encourage student learning that is active, reflective, collaborative, and mindful.

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Extreme Makeover: Rebuilding the Library Experience

Information literacy is the cornerstone of lifelong learning. At Northern Kentucky University it is customary for First-Year Programs and Steely Library to introduce first-year students taking the three-credit elective, Orientation to College (UNV 101), to resources and services within the library and to basic research strategies. Yet, making the library relevant to traditional-age, first-year students can be challenging. With information so readily available via sexier formats such as YouTube, Facebook, wikis, blogs, and Google, announcing to students, “Today we are going to visit the library,” is usually met with flat expressions and maybe even a moan or two.

For years, we have struggled to build an effective combination of information, hands-on activities, and assignments in UNV 101 that would engage the reluctant student. Usually, UNV 101 instructors would opt for approaches that they felt most comfortable with, or that they had time for in their course schedule. For example, some instructors would ask their students to do an audio walk-about or a virtual tour of the library and then follow up with a worksheet. Other instructors would simply cross that topic off the list after the students completed the self-guided tour. Students often considered the experience busy work or a waste of time.

But, other instructors would create detailed research assignments integrating various skills related to information literacy. Though these

assignments were typically linked to UNV 101 topics and facilitated a connection to class discussion, students became frustrated and overwhelmed because not enough instructional scaffolding was provided to help students meet the objectives of the assignment. Despite good intentions and some success, the information literacy component of the UNV 101 curriculum was inconsistent and in need of an extreme makeover.

That makeover was completed in 2005 when the planning committee—inspired by Rita Smilkstein’s (2003) brain-based learning research in *We’re Born to Learn: Using the Brain’s Natural Learning Process to Create Today’s Curriculum*—embraced the author’s concept of meeting the students where they are. We agreed that first-year students were “at Google” in their research development, and librarians would meet them there by demonstrating more scholarly approaches to research, such as limiting searches by domain or using Google Scholar, which limits searches to more scholarly items (e.g., professional papers and articles, theses, or conference proceedings) than tradi-

tional search engines. The librarians at Steely also agreed to offer brief instruction on two library databases, Facts.com and Historical New York Times, researching issues related to the 2005 common reading selection *All But My Life* by Gerda Weismann Klein. The common reading selection was chosen because all first-year students had been reading and discussing the book in their first-year courses. These two databases yielded a more scholarly bank of research and demonstrated to students the value of going beyond Google. Additionally, a small-group exercise was designed that engaged students in formulating searches, supporting Smilkstein’s theory that we learn what we practice.

With the instructional blueprint developed, slight modifications were made in 2006. The UNV 101 Library Week was offered in September, and the entire library instruction program was dedicated to teaching UNV 101 classes. Additional sessions were added to accommodate all class sections. A large banner was hung at the library entrance welcoming first-year students, and special signs were placed around the classroom that advertised the various services of the library. UNV 101 Library Week adopted another common reading selection, *Restavec* by Jean Robert Cadet, and a library resource guide was created to help students more easily research topics related to the book. Throughout Library Week, UNV 101 helped students achieve (a) an orientation to the basic services of the library; (b) an appreciation for the importance of information in daily life; (c) an understanding that

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mentors and student development staff and are changed periodically to correspond to a timeline of common first-year issues. Students can access the discussions by pointing their mouse at one of the 43 picture blocks on the web site. As one first-year student noted, "The web site is an easy way to ask questions and receive quick answers; it gave me a lot of helpful information that I would not have otherwise considered." All students receive a username and password to the online community as soon as they are accepted to Wilkes. During the first three weeks of May 2007, the mentoring community received 1,927 hits and was visited by approximately 400 incoming first-year students.

Linking Mentoring to Orientation

When first-year students arrive on campus for summer orientation, they are greeted by their mentors, who have also been trained to serve as orientation leaders. In addition to leading their students through a series of ice-breaker activities and tours of the campus and local community, mentors also attend students' small-group meetings with academic advisors and work alongside first-year students during a half day of community service. Based on informal feedback, linking the mentoring program to orientation has yielded several benefits.

Since many first-year students started communicating with their mentors prior to the June and July orientation sessions, they reported feeling less anxious about coming to campus to stay overnight for the first time. As one first-year student who

was communicating with her mentor throughout the summer noted, "I liked communicating with my mentor. She provided me with great information, and just by talking to her I felt welcomed and involved in the school before I even arrived."

By serving as orientation leaders, mentors had the opportunity to spend quality face-to-face time with their students during the two-day program and establish the foundations for trusting relationships.

Since the inception of the program, the Admissions Office and Office of Student Development have both reported a significant decline in the number of calls received from students in the months book ending summer orientation. Ostensibly, this is an indication of first-year students' penchant to contact their student mentor for answers to their questions.

Parents were very pleased to have the opportunity to meet their son's or daughter's mentor at orientation and felt comfortable that their student would have a positive role model on campus to turn to for questions and concerns.

Assessing the Program

At the midpoint and conclusion of the fall 2006 semester, self-administered questionnaires were provided to first-year students to assess their satisfaction with the inaugural program and the extent to which the program's objectives were accomplished. In addition, small focus groups were conducted with approximately 15% of the class. The results from both the quantitative and qualitative studies have been promising. The survey results ($N = 157$) revealed that 83% of the respondents felt that the mentor-

ing program was beneficial in helping ease their transition to Wilkes. When asked during the focus groups to rank the most important benefits of the mentoring program, 25% of the respondents indicated that the mentoring program helped them adjust to the social life on campus, 25% responded that their mentor's academic advice and support was the most important benefit, and 24% said having someone to introduce them to campus resources was important. Despite the availability of the online community and other forms of electronic communication, the preferred method of communication among students after the start of the fall semester was face-to-face (44%) followed by electronic communication (37%).

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- Dye, B.R., Pinnegar, S., Daynes, J.G., & Esplin, P. (2005, April). Using story cycles to study peer mentor's learning, **2(5), 6.**

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information searching requires time, diligence, and practice; and (d) an understanding that skills are developed over time. In the end, the new approach resulted in an effective, consistent, meaningful, and active learning experience for first-year students.

First-Year Programs and the Library collaborated to promote Library Week, with a librarian presenting the plan to UNV 101 professors during the summer and through regular announcements via the First Year Program electronic mailing list for several months prior to the start of the week. Out of 53 first-year class sections, 43 attended UNV 101 Library Week in 2005, and 42 out of 46 in 2006—a total of almost 1,000 first-year students each year. Faculty feedback was elicited through feedback cards returned via campus mail or electronically. Comments were favorable:

- “The brainstorming activity worked out well.”
- “I feel that the information opened students’ eyes to the wealth of resources available here on campus.”
- “Upon discussion afterward with my class *every one* of my students found it beneficial.”
- “Many appreciate the fact that you show them how to research using Google as well as databases.”

For the 2007 UNV 101 Library Week, we plan to remodel the program slightly, adding more active-learning opportunities to further engage the students and offering a

new approach to presenting the services of the library. We will continue to assess the foundations of where students are in their current research skills and challenge them to build upon these skills. These collaborations between First-Year Programs and Steely Library took a learner-centered approach and solidified a foundation for life-long learning.

Please visit these web sites for more information:

- <http://library.nku.edu/>
- <http://www.nku.edu/~firstyear>
- <http://www.nku.edu/~nkubc>

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Resource Spotlight

Minority Student Retention, edited by Alan Seidman, is a compilation of the best articles about the retention of students of color that have appeared in the peer-reviewed *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory and Practice*. As Seidman notes, “Minority student retention continues to be a major issue in and a vexing problem for the higher education community” (2007, p.1). According to the Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange (2005), underrepresented students of color have lower first-year retention rates than their White student peers. The articles in this collection address current challenges and provide valuable research that colleges and universities can use in their efforts to retain students of color.

The book is divided into six sections focusing on racial/ethnic populations that include: African American students, Latino/a students, Asian and Asian Pacific students, Native American students, and biracial students. The final section of the book addresses institutional responses to the challenges faced in retaining students of color. Here are highlights from each of the sections:

African American Students

There are five articles in this section that focus on the retention of

African American students. Two of the articles pertain to the retention of African American men at community colleges. Another article explores the long-term impact of retention programs on African American students in engineering, while a fourth article describes predictors of academic success and retention for African American women in college. Finally, an article by Sharon L. Holmes and colleagues, “Validating African American Students at Predominately White Institutions,” focuses on how

the college environment can be “re-designed to enhance the total learning experiences of students using the principles of Rendón’s (1994) validation model and Astin’s (1984) theory of student involvement” (p. 88). Ideas for inclusive practices in recruitment, orientation, and in- and out-of-class experiences are also presented.

Latino/a Students

The two articles found in this section discuss the persistence of Latino/a undergraduates. One of the articles, “Leaking Pipeline: Issues

Impacting Latino/a College Student Retention” by John C. Hernandez and Mark A. Lopez suggests that faculty-student interaction, mentorship, and participation in student organizations are valuable assets in student persistence. Community orientation and the role of religion are also important factors to consider.

The other article, by Martha Zurita, focuses on a phenomenological study of Latino students who have not maintained continuous enrollment in college. Zurita looks closely at issues affecting Latino persistence such as parental support, academic and financial issues, and home-to-school transition.

Asian and Asian Pacific Students

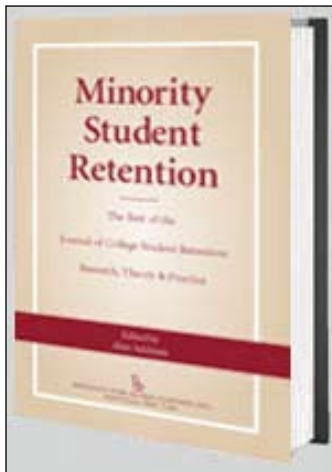
The sole article in this section, “Issues of College Persistence between Asian and Asian Pacific American Students” by Theresa L. Yeh, explores high rates of departure among Asian Pacific American students. In addition, strategies and approaches for improving persistence and graduation rates are presented upon a review of relevant literature. Yeh also discusses minority retention theories as well as challenges for Asian Pacific Americans.

Native American Students

The sole article in this section, “The Retention/Intervention Study of Native American Undergraduates at the University of New Mexico” by Mary Jiron Belgarde and Richard K. LoRé, examines the impact of student service programs in the retention of Native American students. Specifically, findings are presented that explain how Native American undergraduates

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used mainstream and native programs to support their persistence to graduation at the University of New Mexico.

Biracial Students

In this section, the single article, "Identifying Interventions to Improve the Retention of Biracial Students: A Case Study" by Nicole Sands and John H. Schuh, identifies themes, patterns, and trends within categories such as perceived diversity, friends in college, dating relationships, services for biracial students, and involvement with the office of minority student affairs. Their study also examined the racial identity development of the participants.

Institutional Responses

The final section of the book includes four articles that address institutional responses to retaining students of color and pulls the previous sections together by exploring the issue from a broader perspective. For example, a case study by Evon Walters, "Institutional Commitment to Diversity and Multiculturalism Through Institutional Transformation: A Study of Olivet College," discusses ways that diverse students have been integrated into the larger population at a large predominately White university.

In addressing a critically important issue in American higher education, *Minority Student Retention* presents readers with valuable research and theory that can be applied to work with students on any campus.

See RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT p. 13

***E-SOURCE* SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

Guidelines follow for those who would like to submit articles related to significant student transitions for consideration.

Audience: *E-Source* readers include academic and student affairs administrators and faculty from a variety of fields. All types of institutions are represented in the readership.

Style: A limited number of feature-length stories will be interspersed with shorter research briefs or news items. Tables, figures, and artwork will be included on a space-available basis. Limited references can be printed. Articles, tables, figures, and references should adhere to APA (American Psychological Association) style. Annotations of new resources should include the following: complete title of the publication, author(s) or editor(s), publisher, publication date, and complete URL if source is available online. *E-Source* does not publish endorsements of products for sale.

Format: Submissions should be sent via e-mail as a Microsoft Word attachment.

Length: Feature-length articles should be 500-1,000 words. Brief articles should be 250-500 words. Annotations of new resources should be no more than 50-100 words. The editor reserves the right to edit submissions for length.

Copyright: Articles shall not have been registered for copyright or published elsewhere prior to publication in *E-Source*. Photographs are welcome with a signed release form and name of photographer or copyright owner.

Contact Information: Contact information will be published with each article selected for publication in *E-Source*. Please include the following information with your submission: name, position title, department, institution, address, phone number, and e-mail address.

Submissions Deadlines: For the November issue, the deadline for submissions is September 25; for the January issue, the deadline is November 19.

Please address all questions and submissions to:
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What's Happening at the National Resource Center

Conferences

14th National Conference on Students in Transition

November 4 – 6, 2007
Cincinnati, Ohio

Early registration deadline is October 19, 2007.

27th Annual Conference on The First-Year Experience

February 15 – 19, 2008
San Francisco, California

Proposal deadline is October 8, 2007.

For more information on these and other National Resource Center events, please visit our web site www.sc.edu/fye/events/

Publications

International Perspectives on the First-Year Experience in Higher Education

Institutions that have developed, implemented, and evaluated initiatives to enhance the quality of the first-year experience are invited to contribute their case studies for inclusion in this new monograph. We are particularly

interested in receiving submissions from non-U.S. institutions.

Deadline for submissions is October 1, 2007.

Please visit <http://www.sc.edu/fye/centerinitiative/development/index.html> to download complete submission guidelines.

Research

The 2006-07 Paul P. Fidler Research Grant has closed with 91 proposals—a number of which came from international researchers in Poland, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. The grant recipient will be notified by early October, and the formal announcement will be made in November at the 14th National Conference on Students in Transition in Cincinnati. The grant is named in memory of Dr. Paul P. Fidler, a faculty member at the University of South Carolina, whose pioneering research on student learning and success had a vital impact on the work being done to promote the success of all students in transition.

RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT Cont. from p. 12

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