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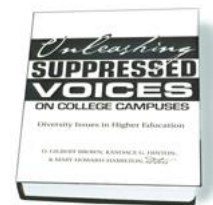
Brown, O. G., Hinton, K. G., & Howard-Hamilton, M. (Eds.). (2007). *Unleashing suppressed voices on college campuses: Diversity issues in higher education*. NY, NY: Peter Lang Publishing.

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Instances of overt and covert discrimination in terms of race/ethnicity, religion, language, sexual orientation, and gender have become recurrent in institutions of higher learning in North America. Adjustment and understanding between diverse groups are still lacking in North America despite our pronouncements of achieving a harmonious society, where equality prevails. Promotion of an understanding of diversities in higher education was felt to be a dire necessity in the early 1960s. Although nearly all institutions of higher learning have undertaken serious efforts in realising unity in diversity over the years, they could not make the people understand the complexity of diversity. The emerging trends in the higher education systems of North America present dualities and contradictions. The unstated implication of this unholy trend is that it would generate two streams in the higher education system: one for the privileged and the other for the downtrodden or the marginalized.



Now, more than ever before, people of fundamentally different societies and cultures not only need to understand each other to counter the culture of hegemony and hate, but need the space to interpret their own cultures, and reconstruct their own identities, in a world overwhelmed by the thoughtless turbulence of globalization on the one hand, and reactive chaos and conflict on the other. Hence *Unleashing suppressed voices on college campuses*, timely and enriching, provides faculty, students, and staff with several cases that eloquently articulate and address a variety of issues pertaining to diversity in the arena of higher education. This book is an eye-opener for anyone who has a genuine and keen interest in unearthing the naked realities of diversity related problems that usually occur in institutions of higher learning. The authors in this volume bring to the fore several cases that address the “landscape of higher education’s diverse functional areas within student, academic, and business affairs as well as governance” (p. 4).

The first introductory section briefly reviews the role organizational, cultural, and student development theories play as conceptual frameworks and maps to understand the complexity of

human behaviour. It also provides an overview of the broad uses of cases and it outlines ways in which cases can be analyzed. Howard-Hamilton, who authored the second chapter in this volume, opines that “the use of student development, social justice, and organizational theories should be the first step in assessing and identifying the issues that emerge when reading a case” (p. 15).

Indeed, it is imperative, according to Howard-Hamilton, for professionals working in institutions of higher learning to understand thoroughly how the organization, environment, and behaviour of the person all intersect to create an extremely dynamic climate that can be compatible or clash with others in the institution. The introductory section exhorts readers to refer to theories outlined in the volume while analyzing the cases to assist them in making a clearer and more critical analysis of what is occurring within the organizational structure. Howard-Hamilton emphasizes that “all cases should have a theoretical underpinning” (p. 22), which in turn, will allow educators to enhance tremendously their multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills as well as assist them in resolving difficult diversity issues that frequently occur in higher education. No doubt, this will go a long way in preparing institutions of higher learning to make effective use of the knowledge to foster continuous engagement with students, faculty, and staff in addition to enhancing persistence and graduation from college.

Institutional mission, leadership, and racial diversity are the three major themes discussed in the second part of the volume, which has eight cases pertaining to different aspects of the complex interaction among these three themes. The purpose of an institution of higher learning, undoubtedly, is well defined and delineated by its mission. However, because of the inroads made by multicultural education in North American colleges and universities, critics have increased their efforts to marginalize it and make its goals seem inconsistent with the traditional mission of the university. An understanding of the historical origins of the campus mission would help us enrich our understanding of the current campus initiatives. Since institutional mission galvanizes and shapes the campus’s approach to the adoption of organizational structures for academic and administrative divisions, such an understanding becomes indispensable.

The third part of the volume revolves around the new challenges confronted by tenure track faculty in colleges and universities. The topic of tenure, of its granting and its denial, and of survival beyond both outcomes has returned in different essays at the start of the new century. The seven cases elaborated in this section of the volume critically examine the perceptions of tenure track faculty with respect to the constraints on their quest for tenure and later promotion. The case studies will resonate with women and minority faculty in mentoring roles or in the throes of pre-tenure reviews. Today, special initiatives designed to attract women and minority faculty are of particular concern. Although several predominantly White institutions have devoted greater attention to attracting faculty from underrepresented backgrounds to their institution, the statistics on women and minority representation among tenure-track faculty in many disciplines remain alarmingly low. It brings to light the fiasco of affirmative action principles to explicitly or implicitly shape institutions’ efforts to attract underrepresented faculty.

The eight cases in the fourth section of the book address the issues and problems faced by emerging underrepresented stakeholder groups such as disabled students, marginalized subpopulations (Asian American and Pacific Islanders), lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender populations at traditional majority campuses. Students bring a variety of physical, cognitive, emotional, sensory, and learning disabilities into the classroom; hidden and obvious, recognized and unrecognized. However, institutional responses to these disabled students’ unique and special academic and social needs may be appropriate to overcome their different mental and physical challenges. Few on the college campuses may have any didactic or significant prior exposure to disability. Unfortunately, even faculty educated to teach students with disabilities may lack experiential preparedness. As a result, disabled students may feel misunderstood in educational settings and negatively affected by faculty perceptions about disability.

“While diversity remains a fundamental value and goal for many universities, the conversation and targeted constituencies do not typically include Asian American and Pacific Islander students” (p. 227). The case study, authored by Rodriguez, explores the question whether or not Asian Americans and Asian Pacific American Islander are a designated minority group within higher education. The author claims that Asian Americans and Asian Pacific American Islander groups, who often encounter a lack of campus belongingness, alienation, marginalization, and loneliness, are underrepresented in higher education and, therefore, deserve consideration by merit-based scholarship programs focused on underrepresented groups. Furthermore, “when developing and implementing programs, activities, and policies, universities need to be clear on how the term minority is defined at their respective institution and the specific implications of this definition” (p. 234).

The story of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students is no different. As LGBT students become more visible on college campuses, an important issue facing higher education administrators is how to assist them in becoming more secure in their identities. Given the degree of homophobia in our society, students who are struggling with issues of sexual orientation face incredible challenges and lack many of the fundamental support systems available to their heterosexual peers. The LGBT students “face unique challenges with high school peers, teachers and school counselors, and parents both before and after college admission” (p. 13). The need of the hour is to assist LGBT students on our campuses to get rid of their apprehensions about sexual orientation and gender identity, about relationships with their peers and faculty members, and about finding a very supportive and well-built infrastructure inside the college/university campus.

The fifth, concluding section entitled, “Student Affairs and External Relations” explores the frequently perceived uneven student affairs support of underrepresented and marginalized students at different predominantly White institutions. Brown and Riddick, who authored one of the chapters in this section, argue that “purposeful student engagement is critical to undergraduates' having satisfactory college experiences” (p. 276). The extant literature in the field of higher education and student affairs corroborates the authors' claim, viz., undergraduates who perceive satisfactory academic and social experiences compared to undergraduates who perceive unsatisfactory academic and social experiences tend to have higher rates of persistence and academic achievement. Institutions of higher learning must free themselves from obsolete forms of engagement while championing the need for time, creativity, and commitment in the restructuring of institutional mission and focus on programs and activities.

While Brown and Riddick examine the African-American Greek organizations' perceptions of unsatisfactory services, advising, and support from a student affairs division at a major research university in the United States, Cole, who authored another chapter in the concluding section, laments the scant attention being paid to “retention and even less to developing tolerance and acceptance across racial/ethnic groups” (p. 289). The diversity efforts on college campuses, according to Cole, rarely take into consideration the differences between and within groups, based on gender, religion, socioeconomic status, and LGBT issues. Hence, “creating a context where all students are challenged to consider how they may expand their perceptions of race/ethnicity as complicated by within group differences often goes overlooked” (p. 289).

Other thoughtful pieces in the concluding section address transformational challenges facing senior and mid-level student affairs leaders who perennially seek to improve the campus climate for all learners. Indeed, the editors of this volume have succeeded in coming out with a remarkably rich book that gives a vivid portrayal of the complexity of diversity in higher education. The book is well written, well scoped and sequenced, and very well balanced in its content. Each chapter incorporates thought provoking discussion questions, a list of recommended readings, a background on the hypothetical institutions in question, the status of diversity, the cultural climate, the players in the controversy and the options. In short, this is an excellent training manual for student affairs practitioners, administrators, faculty, students, and policy-

makers who have moved beyond the level of discussing the need for viable solutions to improving the climate for diversity in higher education, and are ready to take action.

About the Reviewer

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