Building community: Improving experiences of non-traditional and culturally diverse students

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Overview

- Identify the ethical responsibilities of counselor educators in advocating for non-traditional and culturally diverse students

- Understand and identify challenges that non-traditional and culturally diverse counseling students experience

- Identify and implement creative, research-based strategies for improving the experiences and retention of non-traditional and culturally diverse counseling students.
Rationale

- The ACA Code of Ethics (2014) requires counselor educators to recruit and retain a diverse student body.

- Numbers of non-traditional and culturally diverse students enrolled in counseling programs are increasing (Henfield, Woo, & Washington, 2013).

- However, non-traditional and culturally diverse students continue to face challenges that can impact progress to degree completion.
F.11.b Student Diversity
“Counselor educators actively attempt to recruit and retain a diverse student body. Counselor educators demonstrate commitment to multicultural/diversity competence by recognizing and valuing the diverse cultures and types of abilities that students bring to the training experience. Counselor educators provide appropriate accommodations that enhance and support diverse student well-being and academic performance.”
Strengths of Non-Traditional and Culturally Diverse Graduate Counseling Students (Olive, 2014)

- Resilience and persistence in the face of obstacles
- Willing to make personal sacrifices in order to model higher education for family members
- Belief that counseling is a calling/divine influence
- Altruistic motivation for helping others
Experiences of Culturally Diverse Students in Counseling Programs


- **Tokenization** (Haskins, Whitfield-Williams, Shillingford, Singh, Moxley, & Ofauni, 2013)

- **Orientation and classroom experiences do not facilitate connection with peers** (Henfield, Woo, & Washington, 2013)

- **Diverse perspectives not included in course work** (Haskins, Whitfield-Williams, Shillingford, Singh, Moxley, & Ofauni, 2013)
Experiences of Culturally Diverse Students in Counseling Programs

- Negative interactions with faculty members (e.g., microaggressions, discrimination, being overlooked or misunderstood) (Henfield, Woo, & Washington, 2013)
- Feelings of self-doubt and uncertainty (Hughes & Kleist, 2005).
Experiences of Non-Traditional Students (Munro, 2011)

- Challenge of balancing multiple roles—student, worker, parent, care-taker, etc.
- Reduced attachment to the campus/program
- Lack of the cultural capital needed to succeed in graduate programs
- Viewed less favorably by faculty
- Lower levels of self-efficacy, higher levels of stress and anxiety
Additional Factors Related to Counseling Student Attrition

- **Limited time and financial resources** (El-Ghoroury, Glaper, Sawaqdeh, & Bufka, 2012; Protivnak & Foss, 2009)
- **Unmet student needs or expectations** (Hoskins & Goldberg, 2005)
- **Lack of connection to peers and/or faculty members** (Hoskins & Goldberg, 2005)
Recommendations from the Literature

- Intentional recruitment and retention of culturally diverse faculty members (Henfield, Woo, & Washington, 2013)


- Peer support is critical and often perceived as more helpful than that of faculty support (Haskins, Whitfield-Williams, Shillingford, Singh, Moxley, & Ofauni, 2013)
Recommendations from the Literature

- Provide students with opportunities to co-present or co-write with faculty (Hoskins & Goldberg, 2005)
- Provide students with lunch and learn opportunities (Hoskins & Goldberg, 2005)
- Embed activities designed to support students into classes and make the purpose clear so activities don’t feel like extra work (Casstevens, Waites, Outlaw, 2012).
Welcome Week (Fall)

- Diverse Fall Welcome Week Activities
  - Practicum Boot Camp!
  - Coffee Connect Social
  - Time Management Workshop
  - Branding & Private Practice Workshop
  - Mindfulness Meditation
  - Successfully Navigating School & Parenting Workshop

*Providing convenient times, activities before classes, all free of charge and multiple opportunities for connection*
Wellness Week (Spring)

- Diverse Wellness Week Activities
  - Guided Meditations
  - Stress Management 101
  - Wellness in Private Practice (Doctoral Student led)
  - Self-care in Graduate School and During Practicum/Internship (with Alumni)
  - Introduction to Mindfulness
  - Wellness Practices for Academic Success

*Providing convenient times, activities before classes, all free of charge and multiple opportunities for connection*
Popular Events

- Practicum Boot Camp
- LPCA-SAOSponsored Workshops
- CSI Community Outreach & Workshops
- Counseling Info Fair (Fall)
- Lunch & Learn Workshops
Workshops

- Examples
  - Time Management
  - Counselor Wellness and Self-Care
  - Managing Expectations in Practicum
  - Skills Refresher
  - Shame-Resilience Theory
  - Trauma Informed Care
  - Trauma Competency: The Essentials
  - Creative Techniques in Counseling
  - Writing in Counseling: treatment plans and session notes
  - Compassion Fatigue
  - Working with the Military
  - Parent Education/Consulting
  - Play Therapy Basics
  - Wholehearted Living
  - Gut Health for Mood Management
  - Doctoral Student Panel: What It’s Like to be a CES Doc Student
Engagement in Classes

- Stress-release, mindfulness & self-care IN CLASS
- Dyads and small group discussions
- Culturally diverse materials
- Culturally diverse speakers
- Diverse activities
  - Boundaries & Expectations Exercise
  - Experientially-based appropriate to content
Transparent Program Expectations

- Student Orientation
- Faculty Advisement
- Descriptive feedback with grade sheets
Building Relationships

- Personalized welcome email and phone call for each new student
- Faculty advisor outreach at the start each term
- Inviting students to present and conduct research with faculty members
- Departmental newsletter:
  - Highlights student accomplishments
  - Notifies students of opportunities for awards, conferences, scholarships, etc.
Thank you!

- Thank you for coming to our presentation today!
- Please keep in touch:
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