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BOOK REVIEW: MULTICULTURAL AND DIVERSITY ISSUES IN STUDENT AFFAIRS PRACTICE - A PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY BASED APPROACH

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REVIEW

Multicultural and diversity issues in student affairs practice: A professional competency-based approach (N. Zhang & M. F. Howard-Hamilton (Eds), Charles C Thomas Publisher, LTD, 2019) brings the voices of 26 student affairs scholars and scholarly practitioners to discuss the challenges of multiculturalism and inclusion in student affairs practice. This work collectively discusses matters of race/ ethnicity, gender/ gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, religion, whiteness/ privilege, and more. The authors individually and collectively call readers to a reflective practice grounded in knowledge of self, humility, critical conscientiousness, and social justice. It also calls readers to lifelong learning as a means to continually renew and improve one's student affairs practice as well as challenges the field to employ pluralistic approaches which decenter white, cisgender, male, abled, Judeo-Christian, and hetero-normatives. The greatest strength of this book is the inclusion of case studies and questions within each chapter, rendering opportunities for discussion within classroom and workshop settings. By squaring American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) diversity competencies with intricately detailed cases that require readers to think across rather than merely within identity categories, the text provides an opportunity for collective and individually reflective growth. Beyond the cases, the latter chapters focused on evidence-based practice, culturally appropriate intervention strategies, and assessment. These chapters provide pragmatic strategies on how to navigate practice using theory as a guide. Future iterations of this text may consider a different organizational schema, with the first half of the book exploring the multiplicity of identities students bring with them to campus and the second half focusing on theory to practice navigational strategies. As is, several chapters surmise over complex within-group identities. For example, while I was pleased to see complex discussions regarding Black and Latinx identities beyond African and Mexican American, dedicated chapters to within-group cultural differences would have allowed for further elucidation of the experiences of continental Africans, Caribbean heritage Blacks, Dominicans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and so on, as well as discussions of the impact of race/ phenotype/ colorism within these communities and the impact on students. Further discus-

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sion of the impact on changes in immigration law as related to diversity within the Asian pan-ethnicity and discussion of the model minority myth would also be helpful. A taxonomic focus would also allow greater citation to and focus on works that highlight within-group racial/ ethnic diversity as well as differences among women, the LGBTQIA umbrella, among religious groups and particularly the conflation of Islamic practice and Arabic heritage. Additionally, while there are discussions regarding student ability, further discussion of learning disabilities and student mental health are warranted given the challenges students contemporarily bring with them to campus (Feldman, Davidson, Ben-Naim, Maza, & Margalit, 2016; Ketchen Lipson, Gaddis, Heinze, Beck, & Eisenberg, 2015; Lombardi, Murray, & Kowitt, 2016; Showers & Kinsman, 2017). Furthermore, while several chapters make historical references to group inclusion within higher education, richer and more accurate discussions would be informed by texts centered on diverse student populations, like *Law and Social Justice in Higher Education* (Chambers, 2016). Finally, it would be a wonderful thing if we as a field can get past the term “issues” to address the experiences of students at their non-dominant identities. Certainly, the history of diversity is adversity (Chambers, 2016); however, the language of issues or challenges or problems emphasizes nondominant identities and ignores the structural defects that give rise to the actual issues, challenges, and problems. And indeed, the authors’ aim is towards a more inclusive and affirming praxis. Overall, this text is a useful resource for introductory student affairs coursework at the undergraduate level, master’s level, for workshops and other continuing education/ professional development.

Keywords. multiculturalism, diversity, inclusion, student affairs

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BIOGRAPHY



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