Preparing Future Citizens and Leaders by Developing College Students’ Multicultural Competence

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Developing Citizens & Leaders

• Imperative to develop citizens and leaders who can promote inclusion and social justice
• Part of institutional mission statements
• Higher education institutions are ideal settings to develop social change agents who affect change in a diverse and democratic society
Developing Citizens & Leaders

• Several authors have called upon colleges and universities to intentionally create connections between multicultural competency, leadership development, and civic responsibility (Astin & Astin, 2000; Hurtado, 2011; Schneider, 2006)
Benefits of Diversity in Higher Education

• Diversity has a mostly positive relationship with increased leadership and civic development (Antonio, 2001; Gurin, 1999; Gurin, et al., 2002; Gurin, Nagda, & Lopez, 2004; Hurtado, 2001)

• Structural diversity is necessary but insufficient for democratic outcomes (Denson & Chang, 2009; Gurin, 1999; Gurin, et al., 2002)
Gaps in Scholarship

- While institutions are increasingly diverse, there is a lack of literature connecting institutions’ contribution to students’ multicultural competence and students’ leadership development and development of a sense of civic responsibility.
Conceptual Framework

• Primary: Astin’s (1993) Inputs-Environments-Outputs Model for College Impact
• Secondary: Bowman’s (2011) conceptual framework of college diversity experiences and civic outcomes
Methods

• Instrument:
  – ACT College Outcomes survey
  – Administered to college seniors from 2000 to 2011 at 15 universities (72.2% highest degree masters, 21.9% highest degree doctorate, 6.0% BA only)
  – Response rate 15-100%, average 64.4%
  – Final sample through listwise deletion, n = 5,922
Sample

- 59.5% female
- 3.9% Asian
- 4% Black
- 2.7% Multiracial
- 2.3% Native American
- 6.1% Hispanic
- 83.0% White
- 2.1% other/unknown
Measures

• Demographics
• College experiences
  – GPA
  – Academic major
  – Campus climate
  – Students’ satisfaction with extracurricular and recreational opportunities
  – Contributions of coursework to interpersonal development
Measures

• Leadership development—students’ personal growth in
  – Developing leadership skills
  – Becoming an effective team/group members
  – Learning to be adaptable, tolerant, and willing to negotiate
  – Developing self-confidence
  – Becoming more willing to consider opposing points of view

• Development of civic responsibility—students’ personal growth in
  – Becoming more aware of local/national political/social issues
  – Recognizing their rights, responsibilities, and privileges as a citizen
  – Preparing to participate effectively in the electoral process
  – Becoming sensitive to moral injustices
Measures

- Colleges’ contributions to students’ multicultural development—the extent to which students perceived their colleges’ contributed to their personal growth in several areas:
  - Ability to interact well with people from other cultures
  - Deal fairly with a wide range of people
  - Improve their ability to relate to others
  - Become a more effective member in a multicultural society
  - Develop productive working relationships with men and women
  - Understand religious values different from their own
Regression

• Hierarchical multiple regression
  – Block one: race, ethnicity, and first-generation status
  – Block two: college experiences
  – Block three: colleges’ contributions to students’ multicultural competence
Leadership Development

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<th>Sig.</th>
<th>R² Change</th>
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Civic Responsibility Development

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Civic Responsibility Development

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Limitations

- Means through which colleges contributed to students’ development of multicultural competence is unknown
- Unable to discern structural diversity of institutions in sample
- Self-report data, which has been shown to inflate findings (Bowman, 2011)
Discussion

- College experiences, not individual demographic characteristics, are most influential in developing leadership and civic capacities
- Socially responsible leadership tends to resonate more with women and students of color
- Required courses outside of students’ majors are important vehicles for both students’ leadership and civic development
- Major choice matters in terms of developing civic responsibility
Thank You

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References