Helping Students of Color: Advising from a Holistic Perspective

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Overview

• Definition of Students of Color
• Why is this Topic Important?
• Basic Statistics about Students of Color in Higher Education
• Breakdown of Students of Color by Racial/Ethnic Group
• Race-Related Stress
• Activity - Pictures
• Cultural Lens
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• Wrap Up
Defining Students of Color

For this presentation, we define Students of Color as:

- Black/African-American Students
- Latino/Latina Students
- Asian-American Students
- Native American/American Indian Students

*By no means, is the term “Students of Color” limited to the groups listed above
Why is this Topic Important?
Note: Figures for total enrollment include nonresident foreigners, not shown separately. Figures include full- and part-time undergraduate and graduate students. Percentages are rounded.

Source: Chronicle analysis of U.S. Education Department data
“Although some scholars have cautioned to not over-interpret the significance of race, factors such as racial identity may be more helpful in understanding the experiences and perspectives of people of color.”

~Raechele Pope, 2000
Black Students

• Black students often deal with stereotype threat (Steele, 1999)

• Specifically, Black male students are graduating from four-year institutions at alarmingly lower rates than any other student demographic (Harper, 2009)

• Struggles with racial identity may significantly impact student success and persistence
Latino/a Students

• Relationships with families are extremely important for Latino/a students (Torres, 2003)

• Latino/a students with stronger racial/ethnic salience flourish in environments where diversity is encouraged, but may suffer academically if they do not feel supported (Torres, 2003)
Native-American/ American Indian Students:

- Adopting a “mainstream” culture through acculturation is significant for Native American youth (Garrett & Pichette, 2002)

- For American Indian college students, the more acculturated or connected with Native culture, the more likely they are to leave college (Scott, 1986)

- American Indian students may struggle with a sense of “competition” within the college environment (Ecklund, 2005)
Asian-American Students

• Asian-American students often fight against the “model minority myth” that all Asian students are high achieving (Chun, 2005)

• Family conflict and fear of not meeting parental expectations have led to suicides among Asian-American students (Cheng, Fancher, Ratanasen, Sue, & Takeuchi, 2008)
Why is understanding the needs of students of color so important?
Race-Related Stress

- Race-related stress occurs as the result of both acute and chronic encounters with racism and discrimination (Utsey & Ponterotto, 1996)

- Although African-American, Latino/a American and Asian American students experienced race-related stress, African-American students experience it the worst (Utsey, Chae, Brown, & Kelly, 2002)

- When helping students of color, it is imperative that we keep in mind that students are experiencing multiple struggles as they progress through their college careers (Utsey, Chae, Brown, & Kelly, 2002)
Activity-Pictures
How does this activity relate to helping students of color?
Cultural Lens

Cultural Lens refers to the unique perspective one has of the world as a result of their background.

One’s cultural lens can be shaped and influenced by many factors including:

– Family
– Friends
– Education
– Co-workers
– Where you grew up
– Religion
– Life experiences
– Media
Discussion

What are some techniques that we can use to effectively help students of color?
Holistic Advising for Students of Color

• Humanized academic advising (Museus & Ravello, 2010)
  – Academic advisors being perceived as human beings, rather than one-dimensional advisors
  – Academic advisors being committed to success of students of color

• Serving the whole student
  – Students of color often have multiple issues (not just one isolated issue)
  – Advisors make sure students are connected to resources and receive the support that they need

• Giving overall good advice, regardless of the topic

• Proactive efforts that go above and beyond the “call of duty”
Tips on Advising Students of Color

• Be aware of your own biases and judgments.
• Know that culture differences do exist.
• Ask questions; don’t make assumptions.
• Know that students of color may have different needs, but don’t treat them differently in a group.
• Students of color may not be aware of different opportunities available; inform them of these opportunities if you see potential in them (non-traditional majors).
More Tips…

• All students have to adjust to their environment, but it may be more difficult for students of color. Keep this in mind when advising students with their credit load.

• Be honest! If a student needs to improve in an area, communicate that to them.

• Get to know your students; show that you are genuinely interested in them.
Questions, Comments, or Thoughts? 😊