

# MULTICULTURAL *and* DIVERSITY

## ISSUES IN STUDENT AFFAIRS PRACTICE

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**A PROFESSIONAL  
COMPETENCY-BASED APPROACH**

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**Naijian Zhang • Mary F. Howard-Hamilton**

**MULTICULTURAL AND DIVERSITY  
ISSUES IN STUDENT AFFAIRS PRACTICE**

Publication Number 3

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PRACTICE AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

*Edited by*

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# **MULTICULTURAL AND DIVERSITY ISSUES IN STUDENT AFFAIRS PRACTICE**

**A Professional Competency-Based Approach**

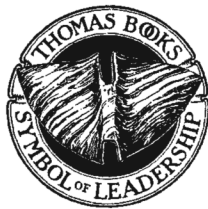
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*and*

**MARY F. HOWARD-HAMILTON**

*(With 26 Other Contributors)*



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## FOREWORD

*When unity is evolved out of diversity, then there is a real and abiding national progress.*

Manhur-ul-Haque

Professionals of almost all fields in the United States have become cognizant of the issue of multiculturalism, diversity, social justice, and inclusion and made effort to level the playing field and change the environment to be healthy for minoritized individuals with the aim of becoming competent in practice. Student affairs educators in higher education are no exceptional. Developing awareness, knowledge, and skills in multiculturalism, diversity, social justice, and inclusion has become one of the essential training aspects for every student affairs educator. To achieve this training goal the Task Force of the College Student Educators International (ACPA) and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) in 2015 established ten professional competency areas for student affairs educators, one of which is about multiculturalism and diversity or social justice and inclusion.

The book *Multicultural and Diversity Issues in Student Affairs Practice: A Professional Competency-Based Approach* is written to assist those who plan to work as student affairs educators soon and those who are new student affairs educators to become competent in social justice and inclusion. This book provides trainees and new student affairs educators not only content knowledge and skills but also strategies and ways to develop competency in social justice and inclusion. As the above being said, the book facilitates the reader on how to transition from students to professionals. The purpose of this book is to enlighten the reader as to how to apply the knowledge and skills on social justice and inclusion in the book to their practical world. In another word, the readers will be able to use the knowledge and skills from years of research and publications plus their life experiences and personal traits to change the world. This book is a matter of building bridges between student affairs educators and the diverse populations they serve.

The book *Multicultural and Diversity Issues in Student Affairs Practice: A Professional Competency-Based Approach* is another essential volume in the American Series in Student Affairs and Professional Identity. As its title indicates, the most valuable aspect of this book is that it targets one of the professional competency areas, social justice and inclusion, set by ACPA and NASPA. The entire book has reflected this competency area comprehensively and meticulously. To be consistent with the revised version of professional competency areas by ACPA/NASPA this book has specifically echoed the “shift from awareness of diversity to a more active orientation.” Besides, the book has been aligned with two other themes of the series, building professional identity for student affairs educators and application of knowledge and skills identified by research and literature in practice, the latter is simply action oriented.

Like other volumes in the series, *Multicultural and Diversity Issues in Student Affairs Practice: A Professional Competency-Based Approach* was written by a group of knowledgeable and experienced scholars and practitioners in the field of student affairs in higher education. The book editors, Doctor Mary Howard-Hamilton and I, have published extensively and had years of hands-on experience in student affairs practice. Doctor Mary Howard-Hamilton is, in particular, a leader and one of the major contributors who have made significant impact on the development of student affairs practice in higher education. Moreover, twenty-six additional individuals consist of both scholars/researchers and practitioners who have authored the book chapters. Their years of knowledge, skills, and experiences in the professional competency areas in student affairs practice of higher education have enriched the content of this book. Through their writing these experts have offered you the reader their first-hand experiences and wisdom for being a competent student affairs educator in higher education—the global enterprise.

Specifically, the book *Multicultural and Diversity Issues in Student Affairs Practice: A Professional Competency-Based Approach* will provide you the reader with an understanding of multicultural competency and professional identity in student affairs practice, an opportunity to develop a professional identity that centers on social justice, a comprehension of historical development of multiculturalism and diversity in student affairs practice, knowledge of multicultural theory and its application, an understanding of ethical and legal issues from a multiculturalism, diversity, and social justice perspective, knowledge of culturally appropriate intervention strategies in practice, and understanding of evidence-based practice in student affairs. Moreover, this book will offer the reader knowledge and skills in utilizing theory, research, and assessment to enhance practice, forming professional identity through social justice and inclusion, and on how to create a social justice and inclusive environment for minoritized students and students with special needs.

Finally, the book teaches you the reader on how to work with minoritized students and students with special needs.

The American Series in Student Affairs and Professional Identity is a unique book series that creates an integration of all ten professional competency areas for student affairs educators outlined by ACPA and NASPA in 2015. The series reflects three major themes: professional competencies development, professional identity construction, and case illustrations for theory translation into application. All volumes in the series are targeting graduate students in student affairs programs and new student affairs educators. The series blends contemporary theory with current research and empirical support and uses case illustrations to facilitate the readers' ability to translate what they have learned into application and decision making. Each volume focuses on one area of professional competency and at the same time addresses some major aspects of the Interaction of Competencies. Given what has been said, the series helps graduate students in student affairs programs and new student affairs educators develop their professional competencies (ACPA/NASPA) by: (1) constructing their personal and ethical foundations; (2) understanding the values, philosophy, and history of student affairs; (3) strengthening their ability in assessment, evaluation, and research; (4) gaining knowledge, skills, and dispositions relating to law, policy, and governance; (5) familiarizing with and learning how to effectively utilize organizational and human resources; (6) learning leadership knowledge and developing leadership skills; (7) understanding oppression, privilege, power, and then learning how to understand social justice and apply it in practice; (8) acquiring student development theories and learning how to use them to inform their practice; (9) familiarizing themselves with technologies and implementing digital means and resources into practice; and (10) gaining advising and supporting knowledge, skills and dispositions. As a result, the series helps graduate students in student affairs programs and new student affairs educators foster their professional identity and ultimately achieve their goal of the whole-person education.

Naijian Zhang, Ph.D.  
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## PREFACE

**T**his book *Multiculturalism and Diversity: An Evidence-Based Approach* is a part of the American Series in Student Affairs Practice and Professional Identity which exposes graduate students and new professionals in student affairs of higher education to the ten professional competency areas as articulated in the ACPA and NASPA *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators* (American College Personnel Association & National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, 2015). Social Justice and Inclusion is one of the competency areas and action oriented, which was renamed from Multiculturalism and Diversity in the previous version of the Professional Competency Areas to emphasize action. To align with the theme of the series this book focuses on professional competency, professional identity, and application.

This book facilitates graduate students and new professionals in student affairs of higher education to develop the essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions outlined for all student affairs educators by ACPA/NASPA. The materials in the book are structured with an emphasis of the development of professional identity based on the values, philosophy, and history of the profession through practice. This text has been written with empirical data, case studies, theoretical concepts, practical application and in some instances the authors' personal experiences to explain how injustice is endemic in this country. Furthermore, the book addresses that higher education must be the catalyst to move this society closer to understanding the innate differences of all humankind. In addition, it provides the readers with the opportunity to develop their awareness, knowledge, skills, and take action to foster a multicultural learning environment for college students. In each chapter, the reader will sense the compassion of every writer's narrative to move college campuses toward community and not chaos.

### ***Book Overview***

**Chapter 1, "Understanding Multicultural Competency and Professional Identity in Student Affairs Practice"** opens the book with the

framework for multicultural competence and the importance of understanding how intersectionality presents the opportunity to value all aspects of a person's identity and not from a mono-cultural lens. Additional theoretical frameworks are shared so that the readers will have a multicultural or diversity roadmap to easily navigate the concepts written in this book.

**Chapter 2, "Competent Practitioners: Developing A Professional Identity That Centers Social Justice,"** answers the questions, what is social justice and who are social justice advocates? The authors explain how the term has a negative connotation today because of the contentious social and political environment. However, social justice competencies can be developed and used as a powerful tool for dismantling systemic oppression.

**Chapter 3, "Historical Development of Multiculturalism and Diversity in Student Affairs Practice,"** presents the reader an overall picture of the multiculturalism, diversity, social justice, and inclusion in American colleges and universities from a historical perspective. It reveals how acquiring an education in the United States has historically been a privilege granted to White men who were from affluent families, the difficulty and struggle for minoritized students to be recognized, and the birth of student affairs through diversity.

**Chapter 4, "Multicultural and Diversity Competence: Theory and Its Application,"** highlights germinal diversity and multicultural theories in student affairs. The authors have carefully selected concepts that can be applied from a practitioner's lens. Additionally, a case that provides the application for clarity and practical purposes is detailed.

**Chapter 5, "Working with Racially and Ethnically Diverse Students,"** connects with the previous chapter from a practical perspective. Given the theory, cultural understanding and capacity, and practice linkages this chapter challenges student affairs educators on how to work with diverse students. The authors have compiled a detailed explanation of the opportunities and challenges facing minoritized and marginalized students on college campuses. Moreover, a conversation about the complexities of Whiteness is presented that clearly connects to the need for an open dialogue across identities so that everyone can experience enhanced educational opportunities. Lastly, a discussion of proactive steps that should be implemented on college campuses are shared.

**Chapter 6, "Support Students with Various Needs,"** provides a view of student affairs from the perspective of the marginalized student combined with the complexities of 21st century challenges. Specifically, how technology has emboldened individuals to engage in unfiltered hate speech comfortably through social media. A review of the policies and laws that have been created or enacted to protect the rights of students with various needs is presented with theory to practice implications.

**Chapter 7, “Ethical and Legal Issues from A Multiculturalism, Diversity, and Social Justice Perspective,”** presents legal and ethical considerations from a social justice perspective. The authors cogently narrate the key components of Critical Race Theory as well as legal and ethical issues in higher education. They also note the characteristics of a social justice oriented and multiculturally competent college administrator. Policies, practices, and people intersect in ways that can be toxic or empowering.

**Chapter 8, “Toward A Model of Inclusivity for Racially and Culturally Diverse Students on College Campuses: Implications for Research and Practice,”** shares numerous ways in which the environment has a direct impact on the social, political, cultural, and overall human aggregate on college campuses. The authors elaborate how environmental diversity and inclusion models can be translated to practice on college campuses.

**Chapter 9, “Using Culturally Appropriate Intervention Strategies in Practice,”** raises the question on poorly attended events, programs, and activities on campus and offers the likely reason as inappropriate intervention strategies that were designed by the practitioners who used a monocultural lens when creating the program. The authors then provide suggestions to assist in the development of culturally sensitive programming and intervention strategies. They also believe it is imperative that administrators evaluate and assess the programs and activities facilitated on campus.

**Chapter 10, “Multiculturalism, Diversity, Social Justice, and Inclusion: Evidence-Based Practice in Student Affairs,”** notes that due to the decrease in institutional and operational funding, departments must justify or provide evidence on the need for programs they hope to implement or continue. Evidence based practices in student affairs apply evaluative principles so that inclusivity and excellence are the primary goals.

**Chapter 11, “Utilization of Theory, Research, and Assessment to Enhance Multiculturalism, Diversity, Social Justice, and Inclusion,”** shares the importance of using assessment tools with historical evidence as well as current successes in the field. The author argues on how assessment can illuminate the need for diversity initiatives, programming, and funding to ensure the success of minoritized students on campus.

**Chapter 12, “Implementing Social Justice: Forming a Professional Identity,”** provides a philosophical perspective of developing a professional identity that is grounded in social justice. Specific strategies on how to develop a social justice orientation for student affairs educators are offered.

**Chapter 13, “The Profession’s Norm: Becoming a Multicultural Competent Student Affairs Educator,”** presents the author’s notations on how to become a multiculturally and interculturally competent student affairs educator. The author suggests that to build professional competency in social justice and inclusion student affairs educators must first build their inter-

cultural communication competence in student affairs practice. Specific strategies on how to build intercultural communication competence are offered.

Overall, this book not only challenges but also provides the reader with a unique approach to learning and understanding social justice and inclusion. It is designed in a format that describes/defines this competency at the foundational, intermediate, and advanced outcomes levels, suggests ways to apply this competency in practice through case studies from student affairs, and provides tools for assessment of competency understanding.

N.Z.

M.F.H.-H.

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**MULTICULTURAL AND DIVERSITY  
ISSUES IN STUDENT AFFAIRS PRACTICE**





# Chapter 1

## UNDERSTANDING MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCY AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY IN STUDENT AFFAIRS PRACTICE

*Dena Kniess & Zak Foste*

College and university campuses have witnessed increases in the number of students from different race/ethnicities, gender identities, sexual orientations, abilities, and socioeconomic classes in higher education. Since 1976, the percentage of undergraduate students of color increased by 26.2% and the percentage of women increased by 8%, (Integrated Postsecondary Education System, 2017). Though there is some debate on the total number, approximately two to four percent of the U.S. adult population identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) (American College Health Association, 2012). Additionally, 11% of college students have a disability (Gose, 2016) and 52% of students enrolled in two-year and four-year colleges are from low income families (Kena et al., 2016). While the compositional diversity on college campuses has increased, students of color, women, LGBTQ+ students, and students with disabilities experience unwelcome, and at times, hostile campus climates. One only needs to view news headlines from 2017:

- “A White supremacist rally in Charlottesville, VA to protest the removal of a Confederate monument erupts in violence killing a 32-year-old woman and injuring 34 others” (Stolberg & Rosenthal, 2017).
- “Baylor University served with a Title IX lawsuit for the sexual assault of college women by members of the university’s football team” (Suy, 2017).
- “In February 2017, the Trump administration rolled back guidance that mandated equal accommodations for transgender students under Title IX” (Gardner, 2017).

Students attending college expect administrators and student affairs educators to engage in discussions on current events and move toward creating inclusive campus environments. It is crucial that all employees within higher education and specifically student affairs educators appreciate difference and engage in the work of creating campus climates that are not only multiculturally responsive, but also critically conscious (Linder & Cooper, 2016). Over the past 30 years, the need for multicultural competence in student affairs practice has been well-documented (McEwen & Roper, 1994; Mueller & Broido, 2012; Pope, Mueller, & Reynolds, 2009; Pope & Reynolds, 1997). Most student affairs educators have had a diversity course in their graduate program or engaged in activities through the course of their graduate assistantships to develop multicultural competence (Flowers, 2003; Gayles & Kelly, 2007); however, developing multicultural competence takes continual effort and cannot be confined to a single course or experience (Linder & Cooper, 2016). Expanding upon the call for professional competence in student affairs practice, the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) with the National Association for Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) jointly developed a set of 10 competencies for student affairs educators including a competency for social justice and inclusion. In order to understand how multicultural competence and professional identity converge, student affairs educators must not only understand multicultural competence, social justice and inclusion but also critically unpack their own social identities. Student affairs educators must be cognizant of how their social identities influence their professional role on campus and how it affects their decisions related to campus policies, practices, and programs.

This chapter provides an overview of multicultural competence, social justice, and inclusion, and a brief history of each in student affairs practice. Abes, Jones, and McEwen's (2007) Reconceptualized Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity (RMMDI), Watt's (2015b) Privileged Identity Exploration (PIE) Model, and additional critical theories will be used as models for student affairs practitioners to engage in their own self work, which is a critical step toward the development of multicultural competence and professional identity. To help student affairs educators engage in their own self work we will provide a case study and resources for further exploration.

## **MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE IN STUDENT AFFAIRS PRACTICE**

Diversity, inclusion, and multicultural competence have always been central to student affairs practice; however, the terminology and implementation have changed based on time and context (Winston, Creamer, Miller,

& Associates, 2001). Young (1997) described seven values that are essential to the field: service, truth, freedom, individuation, equality, justice, and community. Though our field holds values synonymous with diversity and inclusion, the concept of multicultural competence first appeared in the literature in the field of counseling psychology. Scholars noted an absence in counseling curricula on effective strategies for working with diverse populations and advocated for including courses to enhance counselors' multicultural competence (Ponterotto & Cases, 1987). Later, McEwen and Roper (1994) called upon professionals in student affairs "to respond more effectively and knowledgeably to diverse student groups on college campuses" (p. 49). At the time they were writing, students and professionals in graduate student affairs programs may not have had required coursework focused on engaging with multicultural student populations.

Using the counseling psychology literature as a framework, Pope and Reynolds (1997) proposed a tripartite model of multicultural competence focusing on the awareness, knowledge, and skills to work with multicultural populations. For student affairs practitioners, *multicultural awareness* means believing that differences in individuals are inherently valuable, willingness to examine one's own preconceived bias about others who are culturally different, and committing to social change (Pope & Reynolds, 1997). *Multicultural knowledge* involves knowing about how gender, race, sexual orientation, ability, and other identities affect individuals and how power, privilege, and oppression operate in institutions (Pope & Reynolds, 1997). As student affairs educators develop multicultural awareness and knowledge, they translate their awareness and knowledge into *multicultural skills* by developing individual and group interventions and programs (Pope & Reynolds, 1997).

Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller's (2004) framework for multicultural competence offers a starting point for individuals to assess their multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills, however there are critiques of this framework. Landreman, Rasmussen, King, and Jiang (2007) argued "efforts to graduate students with 'multicultural competence' have been hampered by inadequate, overly simplistic ideas regarding what constitutes multicultural learning itself" (p. 276). Critiques of multicultural competence have noted inconsistencies in definitions of multicultural competence, assessments limited to particular cultures, and inattention to within group cultural differences (Linder & Cooper, 2016). Additionally, the multicultural competence framework focuses on individual level skills (Iverson, 2012) without significant attention given to the social, historical, and cultural elements operating in various contexts. Scholars instead have advocated for critical consciousness versus developing multicultural competence (Iverson, 2012; Landreman et al., 2007; Linder & Cooper, 2016).

Critical consciousness goes beyond surface-level approaches to multicultural education by focusing on situating oneself within historical and socio-cultural-political contexts (Landreman et al., 2007). Critical consciousness is grounded in Paulo Freire's (1970) *conscientizacao* (critical consciousness in Spanish). Individuals develop critical consciousness by identifying the context of the situation, reflecting on their own identities in relation to the context, and engaging in dialogue in small groups and other efforts to promote social justice. Freire (1970) critiqued the banking concept of education, positioning the teacher at the center of learning, content, and knowledge transmission. By passively absorbing knowledge, one is not encouraged to critically think about the context and societal conditions informing one's reality. By developing a critically conscious mentality, individuals can unpack the social, political, and historical elements of their current reality, reflect on these elements, and engage in dialogue and action toward social change. A central characteristic needed in dialogue is authenticity. Watt (2015a) writes about authenticity as the first component of the Authentic, Action-Oriented, Framing for Environmental Shifts (AAFES) methods as "practitioners commit to listen deeply/actively to multiple voices and competing views, to think critically about their own identities, beliefs, values and positionality, to participate authentically and intentionally in difficult dialogues, and to be open to personal development" (p. 32). Individuals within groups balance moving from dialogue to action as they examine "inequity at multiple levels and intentionally reconstruct an environment for inclusion" (Watt, 2015a, p. 33). In fact, the shift from dialogue toward action-oriented elements is reflected in the ACPA and NASPA (2015) professional competencies.

Two of the leading professional associations for student affairs, ACPA and NASPA, collaborated on a set of professional competencies for student affairs educators. In 2010, both associations published a set of 10 professional competencies. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion was listed as one competency, focusing mainly on individual awareness of social identities, values, and advocacy for minoritized groups (ACPA & NASPA, 2010). The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion competency was revised and renamed in 2015 to Social Justice and Inclusion. The revision reflected an action-oriented approach to not only recognizing oppression, but actively engaging in dismantling systems of oppression in campus communities (ACPA & NASPA, 2015). The significance of this change is twofold. First, in the revised 2015 competencies, the authors "aimed to frame inclusiveness in a manner that does not norm dominant cultures but that recognizes all groups and populations are diverse as related to all other groups and populations" (ACPA & NASPA, 2015, 4-5). Second, the authors of the ACPA and NASPA competencies overall intent "was to integrate the concepts of equity, diversity, and inclusion within the active framework of social justice" (ACPA & NASPA,