Final Internship Paper

Center for Civic Engagement &

Educational Opportunities Program

Joann Zhang

Oregon State University

To begin my second year of graduate school, I decided to focus my time on developing more practical, hands-on experiences where I intended to learn by doing. I believe I accomplished this through my two internships, one with the Center for Civic Engagement and the other with the Educational Opportunities Program. To begin this personal narrative, I will discuss my internship with the Center for Civic Engagement and then follow it by discussing my internship with the Educational Opportunities Program. I will first highlight my role and summarize my contributions and what I learned. Secondly, I will describe how I believe I met or may still need to work on each competency from each learning contract while also incorporating recent research or current events that relate to the importance of each competency.

Center for Civic Engagement

My primary role with the Center for Civic Engagement was to co-chair the annual Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week. During our first planning committee, our team decided to officially change the name of the week to Hunger and Homelessness Action Week. With this change, our team wanted to put more emphasis on doing action, rather than just spreading awareness. Through this term, I personally learned a lot more about the individuals impacted by hunger and/or homelessness. More importantly, I learned more about the stigma of it and how it negatively impacts individuals in that community. I became more aware of how hunger/homelessness can be part of someone's identity, which further complexes intersectionality. For example: I attended the Indigenous Gender Diaspora & Homelessness event sponsored by the Native American Longhouse Cultural Center. There I learned about the experiences of two-spirited individuals and how hunger/homelessness creates a further struggle within the tribes. Outside of the actual week of events, I learned more about my leadership style, the importance of trust and teamwork, and how to start and finish a program. The competencies outlined in my learning contract helped guide what I learned:

Recognize best practices and challenges when working with students

A best practice I recognized throughout this term is NASPA's *Principles of Good Practice for Student Affairs.* They outlined 7 good practices which include:

1. Engages students in active learning

2. Helps students develop coherent values and ethical standards

3. Sets and communicates high expectations for student learning,

4. Uses systematic inquiry to improve student and institutional performance

5. Uses resources effectively to achieve institutional missions and goals

6. Forges educational partnership that advance student learning

7. Builds supportive and inclusive communities (NASPA.org, n.d.)

From these good practices, I believe through my role in the Center for Civic Engagement office, I engaged students and H&H participants (the students and/or community members who attended our week of events) with active learning (the first good practice). On our first day of the committee, we had an enrich discussion on the language around homelessness versus houselessness. The conversation provided students to bring their own life experience and interpretation into the planning process. By providing H&H participants a wide range of events and programming throughout the week, we engaged them in active learning as well. Participants were able to pick and choose which topics they were interested in, and further develop their knowledge around those topics.

Another good practice I want to recognize with my internship is practice number 4. As a student affairs practitioner, it is important to assess and evaluate one's programs and initiatives. Thus, by using systematic inquiry (such as asking for feedback from the committee on what they think our overall success and areas of improvements were, or asking H&H participants to assess

the program's learning outcome), we are looking for ways to measure whether or not our programs were meaningful.

Practice number 6 is something we also accomplished through our collaborations of various departments on campus. H&H week is known to encompass different functional areas within student affairs. This year, we had members from the Human Services Resource Center, Native American Longhouse Cultural Center, Student Sustainability Initiative, Pride Center and various other groups. By having a wide range of different functional areas involved, my hope was so that students can learn about different programs and their efforts while seeing how everything connects. This leads to practice number 7. Through our collaboration, we are building supportive and inclusive communities. Individuals who experience hunger and/or homelessness are not all the same, all their identities play a crucial role – and thus by supporting the different events, I hoped to create awareness around this complex issue.

While understanding these practices are important, it is also important to recognize the challenges that can sometimes take place when working with students. The first challenge that comes to my mind is the recent post-election results. We can see that our country is divided and so what does it mean to be a supportive student affairs practioner in a public institution? Thus, the challenge being, students come from an array of backgrounds, beliefs and perspectives – it is important to support all students regardless of your own background, belief or perspective. Another challenge I think of when working with students, is the 'invisible' student population. Student affairs practioner can support students who seek our services, or attend our events/programs – however, what about the population of students who do not seek our services? How do we get more students (sometimes the students who really need our help, and are at-risk for dropping out) to get support whether it is from engaging in clubs or seeking counseling support?

Understand the impact of student identity, cultural heritage, and institutional and societal systems (including power and privilege), on identity development, personal growth, individual perspectives, and students' experiences

The Center for Civic Engagement aspires to work for towards Social Change. Social Change refers to understanding the root causes of social issues (such as hunger and homelessness) and providing students with opportunities to develop critical knowledge around the complex issues of our society. In order to do so, I understood the impact of one's identities and how their personal experiences are often contributed by them. The Indigenous Gender Diaspora & Homelessness event sponsored by the Native American Longhouse cultural center was very impactful as it directly indicated how one's identity, consisting of their cultural heritage, sexual orientation, gender, class, etc. can influence whether or not they have power or privilege. This internship provided me more perspective on the complex issues that our society faces, and thus I feel better prepared to support students who are from diverse backgrounds and are different than myself.

I enjoyed getting to learn about the different functional areas that became involved with H&H week. I think with the different functional areas (much like the different students on campus) each provides unique insight and perspective on issues – thus, having more members representing their department, the more all students got to learn about their efforts. In our committee meetings, I got to learn about each department, their goals and their perspective on hunger and homelessness. I also learned how hunger and homelessness impacts their community (whether it is the ECC, NAL, HSRC, or SOL). By learning about their identity and perspective, I became more knowledge about how identities impact experiences.

To understand student identity development, it is important to acknowledge theorists such as Eric Erickson's eight stages of development, or Chickering's seven vectors. By understanding

where students are developmentally and with their identity, we can begin to support them without overly challenging them. Scholessburg's challenge and support theory indicates there needs to be a near equal amount of challenges for students as well as support. Thus, in order to move students through the seven vectors or stages of development, we need to provided challenges and supportive opportunities for students who come from different identities or backgrounds.

Recent events including the post-election results have also played a critical role in students and their identity development. Individuals who society has deemed as more privilege are either celebrating the win of Trump, or providing support to those the election has negatively impacted (there are also privilege individuals who remain neutral). In my opinion, the election has spiked awareness on individual's identity. Only time will tell what our future will look like and how student's development will be impacted. I believe the best thing we could do for all our students is to remain supportive and keep our own personal biases in check.

Identify target populations and use appropriate marketing strategies to maximize program effectiveness

H&H week is a campus wide program and therefore I do not believe we had intentions of targeting a specific population. We had members from the Corvallis community attend our events as well as undergraduates, and graduate students. During one event, we had a food insecurity panel (facilitated by experts in this field) where they engaged with individuals who were utilizing the food pantry at the HSRC.

In order to target the OSU community, we primarily focused on social media and print materials to maximize program attendance. Though there are many reasons why collaboration has proven to be significant, another reason it is important in terms of marketing strategies include having a bigger network of supporters. For instance, because we were supporting and

collaborating with individuals who were also planning for the Native American Heritage month

and Transgender Awareness month, our marketing efforts included marketing their events and

having them help us market our events. In one post, we were able to re-share all the important

things that were happening this week/month. See Image 1 below.

Image 1

We also wanted to utilize on-campus technology when it came to marketing. Thus, we

targeted specific high populated locations on campus (such as the SEC lounge and MU) and

added our electronic marketing material to play in their television screens. Though it was nice to

have physical or electronic means of marketing to students on campus – I do think our efforts

paid off through social media. We gained a high number of 'likes' which means individuals were

helping us spread the word on their newsfeed. I think as we enter an era where technology

becomes more and more relevant, programs and events will become more dependent on social media to help spread the word.

Another marketing strategy we incorporated this year was reaching out to instructors or professors who taught courses that closely related to hunger and homelessness. One of the CCE coordinators started reaching out to instructors and professors as early as summer, and did follow ups in the fall about the possibility of incorporating extra credit to attend an H&H event or to even simply mention the week of events in class. Though we didn't track how many of our participants attended because they heard about it in class or were given extra credit, I do know that one professor offered extra credit to her student who attended a service learning project. I also want to mention that in my sociology course (SOC 526, Social Inequalities), my professor Dr. Mark Edwards mentioned and encouraged the students to attend the week of events. As a result, I felt that we did our due diligence of spreading the word out – and I personally felt like it paid off. We had high attendance at several of our events and know areas to improve for next year's events that did not receive as high attendance.

Establish a commitment to engage in ongoing inquiry throughout one's career or articulate the value/appreciation of ongoing inquiry and engagement

Prior to this internship, I had a strong passion for service-learning. Through this internship, I still have a strong passion and now a better understanding of starting and finishing a project/program. I did not realize the amount of details that went into programming events, especially when collaborating with other departments. As co-chair, it was not my responsibility to plan actual day of event programs but to oversee all the programs, support representatives from each functional area and to keep up with deadlines. Thus, I felt like this role gave me insight on what it would be like to be coordinator of service-learning department, which I found much value in.

For future inquiries, I would like to further develop my knowledge around planning events and executing them successfully. I appreciated getting to read transition notes from last year's H&H week and I think through the assessment that was gathered by last year – it really helped us develop our programs this year. We did not experience the same issues as last year, however did experience different issues on our own. The ongoing inquiry is important when working in higher education, as I personally believe it is in all our efforts to constantly try to improve ourselves. We can do this with ongoing inquiry.

I'd also like to learn about engaging more students involved with civic engagement or service learning. I think what is unique about the Center for Civic Engagement office is that it is opened to all students and majors however, there I think we could improve on getting more students involved on campus. Alexander Astin's Involvement theory indicates the more students are involved on campus, the more likely they will be successful (Evans et. al, 2005). Thus, I want to learn how to engage with students who don't typically get involved on campus with civic engagement/service learning programs with hopes of providing transformative experience.

Transformative experiences can also be difficult in terms of 'one-time' events. Therefore, I'd also like to learn about how to make these one-time communities engagement/service projects more transformative for students. My supervisor indicated that through one-time service projects, our goal is to get students aware of our office and the value of giving back to the community. It is our hope that students will develop a sense of civility and passion for service and will then continue to attend CCE projects or further research ways to support their service. Thus, one-time service projects can be thought as to create awareness and future curiosity on social issues.

Overall, I believe I did pretty well on learning the competencies outlined in my learning contract. I think there are some things that take more time to further develop and to become an expert in such as: to understand the impact of student identity, cultural heritage, and institutional and societal systems (including power and privilege), on identity development, personal growth, individual perspectives, and students' experiences, or best practices when working with students. These are on-going inquiries that can't be accomplished in one term or one year. So long that I am attempting to expand my knowledge on these important topics, I believe I am doing well.

Educational Opportunities Program

        With my Educational Opportunities Program internship, I conducted research on the relationship between cultural resource centers and academic support. This internship was unique to me, as I don't have as much experience working with and knowledge on supporting underrepresented students. And so I truly appreciated the opportunity to learn how we can best support students who have historically been denied access to higher education. My work with EOP is not over, and I plan on continuing my research next term. We hope by the ending of next year, our team will write a research article on the impact of cultural resource centers and academic support.

        Recognize various dimensions of identity and the intersectionality of those dimensions in the lives and learning experiences of students

        Within my research, I learned a lot more about the underrepresented students who come from ethnic backgrounds such as the African-American/Black community, Hispanic community, Native American community and Asian-American community. I recognized how the dimensions of their identity impacted their experience growing up and how that translates to their success or struggles in higher education. It is important for student affairs practitioners to recognize how

family background and growing experiences impact students' ability to be successful in college. Every community is different, and every student within those communities is also different, and as a result, student affairs practitioners need to be prepared with how to engage and support all students.

Jones & McEwen (2000) illustrated the MMDI (Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity) where they indicate how different dimensions of one's identity all interconnect and make up the individual's core. Image 2 indicates how a list of identities and an example of how these identities are more salient than others. Through my research, I learned there are more identities to consider outside of these, and that it is important to learn the uniqueness of each community and individual.
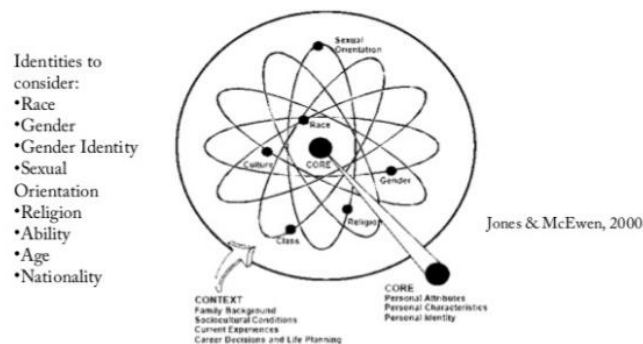

Image 2

With different communities, family ties can impact how successful they are. For example, in the Hispanic and Asian-American communities, research indicated students often felt obligated to return home often to support family with work or time at home. This can impact whether or not students have time to cultivate within their college campus and study for their academic goals. Higher education practitioners can help support this community by providing early pre-college support by engaging with each community and providing families with the context of higher

education. It is important to recognize the needs of each community and how to best support them whether it is through academic support or social support. Our research looked into how by incorporating more academic support in cultural resource centers can better support our students of color and their academic needs.

Analyze and apply concepts and theories of student and human development to enhance work with students

When trying to understand how each student of color develops, it is important to draw upon the Critical Race Theory and the different Racial Identity Development Models. For example, Evans et. al (2005) described Ferdman and Gallego's Model of Latina and Latino Ethnoracial Orientation – which focuses on the ways Latinos come to think about themselves in a diverse and ever-changing society. How they see themselves can correlate with whether or not they adapt to their new campus community. Through my research with EOP, students of color often adapt and feel safe within the cultural resource centers and thus it is important for higher education administrators to look for more ways to utilize these cultural resource centers so that they can provide more than just social support.

Kim's Asian American Identity Development Model as described by Evans et. al (2005) indicated how intergenerational differences and shifts within the structure of Asian American families can impact this communities development. With different generation of Asian Americans within the United States, expectations on life choices and careers can be different which can cause stress to students who are trying to live their own life yet not wanting to disappoint family members. It is our roles as higher education administrators to recognize how students struggle and help support them towards their identity development

Other theories also include the Ethnic Identity of Indigenous Peoples (Evans et. al (2005)). According to Evans et. al, higher education's dominant culture and discriminatory

practices impacts this community as they further segregate students rather than create mutual understanding and awareness. The dominate culture often categorizes this community as one tribe when in fact each tribe is unique and face different experiences. For an example: Anglo students and Navajo students often approach education and social goals differently. Anglo being more performance oriented, competitive and social power oriented, and Navajo students are more collectivist and community based (Ali, McInerney, Craven, Seeshing & King, 2013).

For the African-American/Black community, Cross and Fhagen-Smith's Model of Black Identity Development is described by Evans et. al (2005), Evans et. al indicated how generations also play an important role in their development and how racialized experiences throughout their childhood can impact their development later on. By understanding their upbringing and the negative stereotypes this community faces, higher education practitioners can become more conscious of their implicit biases and work towards creating a more supportive and inclusive environment for this community.

Identify target populations and use appropriate marketing strategies to maximize program effectiveness

In order to best support students from Hispanic, Asian American, Native American and African American/Black backgrounds, EOP hopes to take appropriate actions that will increase academic support in cultural resource centers. The reason why we chose to address cultural resource centers is because we know that these spaces on campus are already being utilized by these populations. Cultural resource centers are more often used for social support – ensuring students feel safe and cultivated with their culture. And although social support has proven to be invaluable, EOP looks to use these spaces to also support students academically by addressing the specific challenges each community face in relations to academia. For example: according to my research with EOP, students who identify as African American/Black aren't as engaged in

class because they can't connect with their teachers or faculty. Programs like EOP could create mentor relationships between teachers and faculty with students who are African American/Black begin to trust and develop possible impactful relationships with their instructors (Moore & Flowers, n.d.)

By addressing the unique academic needs of each community of color, EOP hopes to make appropriate efforts to maximize their program effectiveness as well as the effectiveness of cultural resource centers. It is important to acknowledge that not all communities of colors have the same needs, and even members within those communities can need different supports. By offering both academic and social support to these targeted populations, EOP hopes to increase success and completion rates.

Understand the impact of student identity, cultural heritage, and institutional and societal systems (including power and privilege), on identity development, personal growth, individual perspectives, and students' experiences

Much like through my internship with the Center for Civic Engagement, I learned how the uniqueness of each individual and their identity can impact their development. Students identities greatly influence their educational experience, and thus by understanding their identities, higher education administrators can begin to better support students of color. With underrepresented students, this is extremely important as they are often the first in their family to attend college, and thus, their experience will be unique to them. Family members can play a critical role on whether or not they complete their degree, and so higher education administrators also need to look into bridging the gap between home and college.

Our institutional and socital systems have historically discriminated against underrepresented students. In order to work towards a more socially just society, ALL higher education administrators must be aware of their own unconscious or conscious biases and work

towards dismantling it. If not, these students (students of color) will ultimately be impacted

negatively.

       Overall, through my competencies for my internship with the Educational Opportunities

Program allowed me to dive deeper into issues that impact underrepresented students. I have a

deeper understanding of the complexities of each community and my future will encompass my

efforts of dismantling barriers for these students.

References

Ali, J., McInerney, D. M., Craven, R. G., Seeshing Yeung, A., & King, R. B. (2013, November 4). Socially oriented motivational goals and academic achievements: Similarities between Native and Anglo Americans. *The Journal of Educational Research*, *107*(2), doi:10.1080/00220671.2013.7889

Evans, N. J., Forney, D. S., Guido, F. M., Patton, L. D., & Renn, K. A. (2010). *Student development in college: Theory, research, and practice* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. [ISBN # 978-0-7879-7809-9]

Moore, J., & Flowers, L. (n.d.). Policy implications for school counselors. *John Hopkins University School of Education*, Retrieved from http://education.jhu.edu/edpolicy/commentary/12

Principles of Good Practice for Student Affairs. (n.d.). Retrieved from NASPA website: https://www.naspa.org/images/uploads/main/Principles_of_Good_Practice_in_Student_Affairs.pdf