**Enhancing Collaboration**

**By Examining Faculty and**

**Student Affairs Professionals**

**Through an Intercultural Lens**

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**A Place to Start**

**Today’s Climate:** Increasing accountability + decreasing resources + redefining student learning = need for collaboration

**Collaboration is** “a process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible.” (Gray, 1989).

**Components of Student Learning (**AAHE et. al., 1998; Kuh, 1996)

* Students actively engage in the learning process.
* In and out-of-classroom experiences
* Faculty and Student Affairs professionals create situations that call for contemplation, cooperative sharing, and critical-thinking.
* Acceptance of learning that takes place informally and incidentally
* Common vision for learning, collaboration, and cross-functional dialogue
* Understanding of student cultures

**Culture** (Martin, 2002; Schein, 2004; Smirich, 1983)

* The social glue that holds a group together
* Purpose of culture
  + To convey a sense of identity
  + To facilitate commitment to an entity
  + To enhance stability of group’s social system
  + To serve as a sense-making device that guides and shapes behavior
* Culture affects how people think and how people behave.
* The study of culture provides better understanding of individual and group beliefs, values, norms and behaviors – providing a clearer understanding of the world in which we live.
* Culture of a work group or social network is “organizational culture”.
* Organizational cultures are made up of subcultures.
* Subcultures form around common work responsibilities, common personality traits and characteristics, professional affiliations, and common training and education, to name a few.
  + Faculty make up a subculture in higher education.
  + Student Affairs professionals make up a subculture in higher education.

**Two Inhibitors of Collaboration (What we are learning today!)** (Beodeker, 2005; Bourassa & Kruger, 2001; Magolda, 2005)

* Lack of knowledge or negative perceptions of the other subculture
* Limited perceptions of our own subculture

**Differences and Similarities between Faculty and Student Affairs Subcultures**

**Histories and Training**

* Student Affairs – created to address student behavior and administrative duties; expanded to address large enrollments that resulted in GI Bill; specialization to meet various student needs, and the diverse student populations
* Different graduate programs and training
* New employee training
  + Student Affairs – with other staff, department/division training, mentorship, supervision, peer groups
  + Faculty – little training, may be with other new faculty, usually alone, faculty manual is primary tool, general university orientation with HR
* Segregation of Professional Development Opportunities
  + Between the two subcultures and within the subcultures (academic disciplines and S.A. departments)

**Definition of Student Learning/View of Students**

* Faculty and Student Affairs professionals exhibit a shared commitment to students and student learning, but do so from different perspectives (Beodeker, 2006; Buyarski, 2004; Kezar & Lester, 2009).
* Faculty define student learning as intellectual development and the acquisition and advancement of knowledge. –focus on learning and academic standards
* Student Affairs professionals define student learning as emotional, spiritual, intellectual, social and physical development. –focus on the needs of the individual student
* Faculty view S.A. as auxiliary to the academic mission and in- and out-of-classroom experiences are of unequal importance (Buyarski, 2004; Kuh & Banta, 2000).

**Work Roles and Responsibilities (specific tasks, reporting structures)**

* Faculty – pressure to produce, independent work, not used to collaboration, wonder how collaboration impacts their primary responsibilities
* S.A. – teamwork is common, used to collaboration, collaboration is promoted, understand the importance of different departments working together to help students
* S.A. who moved into faculty ranks noted higher level of intellectual discussion, more difficulty building relationships, more adversarial meetings (more debate), focus was on process, not action (McClusky-Titus & Cawthon, 2004)
* View of S.A.s (Beodeker, 2006)
  + S.A.s view themselves as educators. Believe their values and experiences to be similar to those of faculty. See themselves as more alike than different from faculty.
  + Faculty view SA as administrators. Distrust of administration carries over to distrust of S.A. –causes them to take a cautionary view of collaboration.
  + Some differences within S.A. in terms of how they define themselves – most as educators, but some as administrators (usually upper-level staff), counselors, event/program planners, or managers/coordinators.
* Globalism v. Localism (Buyarski, 2004)
  + Globalism = individual’s focus is geared towards the overarching profession, involved in professional organizations, research with others in the field outside of their university
  + Localism = individual’s focus is on their department or academic discipline within their institution, focus on the students at their institution
  + Both faculty and S.A. show globalism and localism. Most fell in the “localism” category – aligning more closely with their own department/functional area or academic discipline than with the overarching profession.

**Work Structures (schedules, environment, rewards systems)**

* S.A. used to working nights and weekends. Can’t understand why faculty are “against” doing so. Faculty work various hours, but typically put in more than 40 hours/week. They may not work on campus during summers, but are usually doing research, leading travel/study abroad experiences or writing.
* Promotion and Tenure – external pressures on faculty outside of teaching. The department may not consider working with S.A. and students outside-of-class as “service”.
* Rewards and incentives differ
* There is a lack of interaction between faculty and S.A. due to busy work days for all. In addition, entry-level and mid-level S.A. professionals are rarely represented in the academic arena.
* Are there places where faculty and S.A. professionals socialize/congregate on campus?

**Power & Resources (Who has the power? Who has the resources?**

* Power Distance (Beodeker, 2006; Hofstedt, 1998; Hofstedt, 2001; Lee, Pilluta & Law, 2000)
  + How much “distance” a group is willing to give those in leadership
  + Small PD = decentralized structure, stronger personal connections with authorities and better understanding of what they are dealing with, shared governance, less of a tendency to defer to those in power, question authority, react negatively to edicts, value deliberation, debate is key to coming up with the best answer, slower to respond to requests from leaders (Faculty)
  + Large PD = centralized, tiered structure, clear chain of command, clearly defined roles and positions, more comfortable with leaders making decisions and acting on their behalf, respond quickly to requests from leaders and supervisors, expect leaders to create a vision, set goals and implement a plan of action (Student Affairs professionals)
* Resources
  + A belief by faculty that S.A. has most of the resources

**When considering subcultures, what can we do to improve collaboration between faculty and student affairs professionals?** Do these things to increase intercultural interaction, intercultural communication and intercultural sensitivity (Creamer, 2004; Magolda, 2001).

* Increase awareness of your own subculture.
* Increase awareness of our own “mental models” –our ingrained, unquestioned assumptions –those we have about our own subculture and those we have about the other subculture.
* Learn about the other subculture.
* Build interpersonal relationships.

**Self-Reflection Activity**

* What are some beliefs that you hold to be true about your own and the “other” subculture that may inhibit collaboration?
* What is something you learned today about the faculty or Student Affairs subculture that you didn’t know before?
* What is one action you can take to improve collaboration with members of the other subculture?

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