AN INVESTIGATION OF MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION GRADUATE STUDENTS: MID-POINT UPDATE

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ACPA Annual Meeting, Baltimore, MD
March 28, 2011

"Preparation faculty can play a significant role in fostering multicultural competencies of graduate students by articulating expectations for multicultural *knowledge* and *skill* attainment and by creating opportunities for them to explore multicultural issues throughout the curriculum."

(Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2004, pp. 175-6)

MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE

- *Awareness* - of self and the impact it has on others,

- *Knowledge* - of diverse cultures and groups,

- *Skills* - ability to openly discuss differences.

(Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2004)

PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES

- Basic competencies for "equity, diversity, and inclusion" (EDI) include the ability to
  - Assess and address one's own *awareness* of EDI and articulate one's own differences and similarities with others
  - Articulate foundational *understanding* of social justice
  - Demonstrate personal *skills* associated with EDI

  - *Professional competency areas for student affairs practitioners*, ACPA & NASPA, 2010

"MULTICULTURAL TRAINING"

- Professional preparation programs must include "multicultural training" (Pope & Reynolds, 1997, p. 273)
- 74% of prep programs require a diversity course at the Master's degree level (Flowers, 2003)
- Assists students in "developing the knowledge and competencies necessary to fulfill [their] roles" (McEwen & Roper, 1994, p. 86)

"TRAINING AND COMPETENCE"

- Diversity workshops: increased multicultural awareness and prejudice reduction

  (Pope & Reynolds, 1997)

- Inter-group contact: increased association with "others" leads to reduction in prejudice

  (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000)

"PROBLEM"

- Whites have lower rates of participation and tend to be the least aware of their own racial identity development and privilege.

- How to conduct multicultural training with a homogeneous group?
  - Reflective sense-making (Landreman et al., 2007)

NEED FOR STUDY

- Overall effectiveness of professional preparation is unclear
- Flowers (2003) observes that "student affairs graduate programs would benefit from having longitudinal data that might be used to evaluate the impact of their courses and related curricular experiences in developing multicultural competent students" (p. 79).

RESEARCH PURPOSE

- Investigate the impact of graduate professional preparation programs, and more specifically diversity curriculum, on the development of multicultural competence in graduate students enrolled in three professional preparation programs in student affairs.

METHODS: SITES

- Great Lakes University, midsize, public research institution, located in the Midwest; 75% female and 93% Caucasian
  - Required diversity course, with group process and skill-building components
- Cherry Hill University, regional comprehensive institution in the southeast; 76% female and 80% Caucasian
  - Diversity course (required), student affairs and counseling
- Atlantic State University, a comprehensive public institution in New England; 80% female and 25% racial minorities
  - Diversity across the curriculum; no one course

Data collection

- **Multicultural Competence for Student Affairs** (MCSA-P2): Self-report measure of multicultural competency.
- **Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale** (CoBRA): Self-report of racial attitudes.
- Demographic Form

Baseline Data (2009): 67 Participants, 3 campuses

- Female: 73% (49)
- Caucasian: 73% (49)
- Heterosexual: 73% (49)
- Christian: 67% (45); 25% non-believers
- Middle income 67% (45); 21% low income
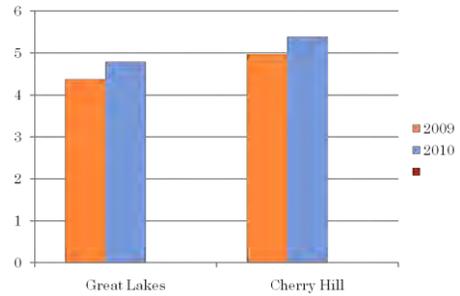- Age, 22-25: 58% (39); 22% = 26-30
  - 80% < 30

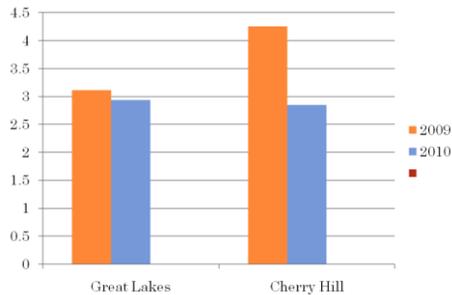## Midpoint Data (2010):
26 Participants, 2 campuses

- Great Lakes: 14 of 42 respondents (plus 1)
- Cherry Hill: 10 of 20 respondents (plus 1)

- Female: 69% (18)
- Caucasian: 81% (21)
- Heterosexual: 92% (24)
- Christian: 85% (21); 12% non-believers (3)
- Middle income 77% (20); 20% low income (5)
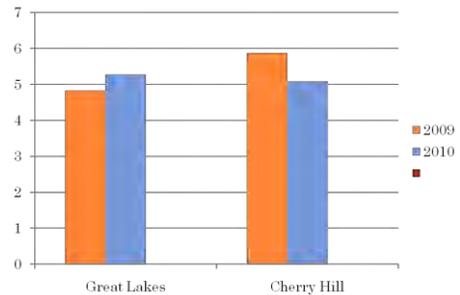- Age, 22-25: 54% (14); 27% = 26-30
  - 81% < 30
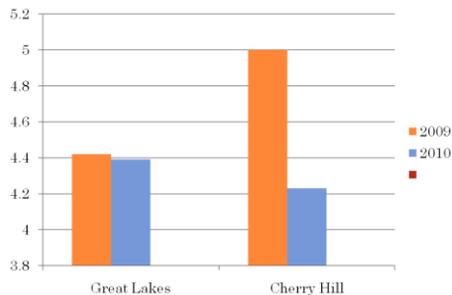
MCSA TOTAL (7 POINT SCALE)

1. I ATTEND WORKSHOPS TO LEARN ABOUT RACIAL GROUPS OTHER THAN MY OWN

15. I ATTEMPT TO LEARN ABOUT RACES DIFFERENT FROM MY OWN THROUGH READING, ATTENDING LECTURES, AND/OR CONVERSING WITH OTHERS

24. I SET GOALS FOR MYSELF TO INCREASE MY KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS OF MULTICULTURAL ISSUES


GREAT LAKES COURSE DESIGN

- One component of "diversity course," students, in assigned small groups, participated in 6 facilitated group process sessions (totaling 10 hours)
- Co-facilitated by graduate counseling students (enrolled in practicum2)
- Explored participant's views, experiences, opinions of multicultural issues
- Students maintain weekly reflective journals

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GROUP PROCESS

- Growth is promoted by learning about self from others (Corey & Corey, 1992)
- Feedback regarding how others perceive a person can promote change (Yalom, 1985)
- Interpersonal process groups are useful in developing communication skills and self-awareness (Arizaga, Bauman, Waldo, & Castellanos, 2005)
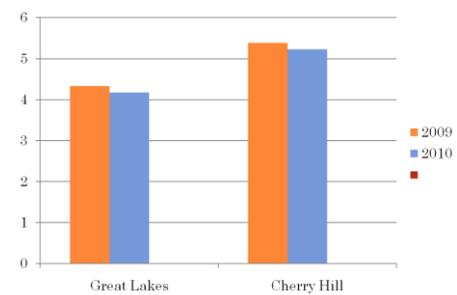
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25. I AM COMFORTABLE SPEAKING ABOUT ISSUES OF RACIAL DIVERSITY IN A GROUP
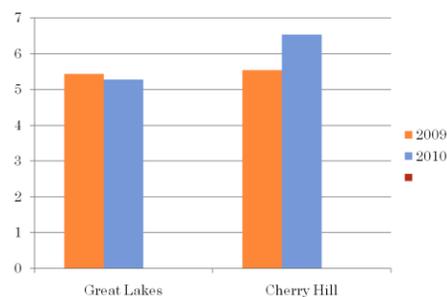

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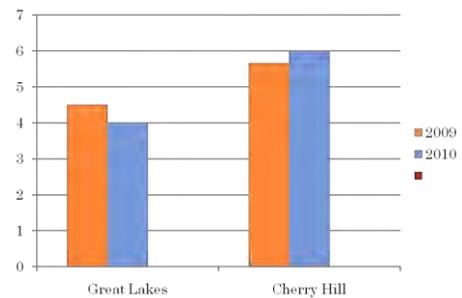
27. I BELIEVE STUDENTS WHO ARE RACIALLY DIFFERENT FROM ME FEEL COMFORTABLE SHARING THEIR CONCERNS WITH ME

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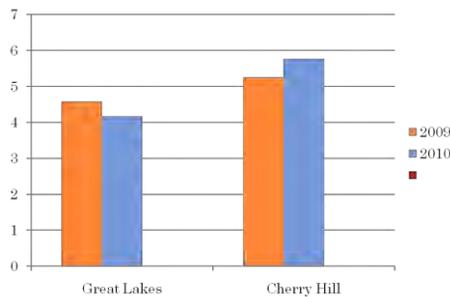
28. I AM NOT AFRAID TO SAY WHAT I THINK WHEN DISCUSSING RACIAL ISSUES

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33. I HAVE EXAMINED MY ASSUMPTIONS AND BIASES ABOUT PEOPLE WHO ARE RACIALLY DIFFERENT FROM ME

STRUGGLE

Awareness – Knowledge – Skills

*I did find some **difficult situations and discussions in the class** that I did not necessarily respond to, but instead learned from.* (Ronald)

***The reflections at times made me take a long, hard look at myself and be honest with myself about my thought processes and opinions.** I still don't get it right every time either, but I am more aware and recognize my shortcomings when they occur.* (Rose)

Awareness – Knowledge – Skills

STRUGGLE

Awareness – Knowledge – Skills

The **reflective nature of the work turned into a natural roadblock**… I found myself **disagreeing…and struggling** to accept [oppression, power, privilege] as a logical answer since it **slapped in the face** of the notion that individuals can find the ability to stand on their own two feet if first shown the way (Mark).

*Awareness – Knowledge – Skills*

STRUGGLE

Awareness – Knowledge – Skills

During the semester **I allowed myself to take risk that I would have never imagined**. Thinking back on my decision to attend a G.L.B.T meeting, I cannot help but to be proud of myself. I learned a great deal of knowledge about this particular population and **I was able to interact with them exclusive of internal feelings of homophobia**. (Darnell)
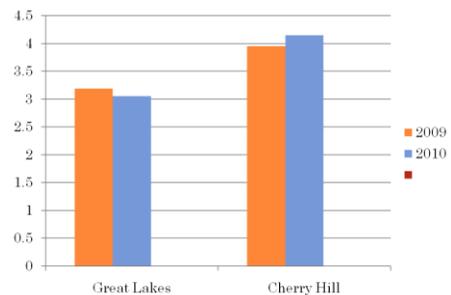
Awareness – Knowledge – Skills

RACIAL ATTITUDES SCALE (6 POINT SCALE)

1. Everyone who works hard, no matter what race, has an equal chance to become rich.
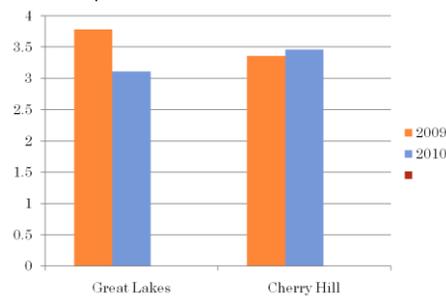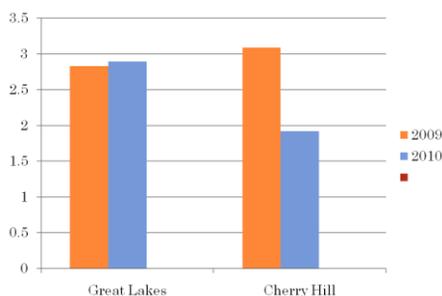

RACIAL ATTITUDES SCALE (6 POINT SCALE)

3. It is important people begin to think of themselves as American and not as African American, Mexican American, Italian American

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RACIAL ATTITUDES SCALE (6 POINT SCALE)

10. Talking about racial issues causes unnecessary tensions

IMPLICATIONS

- **Developmental readiness**: "*I realized not everyone is at the same place in any of their development*" (Emma)
- **"Skills" development**: Connie observed she "*needs to do way more than just be aware of diversity; I need to do something.*"
- **Subsequent opportunities**: "*I am struggling to decide how much time and effort I want to commit to this endeavor and how much I am going to allow it to change my life. I don't think my willingness to examine myself has changed…although my ability to do so has broadened* (Alice).

DISCUSSION

- How does identity and developmental readiness matter?
  - What are approaches for homogeneous vs heterogeneous populations?
  - How do we scaffold learning opportunities?

- Now what? How might you use any of this in your work?

- What challenges do you face?

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THANK YOU

- The presenters are thankful for funding provided by the ACPA Commission on Professional Preparation Faculty Research Grant

- FMI: contact us at siverson@kent.edu and tlara2@kent.edu

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