The Council of Graduate Schools Research Forum
for
Doctoral Initiative on Minority Attrition and Completion

Discussant Remarks

by

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Overview of Discussant Remarks

- My researcher perspective (qualitative)

- Key issues in the report

- Relevant literature

- Implications/recommendations for future research

- Concluding comments

Researcher Perspective

- Qualitative - Transformative/Participatory Worldview

- Recent Projects

- Professional Experience
  - Researcher in Doctoral Education
  - Practitioner as adviser and instructor of both doctoral and master's students

Key Issues

- **Support our national capacity for innovation and competitiveness on a global scale.**
- **Understanding attrition**
- **Insights to understanding programmatic efforts**
- **Highlighting the racial disparities**
- **Making connections between the quantitative and qualitative findings (More qualitative work needed).**
- **Attention to the value of a disciplinary focus**

Relevant Literature

- **Supporting academic success through transformative dialogue and exchanges with students**

  - **Gasman, Anderson-Thompkins, & Haydel (2006)** – Corridors and coffee shops

  - **Gasman, Gerstl-Pepin, Anderson-Thompkins, Rasheed, & Hathaway (2004)** – Developing trust, negotiating power: Transgressing race and status in the academy

  - **Harper and Hurtado (2007)** – Nine themes for campus racial climate and implications for institutional transformation

  - **Hurtado, Clayton-Pederson, Allen & Milem (1998)** – Enhancing campus climates

  - **Hurtado & Ruiz (2012)** – The climate for underrepresented groups and diversity on campus

Relevant Literature

- **Racial socialization**

  - Felder, Gasman, Stevenson (2014) – Race in doctoral student socialization
  - Stevenson (2014) - Managing and coping with racial trauma

- **Strengthening the capacity of graduate education**

  - Commission for the Future of Graduate Education Reports (2010, 2012)
  - St. John, Hu, & Fisher (2013) Academic capital formation
  - Yosso (2005) Community cultural wealth

Relevant Scholars

- St. John, Kline, Moore, Gentry - professional learning and the graduate student experience
- Weidman – Organizational Socialization
- Gardener - Socialization and prior socialization
- Barker – Mentorship, advising, cross-race student/faculty relationships
- McCallum – Transitioning between the baccalaureate and doctoral study
- Gildersleeve & Croom – Critical race analysis of doctoral education
- González – Socialization of Latina doctoral students
- Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso – Critical race theory, racial micro-aggressions, and campus climate

Institutional-Wide Diversity Models of Practice

- University of Denver's Inclusive Excellence Agenda
- University of Pennsylvania Penn GSE Faculty Diversity Initiative
- Yale University's Bouchet Conference on Graduate Education

Chapter One - Introduction

- In what ways are pre-doctoral experiences considered in shaping decision-making about the discipline.

- To what extent is the role of degree completion considered in understanding what activities and initiatives enhance success and completion rates for URM in STEM.

Chapter Two – Data Collection

- **66% of students without prior graduate degrees – Could this be discipline specific? If so, examining student preparation at the baccalaureate level is critical to understanding transitioning into the doctorate and the socialization within doctoral programs and the profession.**

- **To what extent were alumni experiences (and professional success beyond the doctoral degree) considered?**

- **What's the role of philosophical assumptions or interpretive frameworks guiding discussions about the student experiences?**

Chapter Three – Results from the Analysis of Student Level Enrollment Data

- **In what ways do prior graduate school experiences contribute to academic success?**

- **Why are some racial/ethnic groups more likely to complete within 7 years than others?**

Chapter Four - Analyses of Program Inventories, Student Surveys, and Site Visit Data

- In what ways might fit change? How does it change? How is diversity addressed when considering fit?

- 45% of the programs indicated targeted recruitment of URM students emphasizing minority focused job fairs and conferences. What are some other important recruitment activities?

- The concept or process of "permitting" students to have multiple faculty mentors is unclear. What does this mean in terms of the student experience? To what extent is this permission formal and/or informal?

- In terms of thinking about research mode, what kinds of activities exist beyond research fairs that might foster university-wide community for URM students?

- Very few of the programs held seminars related to the supporting minority student experiences. This appears to be a huge barrier/complication to facilitating institutional diversity initiatives.

- Witnessing racism or racist practices or policies vs. Subjectivity can have an impact on student experience

- Graduate Student experience - Over 60% of the concerns related psycho-social issues which can have a tremendous impact on intellectual development and emotional stability for students.

- Students recommended clear program expectations - How is clarity monitored/evaluated?

Chapter Five - Recommendations

- Inventory of interventions by Discipline/Specialization to address nuances of student experience and characteristics of academic success

- Enhanced academic support could involve discipline-specific advisement focused on stages of progress

- How can faculty be encouraged to engage in conversations about supporting marginalized students?

- Both formal and informal evaluations of programs and interventions will be essential to supporting URM students

- Including racial and cultural awareness as key part of the formal advisement strategy for URM students

Concluding Comments

- Report addresses "Areas of Vulnerability" particularly related to attrition (ETS and CGS The Path Forward Report, 2010).

- Strengthening institutional capacity to support advisement strategies focused on URM students and combine these strategies with professional development efforts

- Future studies should involve rigorous qualitative analysis for deeper understanding of student experiences

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