



Multicultural Outreach Initiatives:

A Reflective Evaluation Project at University Counseling Service

Program History and Rationale

The mission of the University Counseling Service is focused on multiculturally sensitive and competent clinical, training, and outreach services to the UI student community.

“The mission of the University Counseling Service is to provide compassionate psychological services, outreach, and training that foster the mental health of students, nurture student success, and contribute to a safe, welcoming, and multiculturally aware campus community.” (UCS Staff Manual)

More specifically:

“The University Counseling Service has a strong commitment to meeting the needs of diverse people. In all areas of the UCS, we strive to create an environment where all people feel welcome. As a staff, we define cultural diversity as personal or social identities based in cultural, individual, group, or role differences including, but not limited to, those based on race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, mental health status, relational and family status, religion, spirituality, language, nationality, citizenship status, social class, economic status, veteran status, disability and ability, gender identity and expression, body type and size, as well as diverse ideas, values, and lifestyles.” (UCS Staff Manual)

In keeping with the mission and service commitment to diverse populations, UCS staff members regard multiculturally focused clinical services, outreach, and training as well as social justice work as key components of staff members’ roles and responsibilities. Staff members are engaged with other campus organizations and campus partners to create not only safe, but affirming services for U of Iowa students from all backgrounds but especially for those from underprivileged/ underrepresented, and historically oppressed groups and communities.

In the past two years, UCS staff members have been asked to set annual individual multicultural outreach goals to support the agency’s priorities of decreasing stigma about mental health services and increasing utilization of UCS services by underrepresented groups.

Purpose of Evaluation

This current project, a qualitative analysis of reflective writing excerpts by staff members, was designed to evaluate individual and agency multicultural outreach efforts and to support staff members’ multicultural goal project this past year. More specifically, the purpose of this evaluation project was to:

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1. Support the UCS mission on providing multiculturally skilled services
2. Support each individual staff member's progress on multicultural goals for the year
3. Provide thematic information about staff members' external (i.e., work with campus partners) and internal (reactions, joys, challenges) process of engaging in MC outreach work
4. Explore strengths and shortcomings in MC outreach work as an entity
5. Receive feedback from campus collaborators about perceived collaborator roles, skills, and engagement on MC outreach process by UCS staff
6. Provide data for a systematic, long-term, growth-focused multicultural initiative at the UCS

Learning Outcomes from Multicultural Goals Project

1. Find shared themes across our work
2. Demonstrate both process and outcome variables of multicultural outreach
3. Discuss implications of findings for outreach, training, and professional development areas
4. Quality improvement of our multicultural goals and outreach efforts
5. Establish advocacy for resources and support for multicultural outreach

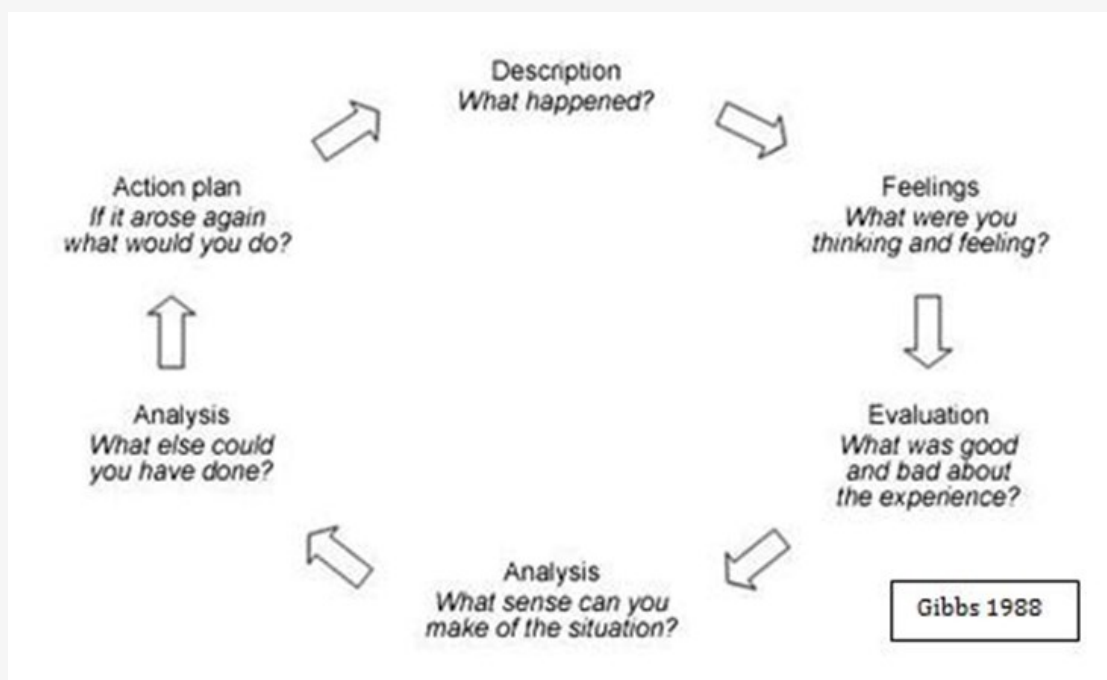
Literature Review

Much has been written about the role of multiculturally aware and skilled clinical practice (Pope-Davis, Coleman, Liu, & Toporek, 2003). Fewer conceptual and research efforts have been directed toward understanding and promoting multicultural and social justice outreach work at college counseling centers. At least two of the six counselor multicultural competencies proposed by Constantine and Ladany (2001) appear highly applicable to multicultural outreach work at a counseling center: counselor self-awareness and general multicultural knowledge. Reynolds and Pope (2003) noted that the role of counseling centers include prevention of mental health concerns and working toward a healthy and safe campus. This includes work on cultural diversity and social justice. Vera and Speight (2003) called for an "expansion" of counseling center multicultural work to include a focus on social justice, which is a broader and more in-depth focus than the long-standing effort in counseling psychology toward multicultural competency. The authors highlighted the need for a social justice framework that emphasizes advocacy and outreach.

In order to fulfill the mission of counseling centers in both the areas of multiculturalism and prevention work, staff members have to be multiculturally self-aware, knowledgeable, and skilled. There are multiple pathways to gaining this type of self-awareness, knowledge, and skills: pre-doctoral training and supervision, continuing education workshops and conferences, staff development opportunities, support and encouragement from administration to increase learning, exposure to and experience working with multiple racially and ethnically diverse clients and students, consultation with other staff members, and a review of the literature.

One tool in the self-awareness and skill development process is the tool of self-reflection. Reflection has been a mainstay learning objective and teaching tool alike in higher education. Moon (2001) noted that “reflection is thus a means of working on what we know already. We put into the reflection process knowledge that we already have (thoughts, ideas, feelings, etc.), we may add new information and then we draw out of it something that accords with the purpose for which we reflected” (p. 1).

Reflective practice is integral to the training of psychologists and allied mental health professionals and is often centered around the experience of supervised clinical practice. Gibbs’ (1988) reflective model describes this process well:



Source: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/7d/Steph_Gib_Model.jpg

Reflective writing was chosen as the primary tool for this evaluation project in order to allow for a more in-depth, qualitative exploration of the UCS approach to multicultural outreach, and to encourage a personal reflective learning process based on the following five stages according to Moon (2001): “noticing, making sense, making meaning, working with meaning, and transformative learning.” Staff members were being asked to notice intentions, process, and outcome, and to critically evaluate their own internal and external process in multicultural outreach this past semester. It was hoped that the activity of reflecting required by this evaluation project would in and of itself become an intervention and professional growth opportunity for staff members in the areas of multicultural outreach work.

Methodology

Participants: All 15 full-time clinical staff members, including the Clinical Case Manager and three doctoral interns, participated in the Staff Multicultural Outreach Reflection during Fall 2013.

Process:

This evaluation consisted of two complimentary projects: 1) Staff Multicultural Outreach Reflection on Multicultural Outreach Work on Campus, and 2) Campus Partner Feedback about UCS Multicultural Outreach Work on Campus. The Staff Self-Reflection project proceeded from September 2013 to December 2013 while the Campus Partner Feedback deadline was postponed from December 2013 to May 2014 to allow more time for collaborative work across campus. Only information from Staff Multicultural Outreach Reflections is reported in this report.

Staff were asked in spring/summer 2013 to choose a multicultural outreach goal as part of their annual professional goals. Staff shared these goals publicly in a group meeting early in the fall semester. At that same staff meeting, the Staff Multicultural Outreach Reflection (SMOR) was introduced to staff. The following instructions were provided:

Staff Self-Reflection Prompts

1. What was/were your MC outreach goal(s) for this year?
2. What were some of the steps you took toward accomplishing your goal(s)? If you have quantifiable data to share (such as how many individuals you contacted, programs you presented, projects that were accomplished, etc.), please do so here.
3. Please share your reflection on your learning process, including a focus on successes, barriers, a look on multicultural self-awareness, power, privilege, your role as an advocate, etc.

There was time for Q & A and any potential concerns about this evaluation project at this first meeting.

Staff were reminded periodically throughout the semester about this evaluation project. It became clear over time that some staff members were struggling with the open-ended nature of the reflection task. In an attempt to decrease anxiety and increase efficiency, a list of guiding questions for the self-reflection activity was provided to the staff, along with information on the benefits of and difficulties with engaging in reflective practice. The purpose and importance of this evaluation project was periodically publicly supported and reinforced by the UCS Director and the UCS Assistant Director for Outreach.

Staff Self-Reflection Prompts--Revised

Please write a reflection on the following questions:

1. What was your multicultural outreach goal for this year?
2. What did you do? Please provide an overview of the types of programs delivered, connections made, meetings with campus partners/
3. How did you approach your multicultural outreach work on campus this semester?
4. What were some of the obstacles you encountered?
5. What did you learn about social justice work?
6. What did you learn about yourself?
7. Please feel free to share other information and other insights as you wish.

Staff submitted their written self-reflections at the end of Finals Week, shortly after another collaborative staff meeting about experiences with multicultural outreach work this semester. This staff meeting was an opportunity for staff to share about their process, progress, challenges, and future expectations engaging in collaborative social justice work across campus during the semester.

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is part and parcel of several qualitative research approaches, such as grounded theory (Boyatzis, 1998). In its simplest form, it is a way of categorizing and grouping information according to researcher-developed codes that are based on emerging themes. The codes (or descriptors) for categories are then compared against any new information provided by participants to look for confirmation or the need for a change in the code. Through a process of constant comparison, codes become legitimate and useful ways to organize and describe information (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

For analysis of the UCS evaluation project, the following steps were taken: Over winter break, the interns served as consultant group and expert reviewers to the AD for Evaluation and Research. Each staff reflection was reviewed by at least two reviewers initially. The reviewers then met several times as a group to discuss initial impressions and emerging themes. Emerging themes were then grouped into coded categories. Based on this preliminary thematic analysis, one more review of the reflections was conducted by the AD for Evaluation and Research to saturate the categories and subcategories that had been established.

Analysis and Interpretation

First Impressions:

Depth and Length: Depth and length of reflection varied among staff members. Reflection essays ranged from 1 page to 16 pages, with the modal number being 4 pages.

Content versus Process: Four staff members wrote what could be considered a summative evaluation (focused on facts, on “what happened”), three staff members wrote a formative evaluation (journaling), and eight staff members wrote an evaluation that combined both formative and summative elements. Formative evaluations allowed for a very nuanced look at subtle intrapersonal and interpersonal processes during outreach events and consultations whereas summative evaluations provided clarity about what happened, when, by whom, and for whom.

Sample List of Staff Goals (verbatim)

- Learning about issues that impact the Latino campus community directly from members of the Latino community
- To reach out to underserved cultural groups on campus. My focus was mainly within the context of EDAAP, where our work was to address the needs of male students on campus.
- To help traditionally underserved student population especially students of Color explore, and articulate the challenges of functioning in a predominantly White institution and community, and the strategies for navigating the complex relationships involved so they can achieve their ultimate goal of successfully graduating from the University of Iowa.
- Explore needs of men on campus in regard to body image and eating concerns and develop collaborative programming approach and offer one outreach program geared toward men.
- I would like to work with student groups associated with the multicultural houses to foster meaningful discussions related to identity, experience, and success on the UI campus. From this and other discussions, an aspirational goal was the creation of targeted resources related to UCS services (brochures, videos, etc).
- Viewed largely through the lens of social justice, continue building outreach networking relationships with both on & off campus entities to strengthen case manager role in assisting students with access to resources.
- Collaborate with Center for Diversity and Enrichment to explore how I can contribute to service for first-generation college students.
- To be more fully embedded in the campus-wide SafeZone and NCBI trainings. I wanted to be seen as a more recognizable leader in these areas.
- To develop a better understanding of the international student community on the U of I campus and their academic, social and psychological needs, particularly with the international Chinese students.
- Discussion of multicultural organizational development issues and leadership practices to support this.

Thematic Analysis

Information from the staff self-reflections was grouped into four categories: I) choice of multicultural goals; II) multicultural outreach process; III) joys and challenges; IV) multicultural learning.

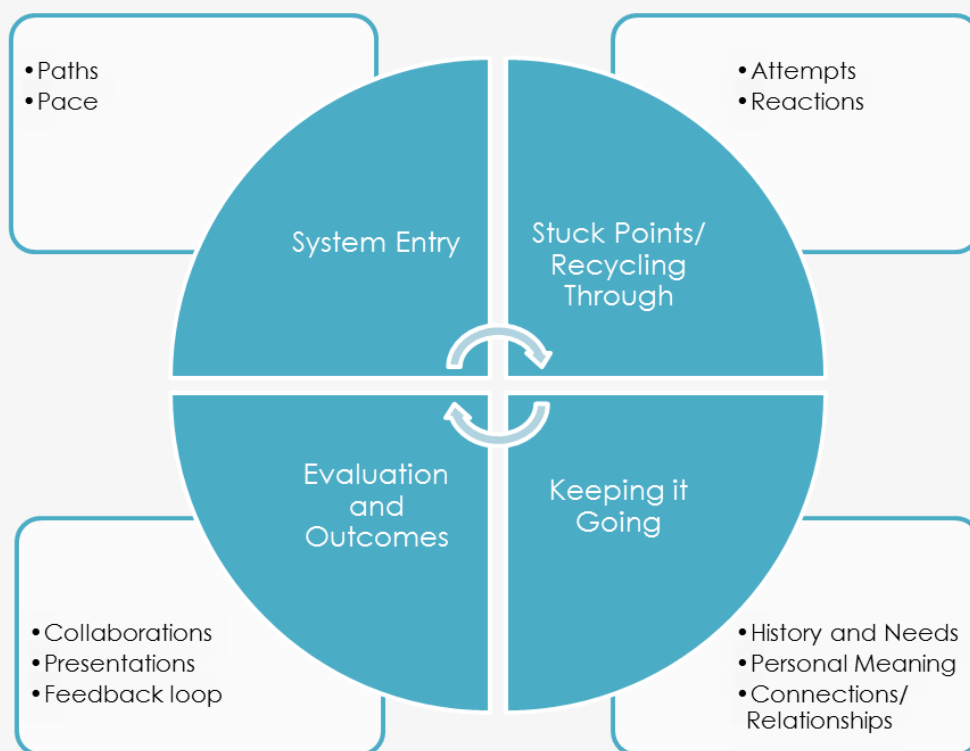
I. Choice of Multicultural Goals

The following were mentioned as reasons for staff outreach goals (multiple mentions were possible):

Category	Theme	Quote	# Mentioned
Student Needs	Student needs	“To reach out to underserved cultural groups on campus. My focus was mainly within the context of EDAAP, where our work was to address the needs of male students on campus.” (David Adams)	5
	Increase student success and retention	“To help traditionally underserved student population especially students of Color explore, and articulate the challenges of functioning in a predominantly White institution and community, and the strategies for navigating the complex relationships involved so they can achieve their ultimate goal of successfully graduating from the University of Iowa.” (Emmanuel Enekwechi)	1
	Decrease mental health stigma	“The APACC (and associated student organizations) are historically disconnected from the UCS and view what we have to offer as mostly irrelevant or even stigmatizing.” (Jeremy Kinser)	3
	Address privilege and discrimination	“Viewed largely through the lens of social justice, continue building outreach networking relationships with both on & off campus entities to strengthen case manager role in assisting students with access to resources.” (Katherine Donahue)	2
Involvement on campus	Be a part of larger scale MC teams/ activities on campus	“Get involved with larger, previously established social justice initiatives such as the White Privilege Conference and NCBI.” (Kelly Clougher)	4
	Support for allied offices	“Collaborate with Center for Diversity and Enrichment to explore how I can contribute to service for first-generation college students.” (Julie Corkery)	2
	Networking	“To be more fully embedded in the campus-wide Safe-Zone and NCBI trainings. I wanted to be seen as a more recognizable leader in these areas. “ (Paula Keeton)	2
Continuing Education and Personal Growth	Further training and education	“Learning about issues that impact the Latino campus community directly from members of the Latino community.” (Audrey Bahrlick)	3
	Personal reasons	Personal experiences and multicultural identities were mentioned here.	6
Administrative	Carrying on the torch for other staff members or UCS initiatives	“To engage with another administrator and discuss multicultural organizational development and leadership issues.” (Sam Cochran)	1
None	No specific discussion about why and how the goal was chosen (1)	NA	1

II. Multicultural Outreach Process

Staff members discussed the process of engaging in multicultural outreach efforts on campus. It became clear that there were specific phases in this process that could be grouped as: Entry, Stuck Points/Recycling Through, Keeping It Going, and Evaluation and Outcomes. Each of these phases represents the collective experiences of UCS staff members while working with diverse groups on campus. Movement from Entry to Stuck Points/Recycling Through, Keeping It Going, and Evaluation and Outcome was described as a somewhat cyclical process with the possibility of going back through earlier stages if necessary. There are specific tasks and experiences attached to each phase that are described below. The quotes below illustrate the aspects of the overall process.



Staff Quotes

“Much of my multicultural outreach has to do with ‘networking,’ being a middle person or ‘mediator’ who connects those in need of resources with those who have the resources and serving as an advocate, often a social justice advocate, to help make those connections. (...) I’m left with an affirming feeling of the importance of being a ‘mediator’ and that it is both a skill and an art—and requires a good dose of humility.”

(Katherine Donahue, December 2014, reflection)

“It seemed to me that the group wanted me to be more involved with the group (...). I had to discuss my limits with them yet I did not want them to feel rejected or ‘I don’t care!’ As mentioned above, if I am a Chinese counselor working in China, I will be there for students all the time because this is the expectation of school/college counselor would do. But, it is not in the American context/boundary!”

(Scott Liu, December 2014, reflection)

II. Multicultural Outreach Process

System Entry

The system entry phase of the multicultural outreach process model consists of two tasks: developing paths for outreach and pacing outreach. Specific staff reflections on both of those tasks are described below:

Developing Paths for Outreach	Pace of Entry and Collaboration
Find good people and allies on campus	Slow
Plug in with existing events	Quite a lengthy entry process
Depends on how welcoming the other party is	
Open houses	
Start with one's own biases and struggles	
Leave your office	
Become an advisor to student group	
Use existing connections with former students to get in	
Invitation response model	
Search for niche versus letting it find you	
Take on leadership positions	

"The speakers often don't make eye contact, or make minimal eye contact with me at these moments. I am aware of my privilege in these moments, and also my empathy for the feelings expressed, aware that I am a less safe or known presence, and try to communicate my openness to these emotional experiences non-verbally."

(Audrey Bahrack, December 2014, reflection)

Stuck Points/Recycling Through

Independently of each other, multiple staff members discussed similar difficulties making entry with other offices and organizations on campus and with developing mutual, collaborative, and sustainable outreach efforts. These difficulties were termed "stuck points/recycling through" because they are reflections on feeling stalled in the outreach process as well as reflections on how to take a step back and approach a particular difficulty differently. Staff mentioned both emotional reactions here as well as some wisdom about important questions to ponder and address.

Recycling/Processing Through

Tough
Lack of Follow-through
Anxiety and Vulnerability
Negotiating time and duties
Ebb and flow

Stuck Points

Can't force it
Take it as it comes
Trying too hard?
When is it enough?

“Then the waiting game started. I emailed early the next week to share with T. and A. how much I enjoyed being welcomed into their staff meeting—and looking forward to joining in the future, on a regular basis. Nothing. No response. During this time, my anxiety about ‘what to do’ began to slowly increase.”

(Amanda McEnery, reflection)

Keeping It Going

Sustainability of outreach work on a college campus is always an important issue to consider, especially in regard to the ongoing and changing needs of underserved groups and communities. This is the third phase of the multicultural outreach process as conceptualized from the reflections of UCS staff members.

History of the Work

- Taking into account the history of the work
- Multiple follow-up emails—need for persistence
- Finding a need to fill

Relationships

- Finding a personal connection
- Building rapport
- Focusing on relationships

Personal Meaning

- Becoming part of the community
- Witnessing experiences as outsider
- Building excitement
- Making time

“The more I learn the more I see the need to increase my knowledge and awareness of diversity issues and to increase my competence when working with diverse populations. Thinking of Nelson Mandela’s life and work, we have made progress with social justice, but we still have miles to go to bring social justice to all people.”

(Helen Brady, December 2014, reflection)

Evaluations and Outcomes

The fourth phase of the Multicultural Outreach Process was termed “Evaluation and Outcomes.” This phase reflected the need by staff to have tangible outcomes of their outreach process over time that were measurable as well as evidenced by ongoing collaboration. It is noteworthy that less emphasis was placed on evaluation and more on actual outcomes from the ongoing work of phases I-III. Another important point is that many of the outcomes were in the area of solid relationships with both students and staff members across campus rather than actual “products” like presentations. It is evident that these connections are valued highly by UCS staff as the core and basis of multicultural outreach work on campus.

“Serving” Others	Practical Applications
Collaborations Listening Working in many different ways with student groups Connecting students with each other Meeting with student leaders or staff	Collaborative programming Offering presentations Providing new programming

III. Joys and Challenges

The third way UCS staff reflections were analyzed centered around emotional reactions of staff members to multicultural outreach work. Themes that were identified included the experience of a time crunch as a challenge, relationships as both sources of joy and challenge, descriptions of emotional work as enjoyable or challenging, and administrative challenges. Joys (J) and challenges (C) are reflected in the table below. Repeat mention of a source of joy or challenge was required for inclusion in this list.

Time	Time Crunch (C)
Relationships	Working with good people (J) Joy of working with campus partners (J) Hopeful about healthy students (J) Deepened appreciation for relationships over time (J)
	Multiple roles and identities (C) Finding the fine line between support and over-functioning (C) Dealing with participant interpersonal dynamics (C) Difficulty sustaining relationships with campus partner when they are busy (C) Complicated boundaries, i.e., use of social media in outreach work (C) Difficulty with being in the minority (C)
Emotions	Outreach work as energizing (J)
	Emotionally draining, dealing with internalized “isms” (C) Feeling put on the spot (C) Feeling intrusive, asking too much (C)
Administrative	Staff turnover in allied office (C) Questions about one’s role (C) How to publicize events (C)

Staff Quotes

“As I reflect on my work with these students and their feedback, I am astounded at the enormity of the challenges that most of the students of color confront. As I receive positive feedback from students both within and outside the university environment on how much my work with them helped them, I feel overwhelmed with gratification that I have contributed in my small way towards helping some of these students achieve their goals of succeeding in the university and also helping the university achieve its objective of retaining the students and helping them get good education.”

(Emmanuel Enekwechi, December 2013, reflection)

“It takes time and is a slow process. I wish that social justice work could be a faster process because there is a lot of work to be done, and I quickly find myself feeling overwhelmed by the work that I see needs to be done.”

(Kelly Clougher, December 2014, reflection)

IV. Multicultural Learning

Six overarching learning outcomes were discovered through staff reflections: Privilege and Power, Identities, Outreach as Insider/Outsider, “In It for the Long Haul”, Experience of not Knowing, and Intensely Personal. These learning outcomes were each mentioned several times by staff members and then coalesced into specific categories with subthemes. Subthemes serve as examples and explanations for the overarching learning outcomes. Subthemes are present when staff members engage in multicultural outreach work. Staff discussion, staff training, and staff support around these subthemes seem to be crucial for ongoing staff development and organizational and systems change regarding multicultural outreach work on campus.

“I wonder about the balance of people not having enough time compared to hesitancy devoting efforts to something that is new. This may be particularly relevant for people who have been in the field for a while and have a routine. As social justice advocates in the realm of outreach, devoting time to something is important and relevant. Does more time need to be allotted for people to do such work? Or do people need to adopt a new, more flexible approach? Or is there another better question all-together?”

(David Adams, reflection)



Privilege and Power

Difficulty interacting with others from privileged identities

What space and support to provide to let students develop their own ideas

There does seem to be an internalized hierarchy of the oppressed...oppression and privilege are really complex processes and they overlap.

Stepping out of the box

Stimulus issues

Evaluation concerns

Identities

Improved professional identity, alleviated some guilt about unearned power and privilege.

Outreach work this year gave me a voice.

Stepping out of the box.

Good to have a partner for this work.

<p>Outreach as Insider/Outsider</p>	<p>We need to know more about the community we are serving.</p> <p>Awareness of stimulus value/insider/outsider issues</p> <p>Having to explain your presence</p> <p>The art of being a mediator, “stepping outside” is important</p>
<p>In It for the Long Haul</p>	<p>How slow it is to do quality work.</p> <p>It is important to be methodical and planful and be in it for the long haul.</p> <p>The need to stay flexible with roles.</p> <p>It is not a spectator sport.</p> <p>Get to ask difficult questions.</p> <p>It is uncomfortable sometimes.</p>
<p>Experience of Not Knowing</p>	<p>More need to learn</p> <p>“I don’t know what I don’t know” and ways to be comfortable with that.</p> <p>Sometimes it’s time to let the work “find you”.</p> <p>Highlighted the relational nature of the work.</p> <p>“Where Is the boundary of how much to advocate?”</p> <p>Learning to “sit with process” and others’ journey.</p>
<p>Intensely Personal</p>	<p>It’s about relational context.</p> <p>There is a personal component.</p> <p>Deepened appreciation for relationships over time and sharing of real-life experiences.</p> <p>“I have to work hard at controlling my responses”.</p> <p>“I get very emotionally charged”.</p> <p>It’s an uncomfortable place sometimes and its’ a stretch and a challenge.</p>

Staff Quotes

“How our own status as a privileged person on the one hand and a marginalized person on the other hand gets complicated when working with people who are also in some ways both privileged and marginalized at the same time.” (Peiwei Li, January 2014, reflection)

“I am learning that this is not a spectator sport. I am learning that I need to be more vocal about what I believe and what I think is right. I am learning that one of my roles in this process is to ask difficult questions and then to allow all of us to sit with the questions.” (Eva Schoen, December 2014, reflection)

“As I entered S401 PBB, I walked into a sea of Black faces. I had both the familiar discomfort of not knowing anyone and the more unfamiliar discomfort of being ‘the one different’.” (Kathie Staley, December 2014, reflection)

“As I’ve sought chances to grow as an ally, I have learned that it will always remain important for me to intentionally keep issues of diversity and social justice at the front of my mind or risk defaulting to my privileged paths of least resistance.” (Jeremy Kinser, December 2014, reflection)

“It’s (social justice work) a process, and it is a challenge. It helps to have a colleague to discuss these processes and challenges, and to refine and clarify the purposes and goals of this work in an institutional environment.” (Sam Cochran, December 2014, reflection)

Discussion and Summary

This outreach evaluation project was based on 15 reflections from UCS staff members about their multicultural outreach work on campus during Fall 2013. A variant of qualitative research methodology, thematic analysis, was used to categorize and analyze the essays/journals provided by staff members. While the length and depth of reflection varied from staff account to staff account, there were multiple overlapping themes in the areas of multicultural outreach goals, process experiences, joys as well as challenges, and multicultural insights mentioned in the reflections. It seems that UCS staff overall are in an intense learning process about how to engage in multicultural outreach on campus, what resources are available to support this work, how to manage and work with privilege and power, difficult process variables, and uncertain outcomes. It is important to point out that while there were central themes identified, experiences that may not have been highlighted in this evaluation summary may be as important to pay attention to as the main themes that emerged.

Implications

Implications from this evaluation will emerge from discussions with UCS staff about the results of this project. Preliminary implications include:

- Ways to honor the often lengthy process and investment of time for staff who engage in multicultural outreach efforts;
- Ways to engage in more collaborative work together as a staff (increased learning, support, and mentoring, as well as increased ability to address outreach as insider/outsider);
- Continued efforts to provide learning opportunities and safe places for staff reflections on process;
- Establish long-range vision and goals

Next Steps in the Process:

1. Meeting with UCS staff to share and discuss results from this evaluation project
2. Discussion about implications from this study for:
 - a. multicultural outreach efforts
 - b. staff training needs
 - c. staff support needs
 - d. evaluation needs
4. Listening to UCS feedback about the Staff Multicultural Outreach Evaluation Project
5. Analysis of Part II of this project, feedback from campus partners (by end of May 2014)
6. Discussion about next steps in evaluation of multicultural goal initiative in collaboration with AD for Outreach

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