As we review our 2017 milestones, the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion can point to success in many different initiatives. Our new system-wide cohort of Chief Diversity Officers has elevated the conversation on what it takes to be inclusive. Campuses are beginning to collaborate and form new relationships with ODEI and with senior leadership to continue the unprecedented creation of Strategic Diversity Plans. ODEI has only begun to see how valuable this network of colleagues can be in building stronger and more responsive actions plans for campus engagement in issues of diversity and inclusion.

Throughout the summer months, campuses evaluated their priorities and refined their proposals to receive Performance Improvement Funds. ODEI is working with campuses on 24 projects that encompass a wide range of diversity initiatives: building pipelines in STEM, growing diverse scholars, and enrolling and retaining underserved student populations. Providing training and education to both students and faculty on a host of important topics including implicit bias, Title IX, sexual harassment and campus climate frame an effort to build cultural sensitivity needed on our campuses.

In the fall, we exceeded all expectations in terms of workshop submissions and interest in our 2017 Diversity Conference: “Engaging Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity in the Classroom, Campus and Community.” The conference hit a sweet spot this year with a smattering of options from vendors and activities beyond the expansive number of workshops and our pre-conference events. Attendance exceeded our venue’s capacity with more than 400 registered participants. Many expressed their eagerness to be part of this learning community. Workshops at our 2017 Diversity Conference discussed classroom inclusion, faculty diversity,
Exciting is the word that best describes SUNY’s Performance Improvement Fund initiative. ODEI has the opportunity to work with campuses on 24 projects to build a Community of Practice and advance the best ideas in diversity and inclusion. This program drives collaboration among campuses and spurs the system-wide adoption of programs and practices to spur inclusion on many different levels.

To participate in the program, campuses reflected on their campus strengths, their campus needs, and in many instances, created projects that integrated elements of their strategic diversity plans.

In Diversity and Inclusion, the projects have been grouped into three content areas: Education and Training, Seeding Best Practices and STEM Pathways. Several of the projects have already partnered with other SUNY campuses to broaden the impact of their work. This important work is being conducted throughout the system in other areas as well and will drive the inclusive excellence that SUNY hopes to create.

SUNY’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion projects are ultimately designed to drive student and faculty diversity and success. Eight campuses are focused on creating cultural competency, implicit bias and other online training resources to share throughout SUNY. Another group of projects will seed best practices in Diversity and Inclusion, such as Delhi’s Men of Color initiative. A third group, STEM Pathways, which includes Binghamton University, SUNY Geneseo and SUNY Optometry, is designed to sustain retention to help STEM students complete their degrees. Creating new course sequences, experiences and pathways to increase STEM participation comprise several strategies to build a better STEM pipeline.

In Year One, the projects will create an impact outcome as well as baseline measures to assess their progression. Facilitators have been identified in each area to help build a Community of Practice through effective online communication, project meetings and information sharing. In Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, we want to promote self-generated accountability through group interaction and collaborative information sharing. SUNY has established and encouraged the use of a Facebook platform called Workplace to encourage greater investment by project teams in building outreach to one another and engagement in the PIF process. In Year Two, projects will report on the change in a number of key indicators to demonstrate progress from a benchmarked starting measure as well as climate studies, satisfaction surveys and other performance metrics unique to each campus.

In looking back at the evolution of the PIF engagement model, System Administration has helped SUNY move beyond the formula of funding localized grant projects to help all campuses engage in discussions of how to become more inclusive. Preparing SUNY’s diverse campus communities to share replicable programs that can be potentially scaled for the entire SUNY community is a pivotal departure from prior models of governance and project management.

Performance Improvement Fund Projects in Diversity and Inclusion
Submitted by Elizabeth Carrature, Associate in Research and Program Development, ODEI
Educational Equity and Inclusion of Undocumented SUNY Students

Submitted by Daisy Torres, Coordinator for Diversity Initiatives
Office of Community Engagement Multicultural Center, SUNY Purchase

The termination of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) re-opened the conversation for how higher education professionals will make campuses more inclusive for undocumented students. DACA was a program established in June 2012 by the Obama Administration. It has allowed young people to get a working permit and protection from deportation. Yet, undocumented students have been at SUNY campuses since before the establishment of DACA. In 2002, New York became one of the earliest states to offer in-state tuition rates at public institutions of higher education to undocumented students. In May 2013, the New York State Comptroller’s Office released a report that there were about 1,555 undocumented students in the SUNY system.

The term, “undocumented students” refers to individuals who are not U.S. citizens or permanent residents. Some may have had a visa to come to this country which has since expired. In some instances, students had accompanied their parents to the U.S. without approval for legal residency. Undocumented students have been able to attend public schools since the U.S. Supreme Court in the Plyler v. Doe 1982 decision held that the Constitution guarantees that all children have access to basic public K-12 education.

Some of the benefits of DACA were that eligible young people could receive a work permit, social security number and protection from deportation. In August of 2017, Tom K. Wong of the University of California, San Diego (along with several organizations) conducted a national survey to learn about the impact of DACA. DACA recipients were able to buy cars, purchase homes, and create new businesses. Several students who I met while working in the college access field were, in fact, able to pay for college. These students did not need to “stop out.” Prior to DACA, they would have to stop taking classes for a semester or two to earn enough from several jobs to pay for school. With DACA, students have earned more by having the ability to procure a Social Security card for higher paying jobs.

Since New York has in-state tuition, we will continue to see undocumented students at our institutions. But how will we as a system help our respective institutions to increase access, assist with persistence rates and ensure that undocumented students graduate? At the 2017 SUNY Diversity Conference, ADELANTE Student Voices, a grassroots network for undocumented high school students in rural areas and towns of New York, partnered with the SUNY Purchase Multicultural Center to present a workshop on strategies to support educational equity and inclusion of undocumented students. Campuses are encouraged to identify a working group that could come up with strategies including the creation of a resource page that lists on and off-campus resources for this student population. For instance, SUNY Alfred has a page that lists a statement of support, outside resources and campus resources. Buffalo State lists DACA information and resources which includes a video introduction. In addition, there is a mobile website SUNY Sexual Assault & Violence Resource (SAVR): https://www.suny.edu/violence-response/. After you select the language and campus, an option to select language for Visa and Immigration Resources will appear, and you will be provided with links for finding a local immigration attorney. You can also click on the Off-Campus Resources tab.

The SUNY system.

The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program is the American Dream in motion. We are extremely disappointed to learn that this important program could come to an end without a fair and permanent solution for those who would be impacted. We urge Congress to act swiftly and decisively to protect the earned rights of DACA enrollees.

Together with leadership across our 64 colleges and universities and our colleagues nationally, SUNY wholly supports efforts by New York Governor Andrew Cuomo and Attorney General Eric Schneiderman to protect New York’s 42,000 DACA enrollees so that they may continue to live the American Dream. SUNY’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion will not falter.

SEPTEMBER 5, 2017

DIVERSITY COUNTS
of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

In pre-conference, Dr. Samuel Museus shared his model for infusing diversity into the campus infrastructure, both in the classroom and in the administration. Dr. Damon Williams, returning to SUNY once again, helped CDO’s and administrators learn how to promote programs that could have significant impact on our campuses. An expert on climate issues, Dr. Ken Coopwood drew a large crowd interested in using climate surveys to gauge diverse viewpoints and assess the concerns that can be distilled from populations responding to the survey.

The lead keynote speaker, Dr. Benjamin Reese, provided a revealing overview of implicit bias, and Dr. Estela Bensimon’s passionate presentation on the inequities in higher education for ‘minoritized’ populations received a standing ovation. Her program revealed the racial equity issues that impact the educational choices and outcomes for students from lower socio-economic and minority backgrounds. She highlighted the concern that faculty are often unaware of the needs or backgrounds of the Latin-X, African American and Native American students. Using the analogy of a broken ladder, supported by conclusive data, Dr. Bensimon discussed ways to remediate, if not fix the broken ladder, by creating an equity mindset among faculty.

On the business side, the conference also addressed MWBE programs. SUNY is viewed as an economic driver within the State, accounting for a large percentage of the business enterprise throughout the State. Not only does SUNY serve as the largest single employer in the state, it fosters the diversity of businesses entering into state contracts. Dr. Rodney Strong helped provide inclusion strategies for MWBE programs throughout the University and the legal fundamentals of the Minority and Women’s Business Enterprise program.

This year, other important issues were brought out in workshops. Notably, Title IX and sexual harassment claims have resurfaced as major issues on campuses throughout the system, and fears of imminent deportations by increasing numbers of undocumented students were raised. Questions of what constitutes free speech and assembly have been in the news nationally and not surprisingly, SUNY is grappling with the best strategies to use in light of campus upheaval too. For instance, when campuses sponsor controversial speakers, what preventative measures are needed? Can the campus draw upon a communication or security protocol to help protect the campus or enable potentially divisive viewpoints to co-exist without creating fear in students? Concerns such as these were also addressed in a Presidents’ Panel to provide an informed view of what has helped campus leaders to respond to inflammatory and racist incidents occurring both on campuses and in campus communities. As a public institution of higher education, creating an inclusive culture has never been more needed in SUNY. As an office, we are undertaking steps to insure campuses are safe and secure places to learn by working closely with senior leadership.

-Carlos N. Medina Ed. D
Vice Chancellor and Chief Diversity Officer
SUNY System Administration
2017 Inaugural Diversity Conference Awards

Two campuses were recognized for their excellence in creating campus programs on diversity and inclusion. ODEI’s Diversity, Inclusion and Social Justice Institutional Awards were presented to Farmingdale State College and SUNY Oswego. Additionally, two faculty/staff awards for Excellence in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion were also presented at the conference. The recipients for these awards were: Dr. Timothy Gerken, SUNY Morrisville and Dr. Jerald Woolfolk, SUNY Oswego.

Longstanding associates of ODEI were also recognized for their advocacy, commitment and dedication on the occasion of ODEI’s 10th Anniversary including Guillermo Martinez, NYS Assembly; Dr. Frederick G. Floss, Buffalo State College; and retired professor, Dr. Raúl Huerta, SUNY Morrisville.

Dr. Medina and staff also presented a special service award for dedication and service to Ms. Barbara Hardman, ODEI’s incomparable Administrative Assistant.

Pictured left to right: Dr. Gerald Woolfolk, Dr. Fred Floss, Dr. Raúl Huerta, Barbara Hardman, Guillermo Martinez, Dr. Timothy Gerken, Dr. Veronica Henry, Dr. Miriam Deitsch, Provost Laura Joseph, Dr. Carlos Medina and Dr. Lorraine Greenwald

Pictured left to right: Dr. Joseph Skrivanek, Lekeya Martin, Gloria Lopez, Edelmira Reynoso, Honoree, Barbara Hardman, Dr. Carlos Medina and Elizabeth Carrature

Pictured left to right: Dr. Carlos Medina and Guillermo Martinez

Dr. Fred Floss with Dr. Medina

Dr. Raúl Huerta and Dr. Carlos Medina
Many campuses honor the tradition of free speech yet are now faced with “hate speech” incidents occurring more routinely in campus life. On many campuses, “safe spaces” were created to support dialogue that could take place without fear of retribution, but such ‘place’ safeguards can not adequately protect a campus or its community from the chilling impact of offensive and prejudicial attitudes found in the environments such as Twitter and Instagram or Snapchat.

Just what students are thinking about “free speech” has been studied in a nationwide survey of 1,500 undergraduate students supported by the Charles Koch Foundation. Some 51% of the respondents expressed their belief that shutting down a controversial speaker by demonstration or counter-expression (heckling, shouting, picketing) supports their freedom of expression.[1]

The Supreme Court has emphatically reinforced the very foundations of free speech. In the opinion of the Court, The Washington Post reported that every member of the Court embraced the First Amendment strongly enough to protect even speech that many people legitimately find hateful or offensive. In this opinion, Conservative Judge Samuel A. Alito wrote “the proudest boast of our free speech jurisprudence is that we protect the freedom to express ‘the thought that we hate.’” Other justices concurred - with the rationale that “A law that can be directed against speech found offensive to some portion of the public can be turned against minority and dissenting views to the detriment of all.”[2]

To be sure, defining hate speech is not simple as the speech or conduct can be offensive on many levels, including race, religion, gender, sexual orientation and national origin. It is unconstitutional to prohibit or regulate speech, of any kind (hate or otherwise) outside of fighting words, true threats, incitement, obscenity, and defamation. [3] In legal findings, decisions have been reversed because the “damage” or “true threat” did not measure up. One such case involved protests outside a funeral being held for a veteran. After several trials upholding the plaintiff’s position, an appeal of Snyder v. Phelps, 562 U.S. 443 (2011), a landmark United States Supreme Court ruled that speech on a matter of public concern, on a public street, cannot be the basis of liability for a tort of emotional distress, even in the circumstances that the speech is viewed or interpreted as “offensive” or “outrageous.”

While the First Amendment guarantees that “Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech,” many public figures have suffered the consequences of using this freedom irresponsibly. Colleges too must now dissect the fine line of what constitutes hate speech in terms of student conduct policy.

Campuses have sought to clarify and protect students despite constitutional freedoms of speech.

As reported in Newsweek, “217 American colleges and universities—including some of the most prestigious—have speech codes that “unambiguously impinge upon free speech.” Citing student fear and vulnerability, campuses have interpreted verbal statements as issues of conduct, and students have been suspended or expelled for commentary or actions whether it took place on campus, off-campus or in a public forum, such as social media or a blog. Defending free speech on the basis of First Amendment rights has been questioned when the comments or behavior defies a moral standard or accepted behavioral code. Students may also negate or ignore an enforceable student conduct policy upon enrollment which can empower administrative action.


(Continued on page 8)
Courageous Conversations: Interprofessional Dialogues Promoting Racial Equity
Lisa V. Blitz, PhD, LCSW-R
Associate Professor, Department of Social Work, College of Community and Public Affairs, Binghamton University

I am a social worker. Social workers often wrestle with courage. It takes courage to face our clients’ fears and despair, courage to face our own inadequacy in negotiating unrelenting barriers and obstacles, and courage to realize that some barriers are the result of policies we may have actually supported. It takes courage to look at an organization, a program or a career, and genuinely consider whether we are doing good or contributing to the problem. Now I am also a scholar; a teacher and mentor to new generations of social workers and a researcher seeking to find courage in partnership with communities and professionals who want to do good, who want racial justice.

The desire to create dialogues to promote racial justice was the genesis for my proposal for the SUNY Conversations in the Discipline Award. I know from my own practice and from the literature that human services and educational organizations are frequently called upon to respond to social issues that contribute to racial disparities in wealth, education, health, child welfare and criminal justice. I also know that policies and practices within the systems to which people turn for help and liberation can result in reifying and entrenching oppression.

For decades, scholars have produced work that has been crucial in identifying disparities and presenting conceptual frames that open dialogue to understand the social, historical, political and economic issues that maintain oppression and privilege. One crucial component is to ensure that people of color are fully represented among the workforce of organizations that define need and provide services to communities. To do this, it is essential to ensure that people of color are robustly represented among university faculty, staff and students.

Understanding the strengths, needs and experiences of people of color are priorities for socially just and culturally responsive practice. A variety of strategies to reduce the racial gap between personnel and people served, to become more responsive to clients and consumers, and to maximize the benefits of a more diverse workforce have been tried. Research into organizational change processes has shown, however, that change in the racial composition of the workforce can disrupt other organizational dynamics, which then inhibits further efforts toward racial equity or multiculturalism (Hyde, 2004; Mallow, 2010; Martín-Alcázar, Romero-Fernández, & Sánchez-Gardey, 2012). Interprofessional dialogues among scholars and professionals are needed to establish university-community research partnerships to deepen the understanding of persistent barriers to organizational change.

Multicultural organization development focuses directly on issues of social identity and oppression (Ramos & Chesler, 2010) and works to change the culture and practices of organizations that favors white people, particularly white men, and marginalizes others. To ensure that the leadership potential of people of color is nurtured, it is important for the organization to formulate critical intersectional analyses of race, gender, sexual orientation and other aspects of identity and culture as members work together to transform the organization’s culture. However, unlike other organization initiatives, racial equity and leadership development for people of color often calls upon expertise and practice wisdom that the current leaders may not have (Blitz & Pender Greene, 2014). For scholars to impact and inform racial equity and leadership development, deep understanding of the organizational change process toward anti-oppressive administration
The Institute for Public Policy at Bucknell University commissioned a survey with a sample of 1200 students nationally and noted the opinion of respondents by political affiliation as shown in the chart above. Interestingly, the findings support more conservative student viewpoints.

Campuses have begun to issue policies for expulsion or suspension. At the University at Wisconsin, system leaders approved a policy in October 2017 that calls for suspending and expelling students who disrupt campus speeches and presentations, saying students need to listen to all sides of issues and arguments. The Wisconsin Board of Regents adopted the language on a voice vote during a meeting at UW-Stout in Menomonie. The policy states that students found to have twice engaged in violence or other disorderly conduct that disrupts others’ free speech would be suspended. Students found to have disrupted others’ free expression three times would be expelled. Subsequently, the legislature introduced a bill on this issue to be considered in the 2017-2018 legislative agenda. (http://legis.wisconsin.gov/assembly/59/kremer/media/1316/17-2408_1.pdf)

Since that time many other college campuses have begun to review campus free speech policies.

In 2017, the Goldwater Institute released the report *Campus Free Speech: A Legislative Proposal*, which included a model bill outlining a series of provisions designed to, as the report explains, “encourage students and administrators to respect and protect the free expression of others.” These provisions establish disciplinary sanctions to ensure that those who repeatedly violate others’ free speech rights are held accountable for their actions, while also giving them full due process protections.

In the months since, The Goldwater Institute has promoted a model platform that more than a dozen states are currently considering or have adopted.

North Carolina passed legislation based on the model last August, with the North Carolina General Assembly approving the Restore Campus Free Speech Act by strong bipartisan margins. The University of North Carolina then adopted a similar policy.

Legislation inspired by the model has already been introduced in legislatures in Michigan as well. Additional related legislation is in the works in Arizona, California, Georgia, Illinois, Minnesota, Tennessee, Virginia and Wyoming.[4]

Many campuses, even public higher education institutions, are considering such action. A formative document, known as Yale’s Woodward Report developed language limiting student conduct or expres-
Courageous Conversations (continued from p. 7)

and leadership is needed (Abramovitz & Blitz, 2015).

The interprofessional dialogue that this program facilitated, Courageous Conversations, was designed to support and enhance research partnerships that can promote scholarship, generate new knowledge and improve organizational practice. For our conversations, approximately 40 people came together to begin the dialogue. We represented a healthy cross-section of the Binghamton community: faculty, students, and professionals; black, brown, and white; straight, cis-gendered, and LGBTQ+; providers, recipients and activists.

The day was facilitated by Tommy Miller, a social justice artist and community activist, and Charles Niven, LMSW, a social worker, both based in nearby Ithaca. Tommy and Charles guided the group through discussions and educational activities designed to help us validate common humanity and recognize different experiences. Tommy, who is African American, encouraged all of us to embrace our humanity and honor the traditions and culture that have both nurtured us and challenged us. Charles, who is white, invited us to consider our place in the matrix of race privilege and, speaking particularly to white people in the room, to understand and act upon our role in confronting structural racism. The manifestations of institutional bias, corrective action steps and potential barriers to change were identified in small group discussions and shared with the larger group. No simple answers emerged, and no previously undiscovered practice recommendations were unveiled. It wasn’t that sort of day. What did materialize was a common desire for meaningful change and a commitment to continue learning, to expand the partnerships and to work collectively.

Looking back, almost a year later, it is hard to measure what change we may have instigated. Friendships were made and others deepened. Allies were identified and partnerships formed. The work for all of us was clarified. And the dialogues continue. People who were central in organizing the workshop, including graduate students, continue to be active in racial justice work in our community. Conversations among the faculty and staff in our department continue and may be finding more depth. We continue to be courageous; and when we fall short of our ideals, we find each other so we can harness the courage to look and hear and understand and act.

REFERENCES

FROM P. 6:


“Enough is Enough”, SUNY Takes Steps Forward
Submitted by Elizabeth Brady, Office of Counsel

In October 2014, Chancellor Nancy L. Zimpher established the Chancellor’s Temporary Working Group on Continual Improvement to Sexual Violence Prevention Policies. In the years since SUNY developed and adopted the system-wide uniform policy and guidelines, which ultimately became Education Law 129-B, SUNY has maintained its commitment to serving as a leader in sexual and interpersonal violence prevention and response. Several initiatives have been undertaken in collaboration with campuses and System Administration, to improve the safety and ultimately, success of SUNY students. These initiatives include:

• The SUNY SAVR (Sexual Assault and Violence Resource), the nation’s only state-wide mobile and web resource that provides information on all available sexual and interpersonal violence response resources. Users can search by campus (SUNY students), zip code or the mapping feature (any New York resident) to find the resources that are available near them. Provisions of Education Law 129-B are translated into 120 languages (with ASL coming soon) to ensure that users are able to access information in the language that is most comfortable for them in moments of crisis. The SUNY SAVR can be accessed at Response.suny.edu.

• Hundreds of campus personnel and law enforcement professionals have been trained in conducting trauma informed investigations across SUNY. Dr. Jim Hopper, Harvard Medical School, provided a deep dive into the impact of trauma on the brain and its effect on investigations of Violence: Chantelle Cleary, Title IX Coordinator at the University at Albany and Lt. Gary Kelly, New York State Police, each spoke about best practices for conducting trauma-informed and carefully tailored investigations.

• SUNY’s Got Your Back, a project dedicated to providing comfort kits for victims of sexual and interpersonal violence, has been hosted at each of SUNY’s 64 campuses, several PGA Tour events, and at this year’s State of the University System Address. To date, over 21,500 comfort kits have been assembled and distributed to hospitals, rape crisis centers and domestic violence shelters across the State of New York.
There are many exciting events and initiatives in the months to come, as SUNY continues to lead in sexual and interpersonal violence prevention and response. These include:

• **Around the World For Yeardley Love.** In April 2017, ten SUNY Athletic Conference campuses, in collaboration with The One Love Foundation, came together with a goal of running 10 million yards (10 times the record of any other school in the country) to honor Yeardley Love. The campuses didn’t exactly meet their goal...they shattered it with a 25.7 million yards in 10 days. After the inaugural campaign, SUNY set its goal for 2018. The circumference of the earth is approximately 50 million yards, and SUNY plans to go around the world for Yeardley, bringing the community together and sparking conversations that can save lives along the way. Throughout the month of April, 24 SUNY schools will be hosting Yards for Yeardley campaign to go around the world for Yeardley Love.

• **SUNY SPECTRUM (Sexual & Interpersonal Violence Prevention Education, Capacity Building, and Training in Response for Underserved Sexual and Gender Minorities)**

• There is a disproportionate impact of sexual and interpersonal violence against the LGBTQI+ community. SUNY is hosting a summer training conference to provide the most cutting-edge prevention and response training to faculty, staff, medical professionals, and community and State agency service providers to turn the dial on sexual and interpersonal violence against sexual and gender minorities, while providing the most trauma-informed, and culturally-competent response and care when incidents do occur. This conference will include prevention and response training specifically tailored to addressing the disproportionate impact of on sexual minorities on college campuses domestically and on study abroad. Registration will be made available in the coming weeks. When: June 18-21 Where: Albany Capital Center.

While SUNY continues to make significant strides in sexual and interpersonal violence prevention and response, and remains committed to the success of all of its students, the work has only just begun. The intention remains to continue developing the strongest, most cutting-edge, and culturally competent programming.

• The State University of New York Chancellor’s Temporary Working Group on Continual Improvement to Sexual Violence Prevention Policies is ongoing.

• In October 2014, Chancellor Nancy L. Zimpher established the Chancellor’s Temporary Working Group on Continual Improvement to Sexual Violence Prevention Policies. The Working Group is charged with developing uniform policies and guidelines to assist SUNY colleges in preventing sexual assault and responding to reports of assault.
INTRODUCTION

Uniform expectation of student educational background, especially Western notions of what “college-ready” truly means, harms our efforts to provide an equitable learning environment to all students. For example, the idea that every student has written an essay before college, or that every student should know parameters of plagiarism and academic honesty can be an unintentional bias that many instructors have. For international students, it is important to keep in mind that some cultures view “college-ready” in terms of how much information can be memorized, retained and reproduced. There might not be a focus on mastery of a variety of subjects before high school graduation, or even a variety of learning modalities within a subject. These broad variances in international student educational background significantly impact student understanding of issues related to notions of authorship that are bound to arise in the Composition classroom. Important types of variance in notions of authorship, plagiarism and academic honesty include moral and ethical codes, inability to define authorship, ownership and determine what is common knowledge. Implementation of teaching strategies that address these variances allows for a more effective and rewarding learner and instructor experience.

MORAL AND ETHICAL CODES

Assigning inflexible moral and ethical codes to writing practices alienates and confuses international students in particular. Further professor-student relationships are strained, and this harms their ability to grow as a writer. The notions of plagiarism and honesty are unmeasurable; often, they are placed on an abstract scale of moral and ethical responsibility that results in judgements and subjective grading outcomes, especially in Western education. This type of outcome can significantly damage professor-student relationships and the ability of instructors to take advantage of teachable moments or build opportunities to better know their students.

Western culture prioritizes values such as individuality, ownership and recognition. In U.S. higher education, morality is linked to Western ideological ideas about ownership, which is not necessarily the case in other cultures (Intro- na, L., N. Hayes, L. Blair, & E. Wood, 2003). Other cultures prioritize group identity and sharing ownership. Scholarly work in this area widely agrees that, “for students from a society where individualism is frowned upon and students may study by copying information from experts, academic honesty as defined by a host [western] institution may be a difficult concept to grasp” (Thompson, Bagby, Sulak, Sheets, & Trepinski, 2017, p. 137) Another issue is that institutions vary greatly on how they define plagiarism, where the academic policies are housed and accessed, and punitive measures associated with dishonesty.

Cultural Sensitivity in the Classroom: Notions of Authorship for International Students

Submitted by Sarah Bjork, ONCAMPUS SUNY Center Director and Rachelann Lopp Copland, Humanities Adjunct Instructor and ONCAMPUS SUNY University Success Advisor, SUNY Morrisville

Fall 2017 ONCAMPUS SUNY Cohort on SUNY Morrisville’s Administrative Quad
INABILITY TO DEFINE AUTHORSHIP AND OWNERSHIP

The U.S. sends mixed messages to international students about plagiarism and honesty. A politician can give a speech that someone else wrote for him/her without giving credit, a business can re-use report information without tracking original authors, materials produced for companies become the property of the company, not the individual who authored the original work, and so forth. Another confusing aspect of the western classroom is the lack of universal agreement on “what knowledge students need to cite...in some subjects and with some teachers, students can copy some ideas from lecture handouts or from textbooks without being charged as plagiarists” (Tran, 2012, p. 20). Some professors require students to take photos of the lecture notes for further study or allow students to record their lectures, so they can listen again carefully at another time; others consider these acts infringement on the professor’s intellectual property. Because students may struggle to understand the requirements of authorship and ownership in the U.S., it may lead to plagiarism.

SUNY MORRISVILLE AND ONCAMPUS SUNY

ONCAMPUS SUNY, a freshman pathway program for international students from a large variety of backgrounds, partners with SUNY Morrisville. ONCAMPUS SUNY student feedback indicates ONCAMPUS SUNY orientation, support classes and advising combined with Morrisville’s instructors, librarians, databases and tutoring support as collaboratively effective in helping them understand and face matters of plagiarism. This feedback shows the depth in which students require support and reflects the scholarly research on the topic. International students expressed a strong connection between an institution’s level of support and adjustment to a new environment in a large study completed at Lancaster University in the U.K. (Introna, L., N. Hayes, L. Blair, & E. Wood, 2003). Many ONCAMPUS SUNY students were never taught about issues of plagiarism or the research process in their home countries: Khalid, of Pakistan, comments on his high school writing experience, “There was no research process, as we had to memorize the entire essay, and then write it in exams.” A South Korean student stresses the importance of the KSAT and other standardized tests, but explains, “The schools did not teach writing. Students were to practice by themselves or attend an academy...we did not have any education regarding integrating research into our essays.” Feedback from students who studied in Singapore, Pakistan, India and South Korea agree that copying or cheating during an exam was the ultimate infraction about which instructors were vigilant. This type of dishonesty was strongly taught and enforced, but matters of plagiarism and honesty in research writing, or writing in general, were rarely addressed in their high schools.

A strong U.S. higher education relationship between professor and student helps students navigate such problems as language barriers and research. For example, a Chinese student felt insecure because of her language barriers associated with paraphrasing research. Also, she struggled over when to use others’ opinions to support her own, but after meeting with her professor during office hours and using SUNY
Educational Equity and Inclusion of Undocumented SUNY Students (cont. from p. 3)

and filter your results to show Legal Resources or Office for New Americans (ONA) Opportunity Center, an office established by the Governor’s office to assist newcomers with participating in civic and economic life.

Due to the changing nature of national policies, hosting workshops and trainings for faculty, staff and students can assist with making a campus more inclusive. In addition to keeping abreast of changes, each office can consider how to improve implementation of long-standing policies that impact their work, like how to streamline requirements for the aforementioned in-state resident tuition expansion from 2002. At the conference, participants were encouraged to start a campus plan of action using an available worksheet, which was adapted from the #HereToStay United We Dream toolkit for educators. It focuses on sample strategies in the areas of access and retention and evaluating institutional campus climate.

While meetings have taken place to discuss how SUNY Purchase can support DACA and undocumented students, we are learning that immigration policy impacts an entire family. How do you support students whose parent(s) have been deported? These students are U.S. citizens and part of a mixed immigration status family. DACA reopened the conversation about immigrant students pursuing higher education. As a planning committee member of ADELANTE Student Voices, I have learned that we have a next or second generation of undocumented students who will graduate in the next 2-3 years. These students are not DACA eligible. In fact, even if the Dream Act passes, it leaves out students who entered after 2012—this composes a significant portion of our membership. What will happen to them? Will we as an institution be ready to support students in receiving a SUNY education?

These students are committed to education for the long haul. Some ADELANTE students marched in Washington D.C. for the Dream Act, knowing they would not be eligible, only because their friends and classmates would be. They also marched to feel part of a community that seeks to do the right thing. SUNY leadership has stood up publicly and in the political arena for immigrant students. We ask staff at SUNY campuses to think about what they can do in a collaborative working group, and to reach out if they need ideas.

“A student deported is one fewer smart student in my class, one fewer skilled worker adding to the U.S. economy, is one fewer curious and creative person thinking originally and helping to move this country forward.”

- PROFESSOR LEANDRO BENMERGUI
SUNY PURCHASE
LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

“If Congress does not address this within the six-month deadline imposed by the Trump administration, undocumented students may face deportation.”

- PROFESSOR LEANDRO BENMERGUI
SUNY PURCHASE
LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

For current information on DACA and Immigration status check online resources at “The Informed Immigrant”
Cultural Sensitivity in the Classroom (continued from p. 13)

Morrisville’s Academic Enrichment Center, she was able to be successful. Kevin, who studied in Uganda, felt comfortable in his own authorship after “he” gained full understanding of plagiarism when [his] COMP 101 professor personally explained the mistakes that [he] did in [his] third essay of the course and helped [him] re-do the essay without having to plagiarize.” In contrast, a South African student who studied in South Africa at a U.K. school speaks of “strict plagiarism policies” and was only “allowed to submit assignments on Turnitin.com.” Getting to know students is of utmost importance; learning about how they learned, and where they learned can keep our minds open to all student experiences. Zarak, of Pakistan, comments, “In Morrisville, there were some great professors that made me feel like I was in my home country. It was really a supporting environment as it was really easy to communicate or reach out to your professor. Morrisville really helped me in transition to a U.S. education system.” At ONCAMPUS SUNY and SUNY Morrisville, we are working to ensure that all students feel this level of comfort in their higher education journey.

LANGUAGE CONSIDERATIONS

Higher education institutions throughout the U.S. have varying English admissions requirements for international students. If the English requirement is generous, the students may struggle in Composition class without built-in curricular support, especially in the area of writing that requires research. Integration of sources becomes challenging when summarizing and paraphrasing is too difficult due to lack of comprehension or having less command of the English language. Moreover, international students must navigate new documentation systems (e.g. APA) to cite their sources, which can be cumbersome for any student. This may especially be difficult for international students, however, due to the different documentation expectations between their home country and the U.S. Without the ability to effectively incorporate sources into one’s writing, one will struggle to meet the requirements of authorship in the U.S. and undoubtedly become tempted to plagiarize or stumble upon unintentional plagiarism.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

Because culture and language can interfere with academic writing, it is important to develop relevant teaching strategies that assist in helping international students to write effectively. These strategies can also be applicable to all students for a more seamless student learning experience. ONCAMPUS SUNY Academic English Instructors, Morrisville State College Composition professors, and ONCAMPUS SUNY international students have found the following teaching strategies useful:

• Show a writing sample if possible, make the writing purpose and audience clear, and give step by step writing instructions. A writing rubric can be utilized to aid in bringing clarity.

• Allow in-class writing time for quick feedback and also to determine the students’ writing voice. Knowing the students’ writing voice can help determine whether a student has plagiarized on an outside-of-class writing assignment.

• Offer to provide feedback on an outline or first draft in order for the student to effectively finalize the writing assignment.

• Instructors and professors can familiarize themselves with cultural tendencies in writing such as circular reasoning.

• Help students decode the metalanguage in sources.

• Provide guidance in the following areas: 1) identify useful types of sources; 2) help locate sources; 3) give training on how to find meaningful information within sources; and 4) assist with determining the best way to integrate sources into writing.

• Introduce strategies for paraphrasing so that the

TEACHING TIPS FOR WRITING AND RESEARCH:

1. identify useful types of sources,
2. help locate sources,
3. give training on how to find meaningful information within sources, and
4. assist with determining the best way to integrate sources into writing.

“Thanks to thorough explanation and education from the college and eagerness to work things out by myself for details, I did not go through any issues [with plagiarism]…Highly detailed sessions of how to research and cite each source really comforted me into learning a whole new field of academic writing.”

- AS REPORTED BY A SOUTH KOREAN STUDENT AT MORRISVILLE.
students have a tangible way to attempt paraphrasing, and are not tempted to plagiarize or produce unintentional plagiarism.

- Have recognition that common knowledge to a U.S. writer can be vastly different from the sets of common knowledge among writers from other countries. Coach students to provide a resource when there is any question that what they are about to write is not common knowledge. Likewise, develop sensitivity to the international student writer.

- Invite students to office hours in person, not via text message or email, so that they must give a response. Depending on the students’ cultural background, they may not readily go to office hours on their own.

- Hold an APA/MLA workshop to allow students to practice the documentation requirements. Depending on the course and students, having frequent designated times to practice documentation can also be helpful (Bethany, 2016).

- If applicable, use the SafeAssign feature on Blackboard and model for students how they can look at the report and understand it. Turnitin is also an option for some institutions.

- Keep students accountable to working off the same first draft (avoid allowing students to change topics mid-writing process without instructor advising. Then, require a first draft for the new topic).

- Be explicit about when students can and cannot work together on assignments.

- Follow through on academic honesty and plagiarism policies and procedures.

Learn more about ONcampus opportunities through SUNY at: http://www.oncampus.global/usa/campuses/oncampus-suny/welcome.htm

“SUNY continues to earn national recognition for our focus on diversity, equity and inclusion, but as we progress as a society, we must build upon our strong foundation and do more to provide support and resources to students who are underrepresented minorities. This work is personal to me—during my eight years as an undergrad and graduate student, there were no female faculty members in STEM. Consequently, I never thought to become a professor in my field. Unless students see someone like themselves in the classroom, they too may not fully know that they can be that person or be successful in that field.”

~ SUNY Chancellor Kristina M. Johnson

REFERENCES FROM CULTURAL SENSITIVITY ARTICLE, p. 12-14


