



2019 ANNUAL CONFERENCE
POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CLIMATES
ON CAMPUS:
WHERE DO OUR STUDENTS FIT IN?

#HECA2019RI



HECA PRESENTATION 2019

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CLIMATES ON CAMPUS: WHERE DO OUR STUDENTS FIT IN?

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In brief: here is what I am going to share with you today:

1. Why I think campus culture and climate are a critical part of the collegiate experience;
2. What the current landscape looks like, although there is so much cultural, political, social, and environmental diversity among campuses that I cannot promise to be comprehensive; and
3. What to pay attention to in evaluating culture and climate as a factor in determining fit for your students.

Why I think campus culture and climate are a critical part of the collegiate experience:

Our students both influence campus culture and climate and are, in turn, influenced by it. What kinds of experiences and environments will produce engaged, socially responsible citizens? Each one of us will need to answer that question for ourselves. My goal for this session is to give you a basic overview of several aspects of current campus culture and climate and some conceptual tools and resources to help you in this process.

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My personal background and what led me to a career in higher education:

- The first young woman from my public high school to attend Vassar College
- My initial experience of “otherness” at Vassar
- How I dealt with the sense of “otherness” throughout and beyond freshman year

My goal at graduation: to have a career as an educator and administrator in higher education

- To enable people to get along with one another better and to treat one another with kindness, compassion, respect, and appreciation.
- Through building community and offering other opportunities for meaningful interaction, I sought to foster the development of thoughtful, engaged, socially responsible, cosmopolitan, and global citizens with the critical thinking and social skills needed to lead purposeful, critically examined and fulfilling lives.

Conceptual Background

Psychosocial development:

- There is general agreement among those who work with college students that **a primary task of the college years is identity development.** This derives from psychosocial development theories, which view individual development as the mastery of a series of developmental challenges or tasks over the lifespan. **Psychosocial theories derive from the work of Erik Erikson.**

Conceptual Background

Arthur Chickering's robust theory of psychosocial development through the college years and beyond has had profound influence upon research about college students and upon the design and implementation of programs designed to meet their needs. Chickering identified seven vectors of development. These tasks could be viewed as dimensions that coexisted simultaneously and could overlap, but also each had discrete tasks associated with it, and seemed to have directionality.

Conceptual Background

Seven vectors of development:

1. Achieving competence
1. Managing emotions
1. Moving through autonomy to interdependence
1. Developing mature interpersonal relationships
1. Establishing identity
1. Developing purpose
1. Developing integrity

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Conceptual Background

Other theories of (primarily) psychosocial development:

- There are also **several compelling theories of racial and ethnic identity development**. Please see a couple of links at the end of this power point to introduce you to a few of them.
- There is also a **prolific and emerging body of theory about LGBTQ identity development**. For these, I recommend that you Google it and browse on your own.

Conceptual Background

Cognitive-Structural Development:

- Cognitive-structural models look at **how** we make meaning of our experiences: how we perceive, interpret, synthesize, and process information. All cognitive models talk about the process by which we manage increasingly complex and sometimes conflicting information, how we interpret the world through our own experiences, and our ability to understand the relativity of situations.

Conceptual Background

William Perry has an equally robust theory of cognitive-structural development. Perry identified several positions of development that are not age-linked, but occur in an orderly fashion. He posited that actual development occurred between positions, whereas the positions themselves represent resting points. **Perry's nine stages may be summarized summarized in the following four clusters:**

- Dualism (stages 1–2)
- Multiplicity (stages 3–4)
- Relativism (stages 5–6)
- Commitment in relativism (stages 7–9)

Conceptual Background

How Perry's theory helps to explain what is happening in our society and on many college campuses today:

- Intense nationalism and protectionism reduces individuals down to their group identities, memberships, and exclusivities, be they ethnic, religious, racial, political, or socioeconomic. The correlate of a negative focus on group identity is a culture of grievance, perceived injury, and victimhood.

Conceptual Background

The culture of victimhood is a perfect example of dualistic thinking, which is at the bottom of Perry's conceptual ladder. This is essentially a zero sum game. "If I am more oppressed than you, then you must be privileged, or, even worse, you must be my oppressor." A zero sum game is black and white, win or lose.

Campus Culture & Climate

This zero sum game **campus culture** of victimhood has its correlate: a **campus climate** of anger, resentment, intolerance, belligerence, incivility, and, sometimes, violence. Dualistic thinking extends to written and spoken discourse, as well as behavior on campus. “I am right and you are wrong. If you don’t agree with my (group’s) views, and if you speak against them, then you are not worth listening to, but worthy of censor and censure.”

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Campus Culture & Climate

Consider how this climate on campus has been aggravated by looking at two major problems:

- The first is **racism**, as manifested by **racial profiling** on campus, and the corresponding alienation and anger of underrepresented minority groups that it has caused. Here are a few examples:
 - University of Massachusetts
 - Yale
 - Smith
 - Barnard

(Links to articles about these are in the list of resources at the end of this power point.)

Campus Culture & Climate

Consider how this climate on campus has been aggravated by looking at two major problems:

- The second is **free speech on campus** and its abuses, i.e. incivility. Here are examples:
- Middlebury
- Evergreen State College

(Links to articles about these and others are in the list of resources at the end of this power point.)

Campus Culture & Climate

How has this climate on campus been permitted to fester?

- A nosedive in the quality of public discourse in the past several years.
- Changing economics of higher education and consequently of admissions.
- A lessening of faculty involvement in the life of the community.
- An abdication of faculty and administrative responsibility for role modeling appropriate behavior on campus.
- Attempts by campuses to diversify without adequately addressing the sense of “otherness” that many minority groups, particularly those that are underrepresented, continue to experience.



Campus Culture & Climate

How has this climate on campus been permitted to fester?

- No consistent communication between and within campuses about how many of the challenges that students face will be addressed by the institution they attend, or be met by the students, themselves.
- A shift in focus in much of higher education away from education for citizenship.
- Confusion about how to address first amendment issues on campus, which differ depending upon whether an institution is public or private.

Campus Culture & Climate

We should look for those campuses that encourage and provide many opportunities for:

- Group projects,
- Learning communities,
- Social justice efforts that people can agree on, and
- Interpersonal and intergroup encounters *specifically designed* to overcome barriers to communication and build understanding, and where the faculty put the time and effort into holding teach-ins on topics that have stirred controversy and conflict on campus.

Campus Culture & Climate

We need to ask and answer questions about how a student may be expected to relate to their collegiate environment, such as:

- What kind of environment does this particular student need?
- How does he, she, or they deal with conflict and controversy?
- Conversely, how would he, she, or they deal with a campus that is largely homogenous in culture?
- What about a school that may be large and diverse in many ways, but where a particular type of social or political group think prevails?

Resources

Incidences of students and staff being racially profiled:

- <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/09/18/incident-umass-latest-which-calls-campus-police-suggest-racial-profiling>
- <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/05/10/yale-police-called-black-graduate-student-who-was-napping>
- <https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2018/08/03/police-called-black-student-eating-lunch>
- <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2019/04/15/barnard-suspends-police-officers-after-incident-black-student>

Resources

Free speech:

- <https://jmp.princeton.edu/statement>
- <https://nyti.ms/2q7GXGp>
- <https://nyti.ms/2oT2IRy>
- <https://www.futurity.org/fake-news-1778042/>
- <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2018/12/21/chicago-principles-are-gold-standard-freedom-expression-campus-opinion>
- <https://www.thecollegefix.com/public-university-stands-behind-white-supremacist-professor-defending-colonialism/>
- <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2019/04/23/williams-college-rework-free-speech-policies-after-controversies>

Resources

Free speech (cont.):

- <https://www.thecollegefix.com/williams-college-asks-students-not-to-invite-speakers-who-would-offend-minority-students/>
- <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2018/12/21/chicago-principles-are-gold-standard-freedom-expression-campus-opinion>
- <https://www.forbes.com/sites/tomlindsay/2018/02/28/35-universities-adopt-the-chicago-statement-on-free-speech-1590-to-go/#6d50319d771b>
- <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2018/03/when-campus-free-speech-is-a-marketing-ploy.html>
- freeexpression.uchicago.edu

Resources

Anti-Israel and anti-Semitism:

- <https://www.thecollegefix.com/williams-college-bypasses-student-government-recognizes-pro-israel-student-group/>
- <https://jewishjournal.com/news/nation/299104/nyu-president-shocked-at-nyu-grad-speakers-anti-semitic-tweets/>

Intersectionality:

- <https://reason.com/2019/06/17/intersectionality-101/>

Resources

Chickering's theory of psychosocial development:

- <https://tomprof.stanford.edu/posting/816>

Theories of racial and/or ethnic identity development:

- <https://infograph.venngage.com/p/179730/cross-five-stage-model-of-racial-identity-development>
- <https://studentdevelopmenttheory.wordpress.com/racial-identity-development/>

Resources

Incidents at individual institutions:

Yale

- <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/19/opinion/nicholas-christakis-yale.html>

UCLA

- https://jewishjournal.com/news/los_angeles/298850/uc-la-guest-lecturer-calls-zionists-white-supremacists/

Resources

Incidents at individual institutions—Evergreen State College:

- <http://www.thestranger.com/slog/2017/06/02/25185107/what-we-know-about-the-lockdown-and-racial-tension-at-evergreen-college>
- <https://nyti.ms/2rw8zl9>
- <https://nyti.ms/2sBl8hy>
- <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/05/30/escalating-debate-race-evergreen-state-students-demand-firing-professor>

Resources

Incidents at individual institutions—Evergreen State College (cont.):

- <https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-campus-mob-came-for-meand-you-professor-could-be-next-1496187482>
- <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/06/05/evergreen-state-remains-closed-amid-another-threat-and-groups-frame-controversy>
- <https://nyti.ms/2txqiwP>
- <https://fair.org/home/threats-to-campus-speech-dont-alarm-media-when-they-come-from-the-right/>

Resources

Incidents at individual institutions—Middlebury College:

- <https://nyti.ms/2qY6t3Q>
- <https://nyti.ms/2ngXIgo>
- <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/charles-murray>
- <https://nyti.ms/2lyyr2c>
- <https://brokeninquiryblog.wordpress.com/>
- <https://nyti.ms/2n3IDTw>

Resources

Incidents at individual institutions:

Harvard

- <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2019/06/17/harvard-professors-vow-new-effort-promote-open-debate>

Amherst College

- <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2019/06/06/colleges-can-bridge-divides-campus-through-intellectual-pursuits-opinion>

Resources

Present status of faculty in American higher education:

- <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/10/12/about-three-quarters-all-faculty-positions-are-tenure-track-according-new-aaup>

Organizations devoted to civics education:

- <https://www.civxnow.org/coalition>
- <https://compact.org/>

Thank you for joining us today!



We look forward to seeing you again in 2020!

