

Undergraduate Research Symposium May 20, 2016 Mary Gates Hall

Online Proceedings

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MCNAIR SESSION - IMPACT OF RACE, CULTURAL IDENTITY, AND MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH ON CAMPUSES AND COMMUNITIES

Session Moderator: Stephanie Fryberg, Psychology, American Indian Studies
MGH 287

12:30 PM to 2:15 PM

* Note: Titles in order of presentation.

Racial Awareness of American College Freshmen Students Attending a Predominantly White University

*Sandra Esmeralda Larios, Junior, Psychology, Sociology,
Comparative Ethnic Studies, Washington State University
McNair Scholar*

*Mentor: Jenifer Barclay, Critical Culture, Gender, and Race
Studies, Washington State University*

The ideology of colorblindness is an issue prevalent in multiple areas of American society. The environment in which college students receive their education could affect whether or not they will develop racial awareness, particularly in terms of privilege. High school educators should have the opportunity to teach students about the topics of race and white privilege and how to recognize the myriad ways that race shapes individuals' lives as well as how they are still embedded in social institutions. Scholarship on this topic highlights how there are many factors that influence the ways in which privilege is (or is not) being taught to American students. White students who fail to realize the privileges that come with their race don't feel like they have social responsibility to others, specifically minorities. This study examines the freshmen college student's awareness of race and white privilege at a predominantly white university. Thus, for the purpose of this study, the colorblind ideology and symbolic interactionism theory of sociology are being used as the perspectives to analyze and interpret the data. The research uses a questionnaire containing many of Peggy McIntosh's questions on white privilege, to observe the racial awareness, particularly in terms of privilege, of the freshmen college students. The results will conclude whether there is a correlation between the student's racial awareness, particularly in terms of privilege and their educational context. Through this research, the discussion of mandating the implementation of a cultural studies course at a high school setting can potentially be opened for future scholars.

A Proof of Concept for the Efficacy of Brief Mindfulness Practice in Large Lecture

*Reina Kluender, Senior, Psychology
McNair Scholar, UW Honors Program
Mentor: Jaime Diaz, Psychology*

There is a plethora of empirical studies on the positive long-term effects of mindfulness meditation practice on a wide variety of cognitive processes. However, the efficacy and feasibility of brief mindfulness meditation practice in the classroom have not been fully explored. Due to students' class scheduling and other time constraints, as well as the need and the cost of expert guidance, traditional mindfulness practice may not be sustainable in conventional U.S. college and university campuses. The focus of this study is to examine if a brief 60- to 90-second mindfulness meditation session immediately before lecture would improve the learning experience among undergraduate college students. Immediately before a 55-minute lecture, students were instructed to sustain focused attention to the present moment and to clear their minds of any thoughts about day-to-day activities. Students were prompted to take a deep breath slowly and also given the option of closing their eyes. The 60- to 90-second mindfulness meditation sessions were carried out twice a week over a nine-week period, for a total of 18 brief sessions. Mid-quarter and end of quarter surveys were used to determine student reactions and impressions, and optional general comments were elicited. The data for over three years of classes will be presented. This research has important implications in education, as we may be able to design affordable and accessible protocols in mental training that have immediate potential benefits. The efficacy of brief mindfulness sessions on actual learning remains to be determined in future studies.

Community-Based Research with Regional American Indian Tribes: Establishing Relationships to Conduct the Health American Indian Pregnancy Project (HAIPP)

Danielle LaFromboise, Sophomore, Psychology, Pre-Medicine, North Dakota State University

McNair Scholar

Mentor: Clayton Hilmert, Psychology, North Dakota State University

There are significant pregnancy health disparities experienced by American Indians in the Great Plains region that are not well understood. Community-based research projects (CBRPs) are one of the best ways to understand why these disparities exist and how we can reduce them. Conducting a CBRP requires building a trusting relationship with the American Indian community and the researchers. As well as having community members and researchers work together on the project will show that we value the community members and their input just as much as our own. It will also allow us to write the findings from a community perspective not just an outsider's perspective. Our McNair research plan is to establish a trusting CBRP collaboration with the Turtle Mountain band of Chippewa Indians focusing on institutions that will help us conduct the Healthy American Indian Pregnancy Project that is under grant consideration.

Latino/a College Students' Transition Experiences: Collectivism to an Individualistic Environment

Lysandra Perez, Sophomore, Psychology, Washington State University

McNair Scholar

Mentor: Monica Johnson, Sociology, Washington State University

Despite recent growth in the rate of bachelor's degree attainment for Latino/a college students, from 8 percent in 1990 to 15 percent in 2014, Latino/as remain in the lowest division least likely to earn their four year degree. Latino/a college students face many academic related barriers to obtaining a bachelor's degree, such as prior academic college preparation, socioeconomic barriers, and cultural/social capital. This study is the examination of the cultural differences between many Latino/a home and community lives compared to the setting in a college or university. For example, many first-generation Latino/a students' experience a setting where they rely on family and community to navigate difficulties. However, in college these aforementioned students are away from this support and may not be prepared for the challenges higher education brings. We are conducting semi-structured interviews for elaborate answers that may potentially highlight transitional ordeals. The sampling technique we are using is convenient sampling. Participants are recruited from a multicultural center "Chicano/a Latino/a center" in the Compton Union Building of Pullman, WA. The population we are targeting is first generation Latino/a col-

lege students from Washington State University in their first or last year of undergraduate career. Influenced from previous research, we are specifically examining what disparate experiences are happening when transitioning from their accustomed culture to an individualistic college campus. Our expected results are that students will be discouraged by unfamiliarity and the new challenges faced in another environment. Specifically, problem-solving skills and avoidance of challenges may differ from the collectivist and individualistic environment. We expect to find this transition to impact first-generation Latino/a college students. Our potential implication of this study is a development of a program, prior to college or in their first year to help these students become familiar with the individualistic environment.

College Adjustment of Students from Hawai'i in a Predominately White Institution

Shantel Rita, Senior, Psychology, Washington State University

McNair Scholar

Mentor: Stephen Bischoff, Critical Culture, Gender, and Race Studies, Washington State University

College retention in the United States has been a growing concern among minority populations for decades. However, the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) population is one of the most overlooked and understudied populations in higher education because of the stereotype that all AAPIs do well in academia. To better understand the various resources needed for AAPI subpopulations, data among this diverse population needs to be disaggregated. This also suggests how resources can be improved to help these specific groups in higher education institutions. Although there have been numerous studies on specific subgroups in the AAPI community, minimal research has included Hawai'i's population in higher education. Retention rates among students from Hawai'i remain invisible. Additionally, retention rates are unclear of why and how these rates occur among students from Hawai'i. This study explored the challenges of students from Hawai'i in a predominately-white institution in relation to retention rates. From semi-structured interviews, commonalities were found from analyzing student responses that attended a public, four-year, predominately-white institution in the Pacific Northwest. This study found that student retention factors affecting college adjustment is pertinent in higher education for student persistence.