Student Affairs Core Competencies: Integrating Multicultural Awareness, Knowledge, and Skills

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The growing and complex multicultural dynamics of many institutions have necessitated that student affairs professionals not only be prepared to address multicultural issues but also acquire the skills necessary to work effectively with culturally diverse populations and issues. In this article selected aspects of the multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills necessary for effective student affairs practice are suggested and the training and research implications of these competencies are addressed.

Addressing multicultural issues has been on the agenda of many institutions of higher education for at least the past 3 decades. For almost as long, higher education has been challenged about the appropriateness of the services offered to students of color, White female students, and other underrepresented or underserved populations. Some critics have expressed concerns about the ability of higher education to provide educational services that are relevant, appropriate, and effective for these students (Aldolphus, 1984; Cheatham, 1991; Freeman, 1975; Katz, 1989; Stabb, Harris, & Talley, 1995; Wright, 1987). More recently, the creation of multicultural campuses has increasingly become one of the stated goals of many leaders within higher education (Levine & Cureton, 1992). Development of multicultural campuses has been focused primarily on increasing the numbers and visibility of historically underrepresented groups of students, staff, and faculty, especially people of color. In addition, campuses have directed more efforts toward cultivating multiculturally sensitive and affirming environments that espouse, through values, activities, and programs, an appreciation of cultural differences, regardless of the number of individuals from historically and traditionally underrepresented groups (Reynolds & Pope, 1994). Although primary and secondary education researchers have done some important work in examining these issues (e.g., Banks, 1994; Giroux, 1981; Giroux & McLaren, 1994), student affairs and higher education researchers must incorporate greater complexity in their understanding and exploration of multicultural issues.

Within higher education, student affairs practitioners have often been called upon to design and implement multicultural programs and services on campus (Stabb, Harris, & Talley, 1995). A growing sentiment among student affairs professionals is that “it is the collective responsibility of student affairs professionals to respond more effectively and knowledgeably to diverse student groups on college campuses” (McEwen & Roper, 1994, p. 49). Despite this important role, many student affairs graduate students and professionals have received little or no training in multicultural issues (Fried & Forrest, 1993; Hoover, 1994; McEwen & Roper, 1994; Talbot, 1992). The growing and complex multicultural dynamics of many institutions necessitate that student affairs professionals not only be prepared to address multicultural issues but also acquire the skills necessary to work effectively with culturally diverse populations (Ebbers & Henry, 1990; Wright, 1987).

Some authors within the field of student affairs have acknowledged the need for concrete and specific multicultural skills (Ebbers & Henry, 1990; McEwen & Roper, 1994); however, little has been done to specify core multicultural competencies. Although the student affairs and higher education literature lacks specificity regarding multicultural competencies, the interest and need for multicultural skills has prompted some student affairs preparation programs to incorporate multicultural issues to varying

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degrees and in various formats (Fried & Forrest, 1993; Talbot, 1992). In this article the authors will examine the literature from a related field, counseling psychology, to further the exploration of the specific multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills necessary for effective student affairs practice and address the training and research implications of these competencies.

RELATED LITERATURE

The counseling psychology literature provides useful models for addressing issues of multicultural competence, education, and training (McEwen & Roper, 1994). Counseling psychology and student affairs literature and training programs have intersecting histories and some overlapping professional goals; therefore, using the counseling psychology multicultural literature as a starting place is a reasonable and appropriate choice for student affairs practitioners.

In 1982 counseling psychologists first specified what multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills professionals in their field needed (Sue et al., 1982) and an updated and expanded version of the 1982 statement was recently published in 1992 (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis). Counseling psychologists have continued to expand the depth of their understanding of the multicultural competencies necessary for effective psychological practice. In 1993, the American Psychological Association (APA) sponsored a committee which developed guidelines for psychological practice with ethnically, linguistically, and culturally diverse populations so that psychologists would have a "sociocultural framework to consider diversity of values, interactional styles, and cultural expectations in a systematic fashion" (p. 45). The APA committee that established these guidelines also began developing a book of corresponding case studies which will illustrate and apply the various multicultural competencies discussed.

The continually expanding theoretical and applied literature addressing multicultural competencies has been accompanied by growing interest in and development of multicultural competence research and instrumentation. To date researchers have developed at least four multicultural counseling competence assessment tools, which are currently in various stages of validation and research (D'Andrea, Daniels, & Heck, 1991; LaFromboise, Coleman, & Hernaldez, 1991; Ponterotto, Rieg, Barrett, & Sparks, 1994; Ponterotto, Rieg, Barrett, Harris, Sparks, Sanchez, & Magids, 1996; Pope-Davis & Dings, 1995; Sodowsky, Taffe, Gutkin, & Wise, 1994). Researchers are using these instruments to evaluate individual multicultural competence as well as to examine the effectiveness of some training or educational interventions. Although these instruments differ somewhat in scope and content, their underlying constructs overlap to some extent. More specifically, based on factor analyses completed for the various instruments, Pope-Davis and Dings (1995) identified the following core multicultural competencies: multicultural awareness and beliefs, multicultural knowledge, multicultural counseling skills, and multicultural counseling relationships (i.e., relationships between counselors and clients that focus on the counselors' stereotypes and comfort levels with clients of different cultural backgrounds). This growing area of research and the availability of assessment instruments (a) encourage greater depth and complexity in the study of multicultural counseling and (b) provides better tools for training programs.

Although some authors have conducted research in the area of multicultural issues in higher education (e.g., Astin, 1992; Fleming, 1984; Levine, 1989; Sedlacek, 1987), much of that research has been focused on students rather than student affairs practitioners or faculty. Higher education professionals, and student affairs practitioners in particular, must continue to examine these issues in more extensive and complex ways that will influence future research efforts and education and training practices.

STUDENT AFFAIRS CORE COMPETENCIES

The student affairs literature shows increasing attention to the core competencies, or general awareness, knowledge, and skills needed for efficacious and improved professional practice (e.g., Barr, 1993; Commission of Professional
Although the literature reveals no consensus about core competencies for student affairs practitioners, several authors have identified and described some necessary basic awareness, knowledge, and skills. Delworth and Hanson (1989) identified assessment and evaluation, instruction, consultation, counseling and advising, program development, budgeting, and managing and using data and information resources as essential competencies for student affairs practitioners. Barr (1993) suggested a more specific list of essential competencies for middle and upper management, including program planning, evaluation, outcomes assessment, budgeting and fiscal management, theory translation, ethical and legal knowledge, conflict and crisis management, and campus and community relationships. Moore (1985) also identified a specific list of basic competencies that she believed could be found in any given job description for student affairs professionals. Her list included conflict management, group dynamics, interviewing, management, problem solving, self-knowledge, supervision, resource use, verbal communication and written communication.

The lists by Barr (1993), Delworth and Hanson (1989), and Moore (1985) are fairly extensive and together they describe many of the core competencies needed for ethical and effective student affairs practice. Increasingly student affairs scholars and practitioners have been calling for the inclusion of multicultural skills as one of the profession's core competencies (Ebbers & Henry, 1990; Pope, Reynolds, & Cheatham, 1997; Pounds, 1987). According to McEwen and Reper (1994), "Institutions are in need of professionals who are capable of solving problems, managing diverse environments, delivering effective services to a diverse student body, and working as part of interracial work groups" (p. 86). In addition, both the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), the two major professional associations for student affairs professionals, have supported and encouraged the inclusion of multicultural issues and skills through their published value statements and strategic initiatives (NASPA, 1987; Pope, Reynolds, & Cheatham, 1997).

Despite the current lack of consensus regarding the core competencies for student affairs work, a strong and compelling need exists for the profession to become more competency based (Creamer et al., 1992). Identifying student affairs core competencies and questions involving the assurance of quality student affairs practice was the task of a study group appointed by ACPA and NASPA (Creamer et al., 1992). This study group has recently disbanded; however, their ensuing dialogues on competency and quality assurance in college student affairs will continue to be significant for the profession.

Building on the efforts by Barr (1993), Creamer et al. (1992), Delworth and Hanson (1989), and Moore (1985), to detail the various competencies necessary for effective student affairs practice, the authors of this article propose an alternative and somewhat expanded compilation of student affairs competencies:

(a) administrative, management, and leadership skills (e.g., fiscal management, resource use, program planning, supervision); (b) theory and translation skills, (c) helping and interpersonal skills (e.g., counseling, advising, group dynamics, crisis and conflict management, campus and community relations); (d) ethical and legal knowledge and decision-making skills (e.g., problem solving, knowledge of ethical standards); (e) training and teaching skills (e.g., consultation, workshop presentations, staff development); (f) assessment and evaluation skills (e.g., program evaluation, self-study); and (g) multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills (see Figure 1).

The seven competencies in Figure 1 offer a possible conceptualization of the core abilities necessary for effective student affairs work. Although all student affairs practitioners should have basic awareness, knowledge, and skills in these seven areas, some professionals will develop more expertise in a particular area than what would be described as the basic and...
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FIGURE 1. Student affairs core competencies.

expected competence. The possibility of differential competence levels is illustrated in Figure 1 by the inclusion of a numerical rating scale within each competency area. For example, if 15 or 20 points on Figure 1 were considered the basic competence level for a student affairs professional, then expertise might be viewed as that knowledge and those abilities occurring at 30 points or more. This conceptualization or numerical rating scale is not connected to any measurement instrument; the numbers within the basic competencies are meant solely to illustrate that individuals may vary in their levels of competency and expertise. Although not all student affairs practitioners will become multicultural experts, they need to acquire basic multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills to work effectively with individuals who differ from them culturally.

Multicultural competence constitutes a unique category of awareness, knowledge, and skills necessary for effective student affairs work. These competencies may assist student affairs practitioners in creating multiculturally sensitive and affirming campuses. However, multicultural competencies also should be integrated into the other core competencies. The open hub at the center of Figure 1 exemplifies the dynamic and fluid relationship between the proposed core competencies. For example, knowledge of student development theory ideally would include the research and literature that examines the experiences of students of color. Helping and interpersonal skills also might include an understanding of the different communication styles of men and women. Another illustration of multicultural competence involves the administrative and management area. Multicultural competence in a management context requires use of the broadest and most inclusive definitions
of effective management and leadership to guard against cultural bias in understanding what constitutes a “good” manager or “successful” leader (Astin et al., 1995; Cox, 1993; Jamieson & O'Mara, 1991; Pope, 1995). For example, in the United States, the dominant culture values and rewards assertion, analytic skills, and independence as effective leadership traits (Cox, 1993; Kanter, 1977), whereas some other cultures or groups may reward and emphasize cooperation and consensus as the hallmarks of effective leadership (Astin & Leland, 1991; Cox, 1993; Griggs, 1983; Pope, 1995). Although none of these leadership traits are more efficacious by themselves, cultural bias or assumptions may encourage some supervisors to overlook or diminish those characteristics that the dominant culture does not endorse.

MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCIES IN STUDENT AFFAIRS

As Sue et al. (1982) and others (e.g., Casas, Ponterotto, & Gutierrez, 1986; Pedersen, 1988; Sue et al., 1992) proposed for the counseling profession, the authors assert that multicultural competence is a necessary prerequisite to effective, affirming, and ethical work in student affairs. Multicultural competence in student affairs may be defined as the awareness, knowledge, and skills necessary to work effectively and ethically across cultural differences (see Sue et al., 1982 and Pedersen, 1988 for further exploration of this tripartite model of multicultural counseling competence). These three core areas constitute the scope of multicultural competence.

Table 1 contains some possible requisite components within each core area. The authors created this partial listing of characteristics after thoroughly reviewing the multicultural literature in both higher education and counseling psychology. The initial listing contained 43 items, but a review for redundancy and clarity yielded a revised list of 36 items. The authors conducted independent sortings (a technique that entailed dividing each of the 36 items into one of the three categories) to determine if the 36 items would be placed in the same awareness, knowledge, and skill categories. Following the sort procedure, the authors presented the items at several day-long workshops on multicultural issues for student affairs practitioners. The workshop participants expressed support for the items and generally thought they were clear and well worded with three exceptions. Finally, the authors conducted a focus group of graduate students who were members of a research team working on multicultural research. The focus group basically concurred with the workshop participants. Following the focus group, the authors eliminated and reworded several others.

Specifying the characteristics necessary for multicultural competence helps student affairs professionals understand the range of behaviors and attitudes necessary for multicultural competence. Such a listing is particularly important because no instrument exists currently within student affairs to measure one’s level of multicultural competence. This multicultural listing offers student affairs some of the specificity and multicultural content that an instrument, if available, could bring to the profession. Awareness of these diverse components can allow professionals to assess the development of their own multicultural competencies or the awareness, knowledge, and skills of someone they are supervising.

Multicultural awareness consists of the attitudes, beliefs, values, assumptions, and self-awareness necessary to serve students who are culturally different from oneself (Pedersen, 1988). Individuals may have an inaccurate or inappropriate awareness of culture (i.e., stereotypes, biases); those false attitudes and assumptions must be changed before multicultural development can continue (Pedersen, 1988; Pope-Davis & Dings, 1985; Sue et al., 1982). Multicultural knowledge consists of the information individuals have about various cultures. For the individuals who have inaccurate, incomplete, or biased knowledge about various cultures, that information base must be corrected or completed before multicultural development can proceed (Pedersen, 1988; Sue et al., 1992). Multicultural skills allow for effective and meaningful interaction such as seeking consultation as necessary with people who differ from them culturally (Pope-Davis & Dings,
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TABLE 1.
Characteristics of a Multiculturally Competent Student Affairs Practitioner

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multicultural Awareness</th>
<th>Multicultural Knowledge</th>
<th>Multicultural Skills</th>
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<tr>
<td>A belief that differences are valuable and that learning about others who are culturally different is necessary and rewarding.</td>
<td>Knowledge of diverse cultures and oppressed groups (i.e., history, traditions, values, customs, resources, issues).</td>
<td>Ability to identify and openly discuss cultural differences and issues.</td>
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<td>A willingness to take risks and see them as necessary and important for personal and professional growth.</td>
<td>Information about how change occurs for individual values and behaviors.</td>
<td>Ability to assess the impact of cultural differences on communication and effectively communicate across those differences.</td>
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<td>A personal commitment to justice, social change, and combating depression.</td>
<td>Knowledge about the ways that cultural differences affect verbal and nonverbal communication.</td>
<td>Capability to empathize and genuinely connect with individuals who are culturally different from themselves.</td>
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<td>A belief in the value and significance of their own cultural heritage and world view as a starting place for understanding others who are culturally different from them.</td>
<td>Knowledge about how gender, class, race and ethnicity, language, nationality, sexual orientation, age, religion or spirituality, disability, and ability affect individuals and their experiences.</td>
<td>Ability to incorporate new learning and prior learning in new situations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A willingness to self-examine, and when necessary, challenge and change, their own values, world view, assumptions, and biases.</td>
<td>Information about culturally appropriate resources and how to make referrals.</td>
<td>Ability to gain the trust and respect of individuals who are culturally different from themselves.</td>
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<tr>
<td>An openness to change and belief that change is necessary and positive.</td>
<td>Information about the nature of institutional oppression and power.</td>
<td>Capability to accurately assess their own multicultural skills, comfort level, growth, and development.</td>
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<td>An acceptance of other world views and perspectives and a willingness to acknowledge that they, as individuals, do not have all the answers.</td>
<td>Knowledge about identity development models and the acculturation process for members of oppressed groups and its impact on individuals, groups, intergroup relations, and society.</td>
<td>Ability to differentiate between individual differences, cultural differences, and universal similarities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A belief that cultural differences do not have to interfere with effective communication or meaningful relationships.</td>
<td>Knowledge about within-group differences and understanding of multiple identities and multiple oppressions.</td>
<td>Ability to challenge and support individuals and systems around oppression issues in a manner that optimizes multicultural interventions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of their own cultural heritage and how it affects their world view, values, and assumptions.</td>
<td>Information and understanding of internalized oppression and its impact on identity and self-esteem.</td>
<td>Ability to make individual, group, and institutional multicultural interventions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of their own behavior and its impact on others.</td>
<td>Knowledge about institutional barriers which limit access to and success in higher education for members of oppressed groups.</td>
<td>Ability to use cultural knowledge and sensitivity to make more culturally sensitive and appropriate interventions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Awareness of the interpersonal stress which occurs within a cultural dyad.</td>
<td>Knowledge about systems theories and how systems change.</td>
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According to Pedersen (1988), “Skill is based both on awareness and on knowledge to bring about appropriate and effective change in multicultural situations” (p. 107).

The development of multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills is “a continuing and unending process that requires learning and relearning” (Pedersen, 1988, p. 107). The first step toward multicultural competence is to assess honestly and thoroughly one’s level of multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skill. This information can help determine what activities, exercises, and experiences are needed to enhance one’s level of multicultural sensitivity and skills. If, in conducting a self-assessment of their levels of multicultural competence, student affairs practitioners discover that they need to upgrade their abilities, then they might establish specific learning goals and develop detailed learning plans to increase their competence level.

The tripartite model of multicultural competencies is an important heuristic tool for helping individuals develop the necessary awareness, knowledge, and skills to work effectively with individuals who are culturally different from themselves. Although Table 1 may help specify the range of attitudes and behaviors necessary for one to be multiculturally competent, Reynolds (1995b) created a more parsimonious list of multicultural competencies. She identified seven competencies for student affairs professionals: (a) an appreciation and knowledge of the history, current needs, strengths, and resources of communities and individuals who historically have been underserved and underrepresented; (b) an awareness of one’s own biases and cultural assumptions; (c) content knowledge about culturally related terms and concepts such as worldview, acculturation, and identity development; (d) the ability to use that knowledge and awareness to make more culturally sensitive and appropriate interventions; (e) an accurate self-assessment of one’s multicultural skills and comfort level; (f) an awareness of the interpersonal process that occurs within a multicultural dyad; and (g) an awareness of the cultural assumptions underlying the helping process.

IMPLICATIONS OF MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCIES IN STUDENT AFFAIRS

Identifying the multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills necessary for student affairs practitioners is important; however, this level of competence must be integrated into the work of student affairs. The multicultural competencies identified in Table 1 have significant education, training, and research implications that invite further specification and exploration.

Education and Training Implications

Most student affairs preparation programs and the standards used to guide those programs (e.g., CAS) are curriculum based rather than competency based. A curriculum based approach suggests or prescribes specific courses and content areas, whereas a competency-based approach focuses on behavioral outcomes that result from exposure to specific content areas, courses, and experiential activities (e.g., supervised practica). The authors do not suggest that preparation programs move to a solely competency-based model, but rather that preparation programs also include an emphasis on assisting students develop multicultural competence, because working with students who are culturally diverse from oneself requires an examination of essential knowledge, behaviors, and attitudes.

For student affairs professionals to become more multiculturally competent, preparation programs and student affairs divisions may need to more actively explore multicultural issues in student affairs and higher education. This might require further incorporation of multicultural content into coursework and training of new professionals. In addition, supervised practica and other experiential activities are necessary to provide opportunities for students to practice skills and receive feedback as they develop these new competencies. To improve training in this area, the multicultural education and training literature, research, and resources in student affairs must expand. McEwen and Roper (1994) presented an impressive attempt to integrate multicultural resources and references into student affairs teaching and training. These resources offer some content that student affairs professionals can use to increase the multicultural
knowledge and awareness of students and employees within their programs or departments. Likewise, Manning (1994) suggested additional perspectives that can be incorporated in the training and education of student affairs professionals. The items specified in Table 1 could be another important resource. This listing could provide more specificity and understanding to assist student affairs preparation programs, departments, and offices in their multicultural training and evaluation efforts.

Future student affairs professionals learn about the profession and higher education in general through student affairs preparation programs; therefore, these programs must include multicultural training. Faculty can structure and infuse multicultural learning into a student affairs preparation program in multiple ways. Copeland (1982) identified several multicultural program designs within the counseling profession: (a) separate courses; (b) an area-of-concentration model; (c) an interdisciplinary approach; and (d) an integration model. These program designs, in addition to the workshop and traditional program designs specified by Ridley, Mendoza, & Kanitz (1994), and Reynolds (1995a), offer a wide array of choices for program faculty to consider when deciding how to incorporate multicultural issues into the curriculum.

The Multicultural Change Intervention Matrix (MCIM), developed by Pope (1993), is an example of an alternative conceptual model, created from a higher education and organizational perspective that can be used in any educational environment as a means of infusing multicultural sensitivity and content. The MCIM is based on the concepts of systemic planned change and multicultural organization development (MCOD) principles, which provide a framework for understanding the range of multicultural interventions and activities that may be used to address multicultural issues (Pope, 1993, 1995). The MCIM offers an alternative framework in which to conceptualize multicultural training. It emphasizes change at individual, group, and institutional levels which some argue is necessary to truly infuse multiculturalism into an academic program (LaFromboise & Foster, 1992; Reynolds, 1995a). Program faculty can use the MCIM to design the goals and activities of an individual course or restructure an entire curriculum. Faculty might first use this matrix as a tool to conceptualize and assess the type and level of existing multicultural training in a student affairs preparation program. Once the initial assessment was complete, faculty could identify what types of training are typically missing and what can be done to expand and enhance their multicultural initiatives.

According to Pope (1993), use of a systemic method like the MCIM to create multicultural change may help student affairs practitioners not only set necessary goals but also identify appropriate implementation methods. Providers of multicultural training offered in counseling and student affairs programs typically focus solely on changing individual students, without examining whether the faculty or the program itself also might need to change. Examination of the targets and levels of multicultural training provides the basis for effective interventions to help create multiculturally competent administrators and counselors.

Student affairs faculty and practitioners may need additional training in the form of continuing education workshops, extensive examination of the literature, and multiculturally oriented supervision to help them develop greater multicultural competence. In addition to examining the curriculum and current training practices as identified previously, the profession needs to develop effective continuing education programs and delivery systems to reach the goal of multicultural competence (McEwen & Roper, 1994; Pope, Reynolds, & Cheatham, in press). Furthermore, the profession must incorporate multicultural competencies, as part of the core competencies of student affairs work, into the performance evaluations of students and employees. The student affairs profession must not just teach multicultural material; student and employee evaluations must include levels of multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills, to ensure that all students are being served effectively.

Research Implications

Research that explores the area of multicultural
competence and the multicultural training of student affairs professionals is urgently needed. Such research efforts will expand the awareness and skills of student affairs professionals so they can effectively work with historically underserved and underrepresented groups. Until this type of research is more readily available, preparation program faculty and student affairs supervisors will be unable to determine whether their multicultural training and educational efforts have been successful. According to Ebbers and Henry (1990), “It is time that student affairs administrators, their staff, and representatives from academic departments become involved jointly with evaluating the cultural competence of campus programs and personnel” (p. 320).

Specific and measurable multicultural competencies are vital to the success of research efforts in this area. Within the counseling psychology literature, the empirical support for the tripartite model of multicultural competence (i.e., awareness, knowledge, and skills) has not equaled the support for the theoretical notion of a tripartite model (Pope-Davis, & Dings, 1995). According to Ponterotto, Rieger, Barrett, and Sparks (1994), researchers must complete more empirical work before professionals can fully understand the nature of the multicultural competency construct. Initial psychometric evidence has been mixed across several different multicultural competency instruments within counseling psychology (Ponterotto, Rieger, Barrett, & Sparks, 1994; Pope-Davis & Dings, 1995). For example, some findings have indicated that measuring multicultural awareness may be particularly challenging, possibly because some measures may not adequately assess the multicultural awareness developed in coursework and workshops or because “awareness is a more individually based variable than knowledge or skills requiring more explicit attention on the part of the trainers” (Pope-Davis, Reynolds, Dings, & Ottavi, 1995, p. 469). Regardless of the specific constructs used, researchers must define and measure them in concrete, behavior-oriented, specific terms. Multiple research methods (e.g., surveys, analogs, case studies, qualitative interviews) not only will better inform an understanding of multicultural education and training efforts but also will help professionals further define the construct of multicultural competence (Ponterotto, Rieger, Barrett, & Sparks, 1994).

After defining the constructs, researchers need to develop some instrumentation to aid in multicultural training and evaluation of student affairs professionals and to measure the current multicultural competence level of student affairs practitioners. The profession needs to understand how well it is doing in the area of multicultural competence. With a baseline established, the profession will be able to identify deficit areas and develop program goals and objectives for improvement (Ebbers & Henry, 1990). Outcome assessment efforts can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of specific multicultural training efforts. More information is needed about what types of teaching and training tools and interventions are most effective in increasing the multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills of student affairs graduate students and practitioners. Research efforts will be an important part of creating the understanding and knowledge base necessary to develop multicultural sensitivity and effectiveness within student affairs. For example, a research project that defines and assesses multicultural competencies in student affairs is under way (Pope, 1994). This project, using a multifaceted design, involves the creation of a valid, reliable instrument that will assist the student affairs profession in its efforts to further refine its understanding of the multicultural competencies necessary for efficacious practice. In addition, the profession may eventually use this assessment tool to assess its current multicultural education and training efforts. However, creating and validating an assessment instrument often requires several years and numerous studies before the instrument is ready for widespread use for anything other than strictly research purposes. For example, although within counseling psychology several psychologists simultaneously began the process of creating instruments to assess multicultural counseling competence in the early 1990s (D’Andrea, Daniels, & Heck, 1991; LaFromboise, Coleman, & Hernandez, 1991; Ponterotto, Sanchez, & Magids, 1991; Sodow-
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sky, Taffe, Gutkin, & Wise, 1994), a review of the literature appears to indicate that the primary use of these instruments is additional research and validation studies.

SUMMARY

Although student affairs practitioners have addressed multicultural issues on campuses for at least the last 30 years, the profession has done little to ensure that these practitioners have developed the necessary knowledge, awareness, and skills to work effectively with students who are culturally different from them. As college campuses become increasingly diverse, multicultural competence has become a requisite core competency area for ethical and efficacious practice.

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