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This chapter synthesizes the common themes across chapters in this volume and argues that campus activists are an integral part of the higher education landscape.

Understanding and Improving Campus Climates for Activists

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From the advent of the colonial colleges in the 18th century to the present day, campus activism has consistently been part of the fabric of American higher education. As Christopher J. Broadhurst explained in Chapter 1 of this volume, although the issues that spark action and the methods activists use may have ebbed and flowed over the years, one thing remains the same—campus activism emerges on college and university campuses from a desire to change one's community, nation, and world. In this chapter, I first explore the tension between activism as behavior to manage or "deal with" on college campuses and activism and its related constructs as desirable college outcomes. Next, I synthesize the common themes of this volume and argue that campus activists, historically mislabeled as radicals, are an important and integral part of the higher education landscape. Finally, I offer considerations for higher education professionals and scholars invested in improving campus climates for activists.

Activism as an Outcome of College

Consistently scholars and educators have identified civic mindedness or civic engagement as a desirable outcome of college (Bok, 1990; Colby, Ehrlich, Beaumont, & Stephens, 2003; Harvey & Immerwahr, 1995; Nussbaum, 2002). Hersh and Schneider (2005) argued that educators do students a disservice if they neglect to teach them the importance of responsible social action. More recently, scholars have used the construct of socially responsible leadership to explore college students' social-change-related attitudes and values (e.g., Dugan, 2006a, 2006b; Dugan & Komives, 2010; Martin, 2013). Many studies employing socially responsible leadership as an important college outcome use Tyree's (1998) Socially Responsible Leadership Scale to assess students' (a) self-awareness, (b) congruence of

behavior with personal values, (c) investment of time and energy in activities deemed important, (d) work with diverse others to accomplish common goals, (e) sense of civic and social responsibility, and (f) desire to make the world a better place. Still other scholars have directly identified social and political activism as a desirable college outcome because of its connection to preparing students for engagement in a democratic society (Hurtado, 2004). Pascarella, Salisbury, Martin, and Blaich (2012), for example, explored the impact of diversity experiences on social and political activism during the first year of college. They found that increased exposure to classroom-related diversity topics and interactions with diverse peers had a positive impact on students' growth in social and political activism as early as the first year of college. Studies such as this not only place social and political activism as a desirable college outcome but also explore the educational and environmental conditions that promote such an educational outcome.

Whether educators use the term social responsibility, civic engagement, civic mindedness, social action, social/political activism, or another similar phrase, the quintessential feature of each of these constructs is a desire to make one's community and world a better place. From that perspective, it is difficult to argue *against* cultivating positive growth on such outcomes during the college years. Educators, at least in theory, appear to overwhelmingly support efforts to help college students grow along these dimensions. However, student growth along such outcome dimensions is likely to be associated with student activism, on campus and in the larger community. These actions may or may not be viewed as positive or developmentally appropriate behaviors by campus administrators. Depending on the magnitude of the action, some activism may simply be viewed by campus educators as a distraction or nuisance to be managed rather than an educational opportunity or a step toward engaged citizenship for college students. Each chapter in this volume has articulated the important role that student activists play in the higher education landscape. They are an integral part of the spirit of a college campus, and many of them have been actively involved in some of the major social changes in our nation over the last century. As Hamrick (1998) indicated, "students who engage in principled dissent and active protest on campus are participating in a different, yet equally valuable, democratic citizenship experience that is worthy of our attention and appreciation" (p. 450).

Common Threads

In this volume, authors have attempted to provide both historical context and contemporary realities for student activists in higher education. Taken together, this collection of chapters offers educators a unique glimpse into experiences and climate for campus activists. Perhaps the most consistent thread that can be found across the chapters is the simple point that social

and political activism is alive and well in American higher education in spite of prevailing misconceptions that activists are legends of a bygone era.

Whether they are students who become disgruntled with campus policies or students who work for systemic social change in their community, state, nation, or world, activists are visible. Although some no longer march for their cause in a free-speech zone on campus, they are visible through other group organizing efforts such as on social media outlets. An important lesson educators can extract from this series of chapters on campus activism is the changing methods student activists use to organize and express dissent. Perhaps it is important to note, as Cassie L. Barnhardt did in her chapter, that many student activists operate within traditional confines through following the protocols and policies outlined by their institutions of higher education. As Barnhardt indicated, "students worked from their insider status as members of the campus community to seek change" (Chapter 4, p. 53). Although student activists in this century may have shifted tactics from those involved in the social movements of the 1960s and other decades, student activists remain present and visible in higher education.

Another theme present in many of the chapters is the potential for learning that occurs with individuals engaged in social and political activism. As J. Patrick Biddix discussed, his research found that participation in activism through demonstrations was positively associated with "students' value of political and social involvement, making the case for dissent as a means of fostering the development of civically minded" college students (Chapter 6, p. 82). Put another way, acts such as protests, vigils, teach-ins, and other demonstrations appear to aid students in developing what many consider an important outcome of college. Further, Adrianna Kezar and Dan Maxey highlighted the role of collective action in contributing to students' learning of key skills such as strategizing, political savvy, critical consciousness, and mediation. Still other chapter authors mentioned students reporting a sense of responsibility around an issue or a desire to make their campus better than they found it. It becomes clear that the learning that occurs from student engagement in activism is perhaps more than the sum of its parts. Put another way, the knowledge, skills, and attitudes student activists receive or acquire in working toward institutional or social change are more complex than what can be measured in a simple test of skill or list of actions. The passion with which many student activists lean into life will follow them well beyond their college years; how their actions are met in higher education will likely influence the course their future endeavors take.

A final but crucial theme these chapters evoke is the power of the individual in campus activism. As Penny A. Pasque and Juanita Gamez Vargas eloquently remind educators, it is important to remember the "small stories" (Chapter 5, p. 68). Educators who approach campus activists without considering the individual stories—both triumphs and disappointments—do a disservice to the students they purport to serve. Student activists not

only reflect a larger movement but individually they also reflect a personal story or experience that has led them to be passionate about the issue they champion. We must remember this small but significant fact about the student activists learning on our college campuses.

Considerations for Campus Professionals

In this section, I discuss a few key considerations for campus professionals interested in cultivating an inclusive climate for student activists. College and university administrators ought to welcome student activism on campus not only through the institution's mission, values, and culture but also through verbal encouragement. Such messages show support for the inclusion of student voice in decision making and the importance of democratic dialogue (Broadhurst & Martin, 2014).

Although some campus professionals may view activists' behaviors as acts to be managed and minimized, perhaps turning to student activists themselves to assist educators in redefining what activism looks like on campus might assist professionals in rewriting the script around student activists in higher education. For example, educators might call on student activists to assist institutional administration in operationalizing what desirable college outcomes such as social action, civic engagement, and social responsibility might look like on their campus.

Multiple chapters in this volume highlight the importance of creating a safe space for student activists on campus. As Strange and Banning (2001) indicated, a sense of community will not likely be experienced in the absence of a sense of safety, inclusion, and involvement on the college campus. Perhaps professionals should consider working with college students to define and envision what a safe and inclusive campus climate might look like for student activists. Similarly, educators might consider the important role that a network of belonging has to students' well-being and overall success in college (Parks, 2000). Intentionally creating a space and structure where student activists can meet one another, engage in constructive dialogue, and find support from campus faculty and staff members might help student activists begin to cultivate a sense of belonging in the collegiate environment.

In their recent portrait of today's student demographic, Levine and Dean (2012) presented the complexity of college students and the values, attitudes, and behaviors they bring with them to campus. They noted that this generation places a high importance on community service and volunteerism and has increased their civic engagement over previous generations.

The current generation of college students thinks globally and acts locally, but as Levine and Dean discuss, they do not have a real knowledge or understanding of the larger world around them. This indictment of the overall portrait of today's college students might suggest to educators that a little social activism might be just what many students need to "cement connections in a world in which our differences increasingly overshadow our

commonalities. This has been essential in every generation but it is mandatory for citizenship in the twenty-first century" (Levine & Dean, 2012, p. 185).

If colleges and universities are invested in cultivating social responsibility and civic mindedness among students, then a transformation of institutional culture is needed (Hersh & Schneider, 2005). This shift in culture is one in which all members of an institution—faculty, administrators, student affairs professionals, students, and even alumni—are committed to change. The varying stakeholders within higher education must better understand campus activists who, as individuals often on the forefront of societal changes, engage in activities that help determine the future direction of American higher education.

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