Model Submissions from 2015 and 2016 National Conventions

Presenter Name(s): Cindy Kane

Presentation Type: Research Poster

Statement of the Problem:
The purpose of this collective case study was to describe the role that scholarship plays in the work of campus activities practitioners. Through analysis of engagement in the four frames of scholarship of discovery, application, integration and teaching (Boyer, 1990), this study illuminates challenges and opportunities for the potential future in campus activities for an enhanced scholar-practitioner identity.

Theoretical or Conceptual Framework:
The theoretical framework chosen to define scholarship was the four-part framework by Boyer (1990) who looked to adapt the notion of scholarship beyond traditional notions of research. He believed that the rewards system for faculty needed to be more reflective of the diversity of faculty skills and a broad conception of how knowledge is developed, applied and communicated to students and the professional community (Bosold & Darnell, 2012; Carpenter, 2001; Glassick, 2000; Komives, 2000). Boyer believed that the dialogue between the merits of teaching or research as scholarship were robbing universities of the chance for incentivizing scholarly achievement in a way that matched the diversity of faculty talent (Glassick, 2000). These four forms of scholarship include the scholarship of discovery, the scholarship of teaching, the scholarship of application and the scholarship of integration.

Objectives or Learning Outcomes:
The central research question explored was, “How do student affairs administrators in campus activities departments integrate scholarship into practice?” This question was investigated through the following sub questions: • How do campus activities administrators describe attempts to integrate scholarship into practice within the campus activities department? • How do senior student affairs officers (SSAOs) describe the appropriate role that scholarship plays within the campus activities department on their campus? • How do campus activities administrators describe obstacles or barriers, both individual and institutional, to developing an identity as a scholar-practitioner within their departments? • How do campus activities administrators describe the individuals, organizations and activities that influence their ability to approach work as a scholar-practitioner?

Methodology:
The method selected was the qualitative, collective case study. Given the lack of established research on the experiences of professionals in the campus activities functional area of student affairs, this study design allowed the notion that experiences within the profession may be experienced differently by those immersed within it. A qualitative method fit this question quite well as the researcher holds membership within the professional community being studied, thereby allowing insider status to promote open dialogue between participants and the researcher (Creswell, 2013). In an effort to explore this research question with well-established departments, the list of award winners from a professional association in campus activities was reviewed to identify institutions recognized most often in the past 10 years. Institutions were chosen with varied commuter and resident student populations and each had a campus activities department with more than one full-time administrator.
Major Outcomes or Findings:
Participants significantly engaged with the scholarship of teaching, some chose to engage with the scholarship of application and the scholarship of integration, but very few discussed significant engagement with the scholarship of discovery. Perceived limits to engagement with scholarship were present on both individual and institutional levels. Individuals identified intimidation and needed skill development, while institutional expectations of output outweighed any regard for the foundation through which programs and services are delivered. Within these cases, while there were instances of engagement with some aspect of scholarship within daily work in campus activities, it was a rare administrator who claimed an identity as “scholar-practitioner.” However, given strategic priorities shared on each campus for more active student affairs involvement with teaching and learning priorities, identification of the role of “educator” was significant.

Conclusions, Recommendations, or Call to Action:
This study applies the priority issued for scholarship by higher education scholars (Jablonski, 2005; Komives, 2000) and the increased emphasis on scholarship by functional area associations (Association of College Unions International, 2011; National Association for Campus Activities, 2012) to the experiences of four campus activities departments that have achieved recognition in the Northeast for comprehensive excellence in campus activities programming. Based on the insights shared by individuals from departments regarded as exemplary in the field, future implications for practice from this study for career preparation, professional associations and institutional contexts can be applied to more closely align the work of campus activities practitioners at these four institutions to one of the most central values of an academic community, scholarship.

Presenter Name(s): Christine Wilson and Mark Flynn

Presentation Type: Research Poster

Statement of the Problem:
This poster will describe research project at two institutions (a large public university and a small private religiously affiliated university) which sought to determine internal and external stressors of student leaders (student organization officers, resident assistants, orientation leaders and community outreach leaders). The goal of understanding student leader stress was to better train, advise, and support student leaders.

Theoretical or Conceptual Framework:
(Not solicited in 2015)

Objectives or Learning Outcomes:
The goal of understanding student leader stress was to better train, advise, and support student leaders.

Methodology:
An anonymous survey was administered during the 2013-2014 academic year. The survey included eight sections:
1. demographic items
2. ratings on 21 general sources of student stress
3. Generalized Self Efficacy Scale (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1999)
4. Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, Kamarck & Mermelstein, 1983),
5. Concern Over Mistakes subscale of the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (Frost, Marten, Lahart & Rosenblate, 1990)
7. SCOPE Scale (coping) (Struthers, 1995)
8. Schwartz Outcome Scale (mental health) (Young, Waehler, Laux, McDaniel & Hilsenroth, 2003)

515 students participated, indicating a confidence interval of 95% =/- 5 (339 females, 174 males, 2 transgender; 393 White and 122 students from racial/ethnic underrepresented groups). The vast majority of students had one or two leadership roles (288-one leadership role; 141 two leadership roles).

Major Outcomes or Findings:
The top three sources of student leader stress were academic responsibilities, poor sleeping habits/not enough sleep, and student organization responsibilities. The results of some of the instruments varied by university, by race/culture, and by gender. Student leaders from the large public university reported significantly more financial stress than students at the small private university. Student leaders from the large public university were significantly more narcissistic, coped significantly worse, and reported significantly worse mental health than students at the small private university.

Student leaders from racial/ethnic underrepresented groups reported significantly more stress than White student leaders. Male and female student leaders did not differ in reported stress. Male student leaders were significantly more narcissistic than female student leaders. Female student leaders coped significantly better than male student leaders. Overall, results indicated that the stress of student leaders has less to do with external stressors and more to do with internal coping and mental health.

Conclusions, Recommendations, or Call to Action:
We recommend that colleges implement the survey so that they can determine the specific profile of their own students, since the results between the two schools had some significant differences; there may be university-culture differences at play. We also think that interviews and focus groups should be added to the protocol so that stories of students and examples of the sources of stress-in-action can be better understood.

We recommend that student leader training addresses internal factors, such as mental health and coping. Mentally healthy students who cope better are better reported being less stressed by the sources of stress. We also recommend that training and advising address issues of sleep and sleeping habits (beyond time management), and how to manage those given that the number one stressor was academic responsibilities and the number three stressor was student organization responsibilities. Student leaders are juggling a lot of responsibilities, and sleep seems to be the first thing that is sacrificed (although that is a hypothesis at this point).

In addition, we recommend conducting more research on, and also more training and support regarding, the intersection of race/ethnicity and stress, given that students from underrepresented groups reported being significantly more stressed by the sources of stress, even though other scores (self-efficacy, perceived stress, perfectionism, narcissism, coping, mental health) did not differ significantly by race/ethnicity.