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Ally Development: Preparing Student Affairs Professionals to Work with American Indian Students

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ALLY DEVELOPMENT: PREPARING STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS TO WORK WITH AMERICAN INDIAN STUDENTS

BY

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This thesis is approved as a creditable and independent investigation by a candidate for the Master of Science in Counseling and Human Resource Development with a specialization in College Counseling degree and is acceptable for meeting the thesis requirements for this degree. Acceptance of this does not imply that the conclusions reached by the candidates are necessarily the conclusions of the major department.

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ABSTRACT

ALLY DEVELOPMENT: PREPARING STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS TO WORK WITH AMERICAN INDIAN STUDENTS

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Previous literature on ally identity development for higher education professionals has been focused mostly on White identity development, with little to no suggestions for those working with American Indian student populations (Broido, 2000; Edwards, 2006; Evans & Wall, 1991; Reason, Millar, A, & Scales, 2005). A conceptual model written by Keith E. Edwards (2006) focused on three stages of aspiring ally identity development with each identity attached to frequently experienced behaviors and viewpoints. This relatable model created a way to offer autoethnographical examples of an aspiring ally's development to suggest adaptations for non-Native student affairs professionals working with Native student populations. With added investigator triangulation of a Native student affairs professional's interpretation, the considerations for aspiring allies working with Native populations include: thorough self-education focused on historical oppression perpetuated through contemporary incidents; cultural understanding of self-determination, future generations, and communication styles; the unique political status of tribal groups with the U.S. government as sovereign nations. Suggestions from Native higher education professionals and application are discussed, concluding with limitations and resources for further reading.

Keywords: aspiring ally identity development, higher education, Native student populations

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

On the land where American Indians of the Northern Plains (Dakotas, Nakotas, and Lakotas) once thrived, there are now numerous towns and public universities, all of which are predominantly White and reflect an unacknowledged history filled with violated treaties, forced removal, assimilation, abuse, loss of culture, and genocide. This harrowing history is perpetuated today through institutionalized racism, oppression, trauma, poverty, suicide, and current incidents which deny Native peoples their basic rights (EagleWoman Townsend, 2015). Dakota, Nakota, and Lakota peoples are now represented in nine sovereign, federally-recognized, tribal reservations located within the borders of South Dakota, with one extending into North Dakota. These citizens make up roughly 10.3% of the state's population, the fourth largest representation in the country (Studies, 2012; Census, 2016; Census FFF, 2016). In 2015, American Indians had the highest poverty rate of any race group at 26.6%, whereas the nation as a whole was 14.7%. Likewise, the median household income for American Indians was $38,530 compared to the nation's average of $55,775. It is not surprising then that only 19.1% of the overall American Indian population had obtained a bachelor's degree or higher in 2015, as compared to 30.6% of the nation's average (Census FFF, 2016).

In 1970, the second tribally controlled college in the country was opened (Sinte Gleska University), followed quickly by the third (Oglala Lakota College), representing a new surge of Native self-determination in South Dakota. Today, there are four tribal colleges: Sinte Gleska University, Sisseton Wahpeton College, Sitting Bull College (North Dakota), and Oglala Lakota College (Carney, 1999). Even though these offer a

postsecondary education, roughly 1% of all self-identified Native students choose to attend a public, degree granting, four-year insitution (Education, 2016). Though the land that all universities presently reside on once belonged to Native people, and despite South Dakota having the fourth largest population of American Indians in the country, Native students continue to be underrepresented in public universities. These startling statistics signify the need for and responsibility of higher education professionals to learn the history and contemporary context of the perpetuated oppression of American Indians in order to support Native students on their path of higher education (Studies, 2012; Education, 2016; Huffman, Sill, & Brokenleg, 1986; Ostler, 2004; Shotton, Lowe, & Waterman, 2013). To acknowledge and respect the vast amount and variety of Indigenous populations throughout the United States, numerous terms will be used to describe these populations such as: Native, American Indian, Native American, Indigenous, Indian, and Alaska Native. When known, specific tribal affiliations will be acknowledged.

I am a White, 25-year-old female who grew up in and completed both my bachelor's and master's degrees in South Dakota. My interest of working with Native populations began in my undergraduate career, and grew during my time in graduate school where I was fortunate to work as an administrative assistant in the American Indian Student Center (AISC). During this time, my academic advisor introduced me to an article that resonated with my current position as a non-Native in the Center at a predominantly White institution (PWI). The article was titled, "Aspiring Social Justice Ally Identity Development: A Conceptual Model," by Keith Edwards (2006). In this article, Edwards presented developmental stages of an aspiring ally and broke them down to further assess

personal factors associated with each stage. The three stages included "Aspiring Ally for Self-Interest," "Aspiring Ally for Altruism," and "Ally for Social Justice" (Edwards, 2006). The conversations among staff members at the AISC began to focus on using the article as a foundational piece in programming to attempt to promote a more supportive campus environment for Native students, and it seemed that some components of the model could be tailored, and added upon, to address the unique status of American Indian students at our institution. Through our conversations about what an aspiring ally looked like, I began to reflect on my own experiences as a non-Native aspiring to be an ally for and with Native populations, and could see examples of Edwards's model in my own development. I then wanted to show developmental examples of the model, to suggest considerations when working with Native student populations.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to weave Keith Edwards's Ally Development Model into my own personal narrative as well as into the narrative of a Native staff member of the AISC (subsequently referred to as "Anna" — not her actual name), to explore considerations of ways in which this model might be adapted to benefit non-Native student affairs professionals working with Native students in higher education. To best show developmental examples, autoethnography and investigator triangulation were the methods implemented. Autoethnography is a qualitative research method that utilizes the autobiographic materials of the researcher as the primary data (Ellis, 2004). Investigator triangulation is a qualitative research method that helps make research less biased, and more valid, by providing insight regarding the same phenomenon through an alternative lens (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000).

The organization of this paper first introduces Keith Edwards's (2006) ally identity development model. Next, certain relevant historical and current events that impact Native people and tribes in South Dakota will be presented. This section's objectives are to provide the reader with a sense of relevancy and urgency on this topic, as well as give a background for the considerations added. The third section consists of parts of Edwards's (2006) ally development model table to which have been added considerations based on extensive reading, experience, and personal reflections regarding suggestions for those working with Native student populations in South Dakota. The objective of this section is to give the reader personal examples of my own growth, while supplementing them with narrative from a Native perspective, and adding questions/reflections that can be used to move forward. These personal examples are shared with the intent of modeling learning from mistakes, acknowledging the inevitability of cross-cultural errors and misinterpretations. Finally, the paper concludes with discussion of the implications of the additions proposed to Edwards's model. Voices of Native professionals in higher education offer suggestions regarding what allies can do on university campuses to make the environment more welcoming and conducive to Native student success.

This brief introduction has given some background regarding the purpose of this paper, and the intention behind writing it. The literature review will supplement the reader with further information about the aspiring ally identity model, and illustrate the urgency for the exploration of ways non-Native student affairs professionals can more effectively support Native students by better understanding historical and contemporary contexts.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

2.1 The Theoretical Framework

Keith E. Edwards published an article in 2006 titled "Aspiring Social Justice Ally Identity Development: A Conceptual Model." This model was inspired through reflection on his own White male privilege and his observations of sexism against women, which motivated him to investigate "isms" and advocacy (Edwards, 2016). Throughout the article, Edwards leads those aspiring to be allies, or student affairs professionals working to develop social justice allies, through various attitudes and behaviors associated with differing specified levels of ally identities. This detailed a way to help explain why some allies are "effective, consistent and sustainable where others are not…" (Edwards, 2006, p. 39). Edwards argued that people who are a part of the dominant society would do well to acknowledge and work against their position because they "may suffer a loss of authenticity and humanity as a result of their unearned privilege and dominant position in society" (p. 43). Thus, Edwards emphasized that a crucial part in becoming a sustainable ally is to become a person who is essentially working to become free from the pressure and guilt of unearned privilege in order to prevent the perpetuation of oppressions. Edwards's ally identity development table illustrates the stages someone who is aspiring to be an ally might experience, and shows the three identities in columns combined with rows delineating developmental characteristics. For instance, an ally in the "Altruism" identity may view the "Victims of Oppression" as the target group themselves, whereas an ally moving into the "Social Justice" column would view everyone as oppressed, though in different ways and unequally (Edwards, 2006; see Table 1.).

For example, a straight, White, cisgender male who is moving through the "Aspiring Ally for Self-Interest" identity may be motivated to call himself an ally for transgendered people because he recently found out his nephew is transgender. He is operating from a standpoint of helping those he loves and cares about; however, his actions may not be consistent or sustainable when he is not around his nephew. If this same White male continued to be active and interested in the oppression transgender people experience, he may continue to find causes to be a part of, or even read literature about this population's experiences. Eventually he may move towards the "Aspiring Ally for Altruism" identity, and begin to feel motivated to be an ally, not only for his nephew, but for the whole transgendered population. His motivation might come from gathering more information about injustices the group experiences, and the desire to help them. This man at this point would appear to be working *for* transgendered people, implying his view of the group is paternalistic, and he might feel dependent on acceptance from the target group. This identity is not sustainable because he may see criticisms and critiques from the target group as a setback, and could easily become frustrated and abandon his efforts. Let us say this same male continues educating himself about his own identity, and learns that his privilege is unearned and has kept him from connecting to the population he sees as oppressed or marginalized. He begins to recognize that other people are also harmed by privilege because of this, and he begins to actively work against it, and connect with privileged others to empower awareness. This transition could be working closer to becoming an "Ally for Social Justice" (Edwards, 2006).

	Aspiring Ally for Self-Interest	Aspiring Ally for Altruism	Ally for Social Justice
Motivation	Selfish—for the people I know and care about	Other—I do this for them	Combined Selfishness—I do this for us
Ally to . . .	Ally to a person	Ally to target group	Ally to an issue
Relationship with Members of Oppressed Groups	Working *over* members of the target group	Working *for* members of the target group	Working *with* members of the target group
Victims of Oppression	Individuals with personal connection are or could be victims—my daughter, my sister, my friend	They are victims	All of us are victims—although victimized in different ways an unequally
Focus of Problem	Individuals—overt perpetrators	Others from the agent group	System
View of Justice	These incidents of hate are exceptions to the system of justice	We need justice for them	We need justice for all
Spiritual or Moral Foundation	I may be simply following doctrine or seeking spiritual self-preservation	I believe helping others is the right thing to do	I seek to connect and liberate us all on spiritual and moral grounds
Power	I'm powerful—protective	I empower them—they need my help	Empower us all
Source of Ongoing Motivation	Motivator (my daughter, my sister, my friend) must be present	• Dependent on acceptance/praise from the other • Easily derailed by critique by other • Often leads to burn out	Sustainable passion—for them, for me, for us, for the future
Mistakes	I don't make mistakes—I'm a good person, and perpetrators are just bad people	Has difficulty admitting mistakes to self or other—struggles with critique or exploring own issues—highly defensive when confronted with own behavior	Seeks critique as gifts and admits mistakes as part of doing the work and a step towards ones own liberation—has accepted own *isms* and seeks help in uncovering them
Relationship to the System	Not interested in the system—just stopping the bad people	Aims to be an exception from the system, yet ultimately perpetuates the system	Seeks to escape, impede, amend, redefine, and destroy the system
Focus of the Work	Perpetrators	Other members of the dominant group	My people—doesn't separate self from other agents
Privilege	Doesn't see privilege—wants to maintain status quo	Feels guilty about privilege and tries to distance self from privilege	Sees illumination of privilege as liberating and consciously uses unearned privilege against itself

Table 1. Table of Edwards's Ally Identity Development model (2006). This figure shows the development between the three differing ally identities.

One can see in Edwards's model (2006) that "Ally for Social Justice" seems to be the goal, as those in this category are no longer aspiring. Nancy J. Evans and Vernon Wall spoke to this ultimate stage of ally development as being one of enlightenment in their book *Beyond Tolerance: Gays, Lesbians, and Bisexuals on Campus* (1991). They stressed that the moral developmental stage of a student influences his or her motivation to be an ally, and encouraged higher education professionals to provide opportunities for students to develop morally (Evans & Wall, 1991). Another article written about ally development stressed "racial justice," and studied experiences of White students before and during college that contributed to their ally development (Reason et al., 2005). Another study was done on a group of White women who were a part of a group called "White Women Against Racism." This study examined how members of this group were attempting to combat White privilege in order to be effective allies for women of color. They seemed to set up an environment similar to what Edwards (2006) would recommend—one that welcomes constructive criticism, holds members mutually accountable, and does not place the burden of knowledge on the target group (Case, 2012). A racial identity development model by Janet E. Helms (1992) shows how White people can work to abandon racism and develop a healthy, non-racist identity. This model should be considered for those who want to develop an ally identity towards social justice due to its helpful stages outlining a White person's recognition and redefinition of whiteness and unearned privelege (Helms, 1992).

Although these researchers discussed how student affairs professionals could better provide environments conducive to White ally identity development, they did not address the unique characteristics and concerns of Native student populations. The broad

ally development guide that Edwards (2006) provided allowed me to see my own experiences through examples of each identity, and I soon discovered that knowing historical events involving Native and non-Native peoples was a critical starting point in developing a well-rounded ally identity specific to working with Native student populations.

2.2 Historical Context

Historically, American Indians have persevered despite great atrocities caused by European contact. Unfortunately, this history is disregarded in most public schools throughout the United States, creating a lack of general knowledge about the unique political status, attempted extermination, forced assimilation, and genocide that disrespects the numerous Native peoples and cultures throughout North America. Craig Howe, a Lakota scholar and the Director of the Center for American Indian Research and Native Studies (CAIRNS) emphasizes the importance of self-education and has worked to provide numerous educational resources that "acknowledge and incorporate tribal perspectives" (Studies, 2012). My time and conversations with him as an intern, and my work as a graduate assistant at my university's American Indian Student Center, humbled and pushed me to realize that all historical happenings can be connected to current events and experiences Native students in higher education, and their families, may have.

To further understand how American Indians differ from other cultural, ethnic, minority, or racial groups, one must understand that the United States negotiated hundreds of treaties with American Indian tribes, beginning in 1778, and ending in 1868. By choosing to sign treaties, the United States recognized tribes as autonomous, *sovereign* nations, each with its own system of government that was established before

the arrival of Europeans (Studies, 2012). *Sovereignty* is defined as: "freedom from external control: autonomy" (Merriam-Webster, 2016).

In 1803, the French sold the Louisiana Territory to the United States, which motivated American political leaders to further expand territory to the West. This plan gave American Indians who lived in what is now South Dakota two choices: resisting, risking extermination; or assimilating. Europeans Americans consistently underestimated the Native resistance to dispossession of land and assimilation, and began to present treaties (sometimes by force) to remove them from their land (Ostler, 2004). In 1868, the last treaty was signed and ratified, and proclaimed by President Andrew Johnson in 1869. This treaty, referred to as the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty, established the "Great Sioux Reservation," and included all the land west of the Missouri River in what is now South Dakota (Studies, 2012). Over time, as agriculture expanded (farming and ranching) and mineral and other resources were found on this land, the area "reserved" for Indians was greatly reduced, forcing tribes into separated regions, which resemble the nine reservations currently in South Dakota (Ostler, 2004). For a visual representation of the reduced land see Figure 1 and Figure 2.

Learning the entire history regarding American Indian and European American interaction and conflict is important. However, in this context, a few examples will serve as illustrations of how historical events and conditions continue to influence Native students in higher education today.

Figure 1 is a map showing the expanse of land once belonging to the "Oceti Sakowin," or Dakota, Lakota and Nakota peoples of the Northern Plains (Studies, 2012, p. 17).

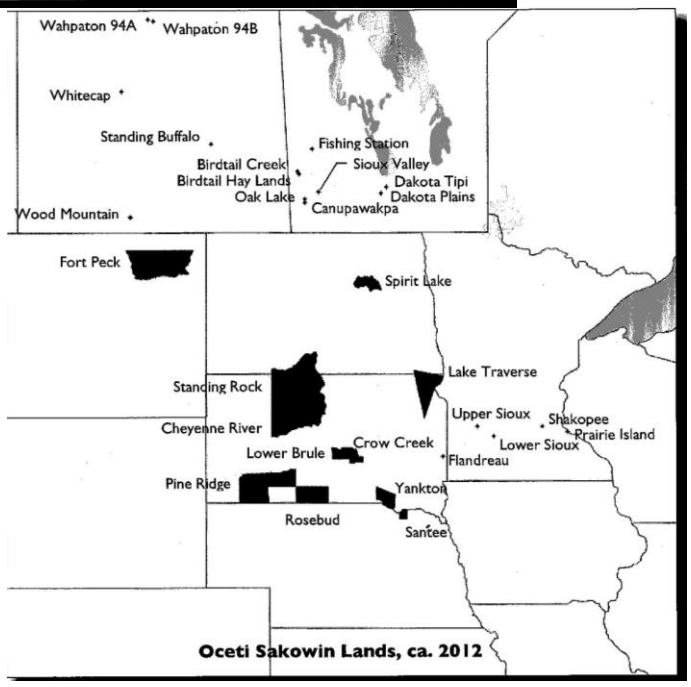

Figure 2 shows the reduced land and reservations where the "Oceti Sakowin" now live (Studies, 2012, p. 18).

Boarding School Era: 1860-1978

The Boarding School Era began after many American Indian tribes were forced into reservations. Due to cultural differences in child-rearing practices, Native families were viewed as incapable of raising and teaching their own children (Yellow Horse Brave Heart & Debruyn, 1998). Further, taking children away from reservations was an intentional effort to break up Native communities and families (Ostler, 2004). Oftentimes, children were removed from their homes by force, and suffered physical, sexual, and emotional abuse while at boarding schools. Richard Henry Pratt was the man who secured funding for the first federal boarding school in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and coined "Kill the Indian…save the man" (Ostler, 2004, p. 151). This statement laid the foundation for what numerous Native peoples were forced to endure. Many Indian children were punished if they were seen displaying any part of their cultural identity, including their given names, language, and spiritual practices. Students were forced to learn English, and sit in classrooms that incorporated a Western-education environment that reinforced speaking up and individualism. This era changed the lives of numerous Native families, and is not confined to the distant past. In fact, it is likely that Native students who choose to pursue higher education may have relatives who attended the boarding schools. Boarding schools for Native children and youth, while more humane and culturally sensitive than in the past, remain in operation today. It is essential that student affairs professionals know this history and take the time to reflect on what it might mean for Native students who choose to pursue their education at a Western-based university (as opposed to a tribal college) to acknowledge and be sensitive to possible historical echoes that may negatively influence student experience (Trafzer, Keller, & Sisquoc, 2006).

Assimilation Policies

Along with boarding schools, there were other attempts by non-Natives to force the cultural assimilation of Native people, such as the 1887 Dawes Allotment Act, the 1924 Indian Citizenship Act, and the 1950 Voluntary Relocation Program (Yellow Horse Brave Heart & Debruyn, 1998). The 1887 Dawes Allotment Act greatly reduced tribal land by dividing it into allotments for Native families to live on, while opening the remaining land for settlement; today, this creates numerous jurisdictional conflicts (Ostler, 2004). Citizenship was granted to Native people in 1924 as another way to attempt assimilation; however, due to the sovereign status of Native tribes, this Act unintentionally created dual citizenship for all American Indians born within the territorial borders of the United States (Deloria & Lytle, 1984). In a further effort to eliminate the federal responsibility to American Indians, the 1950 Relocation Program physically relocated many American Indians into urban areas, purportedly to find employment that was said to be readily available. Even though this policy exposed American Indians to hostility and racism, it also created new pan-tribal communities (Kidwell & Velie, 2006). These new communities ultimately established a new American Indian identity, and those who grew up in urban areas away from their tribal communities are now often referred to as "Urban Indians" (Lucero, 2010). Not until the 1970s did American Indians gain stronger rights of self-determination, which allowed them to legally decide what was best for their communities (Ostler, 2004). Out of this, American Indian people were given legal permission through the 1978 American Indian Religious Freedom Act to engage in their constitutional right of safely practicing their

traditional spiritualties, a right previously denied them by the U.S. government, which had made such practices illegal (Fund, 1979).

These examples were clear efforts to force American Indian populations into the dominant, Western way of life, attempting to destroy what remained of tribal cultures. These laws and social phenomena may seem as if they belong to the past, but in fact impact Native families, communities, and college students today. Deficiencies in education, misinformation and blatant disregard surrounding Native peoples and history perpetuate micro and macroaggressions, racism, and a continued lack of implementing culturally appropriate practices in numerous higher education institutions (Flynn, Olson, & Yellig, 2014; Huffman et al., 1986; McKinley & Brayboy, 2005; Shotton et al., 2013; Yellow Horse Brave Heart & Debruyn, 1998). Further reading and research is strongly encouraged and resources can be found in the references section of this paper.

2.3 Contemporary Context:

Dakota Access Pipeline

The aforementioned history continues to play out in contemporary American society. As I write this paper, Native communities are involved in a struggle for social justice around water and land rights in North Dakota. Members of over 200 tribes are gathered as "water protectors" along the path of a proposed oil pipeline. If constructed, this 1,170 mile, $3.7 billion pipeline would cross just north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation that straddles the South Dakota and North Dakota border, endangering the drinking water of every person south of the construction (Healy, 2016). Members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (SRST) first began protesting the construction in April, 2016 when youth from SRST ran 500 miles from Cannonball, North Dakota, to Washington,

D.C., to deliver a petition to stop the pipeline (Goldtooth, 2016). Since then, a spirit camp has been established in Cannonball, where several tribally-affiliated and non-Native people are gathered in peaceful protest. Construction of the pipeline was asked to be temporarily halted by the U.S. government after a federal court denied the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's request for an injunction; however, construction has continued (Healy, 2016). In fact, on September 3rd, 2016, the day after the SRST filed papers pinpointing sacred sites and burial grounds, Dakota Access employees dug up a two-mile piece of land, destroying the sites. Water protectors who were attempting to stop the construction were attacked with pepper spray and dogs (Today, 2016). On October 22nd, 2016, 127 protestors were arrested "on suspicion for criminal trespassing on private property" (Medina, 2016). Connecting the historical facts about treaties and land rights that were made between the U.S. government and Native tribes, it is indeed disturbing to realize that people who inhabited the land originally are being arrested by descendants of those who first trespassed.

Rapid City Rush Hockey Game Incident

In 2015, a group of students from a school located in the Pine Ridge Reservation were driven to a hockey game in Rapid City to honor them for their grades and good behavior. The group of students sat below a private box owned by a beer company, whose occupiers were later investigated for harassing the group of students (Giago, 2015). A 41-year-old White man was accused of spilling beer and uttering "racially charged and confrontational words within the hearing of minor(s) and adult(s)," and was charged with disorderly conduct a month later (Staff, 2015). The incident exacerbated existing tensions between Native and non-Native people in South Dakota, and the

charges against the accused man were later dropped due to a lack of proof that he "intentionally, knowingly or recklessly" spilled beer on the students (Stasiowski, 2015). Many saw this outcome as reinforcing White privilege and making it acceptable to treat Native children with gross disrespect in public (Giago, 2015).

These two examples are only a few of the numerous reoccurring incidents which perpetuate oppression through violating Native people's rights, trust, culture, and history. There are numerous news articles being written about current social justice issues surrounding Native peoples in South Dakota, each with their own bias. Taking time to be knowledgeable of the current events and how they perpetuate oppression will contribute greatly to the journey of developing a strong ally identity. A few sources that incorporate Native perspectives include: *Indian Country Today, Lakota Country Times, Lakota Journal,* and *Native American Times* (Web, 2016).

This section attempted to provide the reader with a brief introduction to the perpetuation of oppression against Native populations in South Dakota. Since the state of South Dakota's demographics represent 10.3% Dakota, Lakota, and Nakota peoples, it is highly likely that student affairs professionals will work with Native students (Census, 2016). Self-education about historical and contemporary life of American Indian people will provide rich and necessary context to an aspiring ally's identity development. The next section describes the methodology of this paper's qualitative study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Since the alterations made to the Edwards' (2006) model are coming through examples of my own development, I am employing autoethnography as a form of qualitative research to give the reader a more personal perspective on how this identity development model has been woven into my experiences, helping me gain insight into the work as a non-Native in an American Indian student center. Authoethnography is defined as: "an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze personal experience in order to understand cultural experience" (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011, p. 273).

Investigator triangulation has also been used to help deepen the use of the model by providing more than one voice, whose cultural lens offers one Native perspective to the autoethnographical considerations. Triangulation techniques in this context were used to "…attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint…" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000, p. 112). Direct quotations can be found after the autoethnographical descriptions; however, due to the cultural value of humility, Dakota/Lakota/Nakota people are often raised to be modest, and not speak independently of the group, and so it is important not to assume this Native perspective holds true for other Native perspectives (Eastman-Canku, 2010).

3.2 Participants

The participants in this study included a Native higher education professional staff member of the AISC, and myself. To respect the wishes of the Native higher

education professional to remain anonymous, the pseudonym “Anna” will be used. I am a White female in my mid-twenties who grew up in Western South Dakota, and obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree from a private liberal arts university, and am completing a Master of Science degree at a public university. Both universities I attended were predominantly White, and I grew up in a predominantly White town. My father sells tipi poles, and helped set up tipis at different events in the area, and my experiences with Native populations while growing up came from brief interactions during times my father would take tipi poles to nearby reservations. My interest grew immensely after taking an undergraduate history course focused on Lakota/Nakota/Dakota tribes in South Dakota, and I eventually found a master’s program that would allow me to have an assistantship in an American Indian center, where I believe awareness of my identity was supported to grow the most.

The next section provides autoethnographical examples of my own identity development which are supplemented with reflections from Anna. After both reflections, considerations to the model for student affairs professionals are written. Suggestions from Native professionals and allies in higher education are included, as well as application of how these suggestions could be implemented on a college campus.

Chapter 4: Findings and Interpretations

4.1 Results

The model presented by Edwards (2006) shows a table representing three aspiring ally identities: (a) *Aspiring Ally for Self-Interest*, (b) *Aspiring Ally for Altruism*, and (c) *Ally for Social Justice*. Each identity shows differing explanations of multiple behaviors and viewpoints experienced on an aspiring ally's journey, with the goal of finding oneself in the *Ally for Social Justice* category. The behaviors and viewpoints include: "Motivation," "Focus of the Work," "Privilege," and "Spiritual or Moral Foundation," to name a few (p. 47; see Table 1.). Each of these are described differently with each aspiring ally identity to show why some aspiring allies seem to be consistent and sustainable, while others are not. These considerations have not been written throughout the whole model, but rather to those sections I have had a personal experience with to show a connection to the theory (see Appendix A).

Motivation:

Aspiring Ally for Self-Interest: "Selfish—for the people I know and care about."

Many well-meaning student affairs professionals who aspire to become allies initially do so out of a narrow perspective. When they meet and get to know a particular person, and learn about that person's experience with prejudice and racism, they may be motivated to become an ally. However, at this stage, they may not think broadly about others who might be impacted, similarly or dissimilarly, by interpersonal and institutional discrimination. They may not consider intersectionality (intersecting identities contributing to an individual's development) and in which campus contexts certain

students may encounter challenges (Edwards, 2006; Patton, Renn, Guido, Quaye, & Forney, 2016).

My Reflection

My own experience that speaks to this is my rough and distant connection to families living in the reservations surrounding the community in western South Dakota where I grew up, and our infrequent meetings that came about through tipi transactions. My father sells tipi poles, and we sometimes delivered them to Native communities. These experiences were positive for me, and I enjoyed these meetings; however, I did not fully grasp what it might mean to Native people that a White man was selling tipi poles *to* Native people. I know my father, and I know his intentions were good, and so I felt this was a good thing. So why not bring this point up to Native people I met? One of the first days of graduate school, the staff at the American Indian Student Center asked why I was interested in working with Native students. I began by stating that my father makes tipis, and saw smiles quickly disappear from faces, bodies shift in their seats, and felt a general sense of dismissal. Looking back, I can now see how trying to use my father's tipi business as a connecting point initially disconnected us. Even though I had taken an undergraduate course in Lakota/Nakota/Dakota history, I was not aware of how odd or even inappropriate it would be to Native people to have a non-Native selling tipi poles. I was simply ignorant.

Anna's Reflection

I asked Cora why her interest in working with Native people because a brief answer can tell you a lot about where a person's interest lies and what they are there for. I wasn't sure how to respond to Cora's story about her father

making tipi poles so I didn't say anything in response to what she shared. In that moment, I wasn't sure how what she was sharing would influence the work she had committed to as the Graduate Assistant.

I am not sure that she had a Native person in her life that she was advocating on behalf of. I had a better understanding after she shared the stories about what she learned about Native history in her college coursework and perhaps the Native students and the Center environment became her motivator. As I thought about how to work with Cora, I questioned whether she ever had to think about her privilege and could she acknowledge it in a way that would help her through the experience of working with Native people.

Considerations for Student Affairs Professionals

My attempt to connect came through ignorant personal experiences that were culturally inappropriate to American Indian populations, which caused the intention to be lost. In fact, it distanced and created feelings of doubt and uncertainty for both of us. Some other ways non-Native people may try to connect include: stating they have an adopted Native child; volunteering on a reservation every summer; sharing that they have a Native friend or took an American Indian studies course, etc. Non-Native student affairs professionals may find themselves trying to connect with American Indian students, faculty and/or staff by using similar statements. Reflective questions student affairs professionals can use to help address a possibly inappropriate statement include: What is my intention? Am I trying to make a connection? If so, who is the connection for? How would I feel if I were hearing this statement? Should I listen before trying to use this experience as a connecting piece? Taking a moment to actively hear from others

may be just enough time to adjust a statement that may disconnect a student affairs professional from American Indian populations in a university setting.

Ally for Social Justice: "Combined Selfishness—I do this for us."

In this stage, the aspiring ally sees both the oppressed and the oppressor as benefiting from social justice work, and is seen to have greater sustainability in motivation. Student affairs professionals in this stage are often involved with collaborations and partnerships that work to address and end oppression, and may view partnerships as a way to create an environment that addresses the greater whole (Edwards, 2006).

My Reflection

I do not believe I can truly grasp what it means to do work for future generations, as I view American culture as working in the present to further *individual* futures, whereas many Native communities emphasize the success of the group as a whole, and appreciate collaborative work (Matsumoto, 2001; McKinley & Brayboy, 2005). An aspiring ally for social justice must understand the historical weight carried in the present work being done for future generations (McKinley & Brayboy, 2005). My experiences with hearing about how current Native higher education professionals fill their work with acknowledgment of the sacrifices that came before them created a whole new way of viewing my own work. Before I heard this, I viewed my work as in the present, for the current students at the university. Now I try to think about how to incorporate collaborative work that will outlast my time. For example, a program we have been working with at the Center involves a collaboration with another academic department, and to build this program we have looked to existing programs developed by Native

communities, for Native communities. We then connected the program with student development models focused on the Native student experience, to establish a foundational model that others can reference and replicate. I will never claim to know what it must truly mean to be able to continue doing work that will impact future generations, but I have a better grasp of why an aspiring ally for social justice must know the cultural meaning of *us* in order to truly attempt work involving Native student populations.

Anna's Reflection

I immediately began to question why she wanted to work at the AISC and with Native people, specifically our Native students, and how she would be received by the campus tribal community. Questions I thought of included: Would the students accept her? Does she know anything about our tribal communities? What was her real motivation? Was she there because she wanted something from us? Cora was privy (directly and indirectly) to conversations that were taking place between Native students and Native staff; she was hearing and experiencing our frustrations first hand. What began as her personal interest in working at the Center for professional experience, quickly became personal. As she formed working relationships with the staff and students she became part of the conversations and was beginning to understand the pressing need for non-Native allies to move our work forward on our campus. She was confronted with cultural differences that would ultimately change the way she approached her work.

Considerations for Student Affairs Professionals

As a non-Native student affairs professional coming into a Native community, being aware of what each society emphasizes is paramount in shaping the motivation behind actions. For example, being a part of the European-American population influenced my student affairs work from a present- and individually-oriented perspective; whereas understanding the historical weight and cultural reference altered my viewpoint and motivated me to think about the future of the group. Student affairs professionals can deepen and sustain programming by immersing themselves in a culturally different milieu.

Focus of Problem:

Ally for Social Justice: "System."

An aspiring ally for social justice might consider the focus of the problem as the system of oppression. Allies for social justice recognize that members of the dominant society are also harmed by the system of oppression, though can distinguish it is not comparable to the minority groups most affected. Student affairs professionals in this stage may seek collaboration with other groups on campus as a way to begin to accept realities of privilege, and attempt to dismantle oppressive systems (Edwards, 2006).

My Reflection

"Institutionalized racism denotes those patterns, procedures, practices, and policies which operate within social institutions so as to consistently penalize, disadvantage, and exploit individuals who are members of nonwhite racial/ethnic groups" (Better, 2008, p. 11). Since my public school education was inadequate and inaccurate with regard to American Indians, institutionalized racism through public education is one of the key systems I have come to realize is specifically oppressive. In my high school

history class, we learned the non-Native view of the American Indian Movement. We were shown a news clip of Native men taking over the town's courthouse. Not until I was in college did I learn the "takeover" was in protest over the wrongful murder of a Native man by a White man (AP, 1984). This is just one example of how my public education deprived me of knowing the whole truth regarding historical and current events. Unfortunately, since the education system did not prepare my teacher as an educator and he was either part of an uninformed cycle of depravity, or chose not to question institutionalized racism, he perpetuated the system of oppression to a class of roughly twenty-five students that day. I am unaware of how many classes came before and after me who were given the same material; thus, a powerful choice has significant impact.

Anna's Reflection

What Cora described is the typical educational experience in our country. Students are taught the history from the Western lens. I felt it was my responsibility as her supervisor to provide her with the resources to understand the creation of the system. I needed her to think about how the government shaped the lives of American Indians in this country. I gave her reading materials and had on-going discussions with her to provide the framework to understand how the creation of federal policies continues to impact the contemporary Native experience. Our work involves dissecting the framework and asking how is the system designed, who was it designed for, and how can we begin working to change the system in ways that will allow our voices to be heard and to begin the conversations of collaboration?

Considerations for Student Affairs Professionals

Since South Dakota has the fourth largest population of American Indians in the country, addressing institutionalized racism in the education system is urgent. As a student affairs professionals in South Dakota, we will encounter those who have experienced this type of oppression. Recognizing what it looks like is essential to addressing, and then attempting to change oppressive practices, actions, and policies. Student affairs professionals must take time to understand how oppression is continued through the system, and then work to find culturally appropriate resources written from Native perspectives to implement in programming or classes.

Spiritual or Moral Foundation:

Aspiring Ally for Altruism: "I believe helping others is the right thing to do."

An aspiring ally in this stage has realized that social justice work is simply the right thing to do; however, this ally may be working *for* rather than *with* others in his or her efforts. Those in this stage may view their role as a helper or savior to the victims of oppression, and may unknowingly reinforce a personal sense of privilege and power (Edwards, 2006).

My Reflection

My first year in high school, our church group took a trip to the Pine Ridge reservation. We were briefed before going that we would haul firewood, and have a meal with a group of Lakotas from a church there. At that point in my life, I truly believed I was helping others in need because it was the right thing to do, and felt proud of myself for taking time out of my day. I still relate to this stage because I believe that most people's intentions are basically good, but we do not often reflect upon how our actions

might be perceived or experienced. Service-learning is something that students in higher education are encouraged to participate in, and scenarios similar to mission trips are likely. Questions that might assist student affairs professionals when considering service-learning activities include: What is the purpose of this mission/service trip? Do I know anything about the population we will be working with? How might my identity be different from others, and how might this affect our interactions? Am I aware of how previous groups of people with my same identity have interacted with the target group? Incorporating a sense of humility, acknowledgment of privilege, and self-reflection are necessary to develop through an all too common paternalistic view of service (Cress, Collier, & Reitenaur, 2013; McIntosh, 1988).

Anna's Reflection

When you come across an individual who identifies as an aspiring ally for altruism it usually means they are approaching the work at the surface level. They took a class that sparked their interest, they read a book, or they have a friend who has been affected by "isms." They haven't really done the work to research the history and culture, they approach you because they need something from you, or they won't really commit long-term to the cause because they don't really see past the affect it has on their friend (who initially sparked their ally work). Our faith in humanity is restored through acts of kindness and helping one another. What can easily get lost in translation, especially in service learning work, is if there is a lack of meaningful interaction between the helpers and those receiving the help. My work at the Center has provided me the opportunity to see

that sometimes allies focus more on the outcome or act of service than they do on the process and self-reflection piece of the experience.

Considerations for Student Affairs Professionals

A higher education aspiring ally in this stage may be viewed by Native populations as not actually being helpful, but wanting something from them. A non-Native student affairs professional view may approach work as self-sacrificing, and selfless—motivations that are not sustaining, are usually selfish, and create further distance between the aspiring ally and the target group. Some things I ask myself when I feel a bout of moral superiority washing over me: Why do I want to help? Have I consulted with someone to ask what I can do? Am I assuming they need something *I* can give *them*? Taking time to reflect on how morals and spirituality can influence, and even distance, a student affairs professional's work with American Indian populations is essential to continue development of an effective and sustainable ally identity.

Source of Ongoing Motivation:

Aspiring Ally for Altruism: "Dependent on acceptance/praise from the other, easily derailed by critique by other, often leads to burnout."

Since aspiring allies in this stage distance their social status from the target group they view as oppressed, they tend to see their actions as altruistic and selfless. Thus, their motivation is often driven by the need for praise from the target group. Since motivation in this stage is dependent on others, burnout is common, and aspiring allies' work may not be sustainable (Edwards, 2006).

My Reflection

Starting as an administrative graduate assistant in an American Indian Student Center, I could feel that my programming was driven by a need for validation and acceptance from the students I was serving. A moment came when I realized I was putting more energy into these programs than the students, and this reshaped how I viewed what I was doing. I can clearly see myself in this stage, and the exhaustion that followed each unsuccessful program due to my subconscious need for acceptance. I still struggle with this, as I am prideful and believe my ideas to be good ones; however, now that I know my source of motivation can sometimes be driven by the need for approval, I can take a moment to check myself and alter my approach.

Anna's Reflection

I tried to explain (cultural) differences to Cora as the opportunities were presented because I knew she didn't grow up around Native people. I also asked her questions about her experience because I wanted to make sure she was learning while she worked at the Center. I shared reading materials for her to increase her knowledge and I asked her questions, too. I was curious to hear what her experience was like from her perspective. Asking her questions allowed me to tailor what information I shared with her, what I needed to further explain, or how I could present information to her in a way that wouldn't come across as harsh or shaming. In our initial conversation, she shared that she was interested in working at a tribal college and I wanted to help her acquire the tools (knowledge) she would need to make a smooth transition. Her motivation came from acceptance. She worked so hard at creating programming based on the ideas shared with her and when students didn't respond in the way she expected

(large audiences) she took it personally. It wasn't personal, per se, but during her first month of working at the Center she hadn't yet realized how complicated the Native student experience could be.

Considerations for Student Affairs Professionals

Motivation for an aspiring ally in higher education may be more sustainable when it includes regular consultation with the target group. For American Indians, consultation and continued self-education reaffirms and acknowledges tribal self-determination, or the right for Native populations to decide what is best for Native people (Shotton et al., 2013). Student affairs professionals can educate themselves about self-determination, and show respect by consulting with American Indians when working on developing programming. Here are some questions I have thought about in the moments when I feel the need for approval: Is this something I have consulted with the target group (American Indians) about? If not, am I remembering to acknowledge self-determination? Am I viewing a "successful" program through a Western lens (the more students there, the more successful)? Have I conducted a needs assessment to gather information? How can student development theories inform my work? What are my objectives with this program? Is this a program I see being sustained after I'm gone? Am I doing this for the students, or myself? These may help to remind an aspiring ally of the need for ongoing motivation, tribal self-determination, and the resources available for self-education.

Ally for Social Justice: "Sustainable Passion—for them, for me, for us, for the future."

An ally in this stage may have a more holistic source of passion. Those in this stage may realize how limiting it can be to seek oppression-ending strategies in isolation,

and actively seek to develop systems that hold them accountable without placing a burden on the oppressed. Like an ally in this stage's reason for motivation, ongoing motivation tends to be driven by a passion that is all-encompassing, creating sustainability (Edwards, 2006).

My Reflection

Through my work as a graduate assistant at the institution's American Indian Student Center, I have become increasingly aware of other social justice issues. For example, due to the esteemed and respectful way Native people in South Dakota view women in their cultures, I am now more aware of gender inequalities in our society, and how they affect me and others. This reminder motivates me, but I also tend to struggle with not overloading my view with negativity. I continue to work on balancing how to notice concurrent social justice issues, while also maintaining a sense of hope that there can be change. When I find myself overwhelmed and pessimistic, I check in on my reasons for motivation. I recognize how self-absorbed I am being and realize there are few people I know who are *not* doing something that involves social justice work.

Anna's Reflection

> *Our goals at the Center are to identify and establish campus partnerships and to create sustainable programming. We are a small staff, like most Native Centers on college campuses, so we are constantly shifting our priorities and re-evaluating our initiatives to meet the needs of our students. It is important to build a solid foundation to create change. When you are introduced to social justice issues it is easy to become overwhelmed and hard to stay focused. It is so important to take care of yourself, mentally, spiritually, physically, and*

emotionally, in order to stay balanced and to continue looking at the big picture. It's no longer about you, it becomes bigger than you. It's about those who are yet to come. Cora's work took on a whole new depth because of the meaningful conversations with the staff and students and as a result of the friendships that were created.

Considerations for Student Affairs Professionals

When working with Native student populations, an aspiring ally may not know how to create an environment where he or she can actively seek meaning without placing the burden on the target group. It would be helpful for those working in a higher education setting to find others who have similar identities to encourage each other to learn more, hold each other accountable for actions driven by unearned privilege, and support one another's efforts. For example, it helps me to remember that everyone I work with at the American Indian Student Center is key in working to ensure the needs of Native students are attempting to be met; my graduate student peers are all working to strengthen their skills in serving all students in higher education; the faculty members in the graduate program tirelessly push themselves to deliver current and relevant material. These people are resourceful reminders that I am surrounded by those who support social justice, hold each other accountable, and are here to better their environment, which allows me to feel supported and sustained.

Mistakes:

Ally for Social Justice: "Seeks critique as gifts and admits mistakes as part of doing the work and a step towards one's own liberation-has accepted own isms and seeks help in uncovering them."

Aspiring allies who work towards this stage intentionally set up an environment in which to hold themselves accountable. Thus, critiques from others are accepted and appreciated as ways to liberate themselves from their own socialized oppression. Feedback is seen as a path towards greater consciousness of oppression (Edwards, 2006).

My Reflection

This stage, like many of the others, I struggle with daily. American society seems to value things like directness, pride, independence, and a "pick yourself up" mentality. The values of the society I grew up in directly interfere with my development in this stage. It has been hard for me to notice and admit mistakes. It was a big learning curve for me to become consciously aware of non-verbal communication and critiques, especially because directness is a valued communication style in the dominant society. Some of my early frustrations came from not feeling like I had enough feedback about the work I was doing, but I later realized that feedback was sometimes coming in the form of casual conversations, storytelling, and the presence (or absence) of students.

Anna's Reflection

I'm not sure that Cora ever told anyone about how she read our non-verbal responses during our initial conversation where she shared the story of her father making tipi poles. Instead she chose to remain quiet. I remember she seemed to be observing and not really offering her input or suggestions unless asked. She asked thoughtful questions so I knew she was processing what she was observing and hearing from our conversations and interactions within the space. I think it is important when working with people from different cultural backgrounds to observe cultural differences in order to determine how best to

approach your work. Approaching your work with respect will influence your experience. Cora may not have had a lot of experience around Native people, but she knew enough to respect everyone and practice active listening. I was thankful that she was very respectful in her interactions and didn't try to come in and take over or push her thoughts, ideas, or experiences onto our students or influence how the staff made decisions. She simply jumped in and contributed to the work. Whenever I shared a story, I made sure to explain what was offensive, what was respectful, and how things could have been approached differently. I approached my work with Cora in the same manner I do with others, I observe and I ask questions to understand her experience. If it appears she (or others) don't understand, I have to take a more direct approach, but the latter is culturally incongruent. I did ask Cora questions about her experience of working at the Center. I was curious to hear what it had been like from her perspective as the minority when she came from the majority perspective. What she shared with me allowed both of us to learn throughout our experience of working together.

Considerations for Student Affairs Professionals

I know I will continue to need work in this area, but some things I try to ask myself are: Am I taking, accepting, and working with the feedback I am getting? Am I admitting my mistakes, and learning from them? I also found it highly beneficial to learn more about the differences in high and low context communication styles as they are related to this stage. High context communication relies on the listener being aware of more than what is said; this style emphasizes non-verbal communications, and less-direct statements. Low context communication emphasizes directness, and verbal explanations

when something is left unclear. The majority of European Americans use low context communication, while many Native peoples use high context communication (Bennett, 1998). When working in a higher education area where communication may seem challenging and feedback is given in different ways, observing and learning about how to adjust and navigate can be extremely beneficial. Student affairs professionals can be more aware of student needs by understanding high and low context communication styles; more information can be found here: "Intercultural Communication: A Current Perspective, by Milton J. Bennett (1998); "Conflict Resolution Styles in Low-and-High-Context Cultures," by E.G. Chua & W.B. Gudykunst (1987); "Low- and high-context communication patterns: towards mapping cross-cultural encounters," by N. Korac-Kakabadse, A. Kouzmin, A. Korac-Kakabadse, and L. Savery (1994).

Privilege:

Ally for Social Justice: "Sees illumination of privilege as liberating and consciously uses unearned privilege against itself."

At this stage, allies for social justice may be able to view their own privilege as harmful to their humanity, and actively work to liberate themselves from it. Those in this stage may intentionally work to use personal unearned privilege against itself. Student affairs professionals who associate with this level may try to actively take responsibility for working with others who are a part of the dominant society to connect with and empower them to work on their own liberation from privilege (Edwards, 2006).

My Reflection

I once tried to communicate to someone I did not know who was reading in the conference room that our Center was closing. This person was confrontational, and

refused to leave the building, stating that she had been in the room after-hours before and was choosing to stay, despite my request. Her response made me immediately feel that she was talking down to me, and I began to ask myself, "It is because she thinks I am Native? Why was this person so defensive? Am I being too sensitive? Would she have responded in the same way if we were anywhere else on campus?" I felt blatantly disrespected and unheard. After that experience, I could not let go the question "Would she have responded that way if I was working somewhere else on campus?" This event caused me to realize that I rarely have to worry about someone responding in a way that makes me feel somehow unheard and inferior. This is a part of my unearned privilege as a White person that I tend to feel ashamed of. Although I am still partially blinded, and surprised when my privilege is brought to my attention, I am working on this stage to actively accept my unearned privilege and use it against the system of oppression. I believe part of my own journey is writing this paper; using my unearned privilege to reach others who may also be privileged, to empower them to work against it, and make their own changes to address the system of oppression.

Anna's Reflection

Privilege is an interesting concept; if you have never had to think about your privilege that is a privilege and when you are asked to think about it, it raises guilt. The challenge is raising awareness of (unearned) privilege in a non-threatening way, while sometimes simultaneously asking for help from the same people who are struggling with their guilt. When Cora shared her experience with me and talked about all of the questions that ran through her mind, it was a teachable moment to explain that is was an "ism" feels like. In this case, the

questioning of is what you are experiencing an act of racism? You can choose to not react out of guilt, you can react out of anger, or you can identify "tools" to confront the situation. No one benefits when a person with privilege never moves beyond feeling shame about it. We all benefit when privilege is acknowledged and used to make change. It is a process to come to terms with the experiences and responsibility of being an ally. The goal isn't to give up your privilege, but rather embrace it in order to use it to advocate and educate society.

Considerations for Student Affairs Professionals

As a White person, my unearned privilege played a role in the removal, forced assimilation, and genocide of a population I now aspire to work with as an ally in a higher education setting. Knowing the history and how it continues to play out in current events that impact Native students is a critical piece in acknowledging the continued effects of unearned White privilege. Student affairs professionals can work to assess what parts of their identity create unearned privilege to better understand how they may (usually unknowingly) perpetuate oppression by reading materials written from Native perspectives and working to shift their viewpoint with empathy whenever possible. From here, they can work to create a more inclusive environment in their area by being sensitive to words they use, how they tend to communicate with others, etc.

4.2 Discussion and Implications for Student Affairs Professionals

Role of Non-Native Allies to Native Students in PWIs

The historical atrocities perpetrated against Native people continue to have lasting effects, and with a small introduction to two contemporary events, it is apparent racial tensions continue to exist in South Dakota (Giago, 2015). Student affairs professionals

who take the time to understand this connection and actively work to better their respective campus environments are taking part in social justice work. One important aspect of this work is becoming aware of which voices are not being heard (e.g., which students are not recruited into leadership positions, which people are not in the hiring networks, etc.). The competencies that address social justice work are included in sections 2 and 4 of the *ACPA Statement of Ethical Principles & Standards* (2006), and ACPA/NASPA's *Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators* (2015). ACPA (2006) states that competence in multiculturalism is a "fundamental element of ethical practice" and student affairs professionals, as practitioners and citizens, have a responsibility to promote social justice by advocating for members of society (pp. 3-5). ACPA/NASPA (2015) address Social Justice and Inclusion (SJI) as a competency student affairs professionals should view as "…both a process and a goal that includes the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to create learning environments that foster equitable participation of all groups and seeks to address issues of oppression, privilege, and power" (ACPA/NASPA, 2015, p. 30). Thus, it is our responsibility as student affairs professionals to actively work to address social justice issues and promote sustainable allies within ourselves and the students we work with. Some issues surrounding Native populations are discussed below, and include: recruitment of students and faculty/staff; acting on the knowledge of tribes as sovereign nations; awareness of tribal diversity; integration of culturally appropriate practices into higher education.

Recruiting Native students from reservations to predominantly White institutions can echo a history of forced removal from Native homes to boarding schools. Student affairs professionals who work in an admissions department can educate themselves

about this potentially sensitive area, and make necessary adjustments before going into a reservation or tribal community or neighborhood. Each tribal community may have differing views and experiences with boarding schools, so careful self-education on this issue is crucial before attempting to recruit.

To accurately represent the population of South Dakota, many Native professionals in higher education believe finding a top Native scholar to recruit and work at that institution should be a primary commitment of each department. However, faculty and staff of color are underrepresented in higher education institutions, and are often unsupported due to barriers experienced in academia consisting of racial and ethnic bias (Sotello Viernes Turner, Myers, & and Creswell, 1999). Due to the limited representation of American Indian faculty/staff on college campuses, the expectations to represent all Native voices, support Native and other minority students, and develop new Native American-focused courses is a burden, and an unrealistic ask from institutions (Tippeconnic Fox, 2005). In fact, since American Indians/Alaska Natives make up roughly 10% of South Dakota's population, not only would it help support Native student success, proportional representation of Native faculty/staff within each of South Dakota's higher education institutions would accurately reflect South Dakota's demographics (Census, 2016; Shotton et al., 2013; Tippeconnic Fox, 2005). Student affairs professionals can advocate for the hiring and supportive infrastructure of Native faculty and staff by being aware of these statistics and using self-education to be sensitive to culturally appropriate practices when hiring from a Native community.

Due to the unique political status American Indians have with the U.S. government, they are citizens of sovereign nations (Studies, 2012). On predominantly

White college campuses, American Indians are often grouped into the minority or generic "students of color" category. The fact that the land once belonged to Native people may trigger reminders of forced removal, the Boarding School Era, and genocide. Because of this, it is critical to have a physical space to feel safe. Higher education professionals who recognize this can advocate for an American Indian student center apart from other multi-cultural offices to honor the status of tribal communities in their area, and to acknowledge whose land the university is built upon (Shotton et al., 2013).

Understanding where students are coming from personally, culturally, and geographically is important for higher education professionals who wish to effectively advocate on behalf of, and work with, Native students. There are currently 566 federally recognized tribes (Census FFF, 2016). Do not assume all students, even when they come from the same area/tribe, have the same experiences/identities. For example, a student may be enrolled in a tribe that is located in a rural area, but the student has grown up in a city. This student will most likely have vastly different experiences than a student from the same tribe who grew up in the reservation. An assumption that the two students are the same would be similar to saying a Norwegian who grew up in Norway is the same as a Norwegian who grew up in America. People are diverse, and individual experiences are vast; assume diversity and educate yourself (Shotton et al., 2013). Student affairs professionals who know this will also work to stay away from the statement "Native culture." This statement is ignorantly dangerous as it implies all American Indians fall under one monolithic culture, which can cause harmful generalizations, stereotypes, and disconnection from Native students, faculty, and staff. If South Dakota student affairs

professionals take time to learn about Dakotas, Nakotas, and Lakotas and where they are geographically located, it may lead to connection rather than ignorant disconnection.

By recognizing the above, practitioners can work to integrate culturally sensitive practices into their respective areas of responsibility (e.g., residence life, admissions, advising, etc.), which would help address the cultural discontinuity Native students may be experiencing (Shotton et al., 2013).

For example, at the American Indian Student Center, the graduate department supported my desire to do a counseling internship through the Center. Because of this, I was able to offer sage (a native-grown plant found in South Dakota used in Lakota/Dakota/Nakota spiritual practices) to Native students to smudge (the act of burning sage to use the smoke as purification) before our sessions together (Council, 2004). This shows how a department on campus integrated and supported a culturally sensitive practice. These examples are only a few ways through which student affairs professionals who are working toward becoming social justice allies with Native students can move forward. The suggestions presented next are from an additional resource that focuses specifically on Native student experiences, and is highly recommended for further education.

Suggestions from Native Professionals in Higher Education

A foundational message from the book, *Beyond the Asterisk: Understanding Native Students in Higher Education* (2013) is for "postsecondary institutions to develop a deeper understanding of tribal sovereignty, self-determination, nation building, and Indigenous knowledge systems to promote the success of Native students so they can serve their tribal communities" (Shotton et al., 2013, p. 17). To begin this process, the

authors offer a few key recommendations for those in student affairs, and administrators at all levels. These suggestions include:

- challenging one's self to look for the absence of Native representation;
- taking time to learn about the tribal groups surrounding the area of an institution;
- being knowledgeable and updated with institutional resources available to Native students;
- always assuming tribal diversity between Native students and communities;
- looking for possible negative imagery on campus that could degrade or perpetuate stereotypes of Native populations;
- assessing how the campus has or has not acted with situations pertaining to Native students/ tribal communities;
- working to increase Native American faculty/staff presence on campus;
- advocating for an individual space on campus for Native student centers.

Throughout this book, the authors encourage readers to consider the resources provided, and begin educating themselves about *why* these suggestions are being made and *how* they can be implemented. This statement, I believe, summarizes the suggestions offered: "Above all, it is important to be holistic in our support of students. Their well-being is more than retention and academics. We want our students, our future leaders, to be healthy mentally, spiritually, and physically; happy would be good, too" (p. 173).

4.3 Limitations and Conclusion

Limitations

Since this paper has implemented autoethnography to explore a theory, my personal experiences may be different from others, which may limit the reader's application. Qualitative research is not generalizable, and since most of my experiences have been with Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota peoples, examples given are limited to my knowledge and work with those populations. It should not be assumed that implementation of these considerations would be the same, or even similar, to other tribal peoples. Another limit is that considerations were not added to the entire model from Edwards's (2006) table, and so could be adjusted or analyzed even further.

Conclusion

Combining Edwards's (2006) model, and the suggestions of numerous Native authors working in higher education, it seems clear that an aspiring non-Native ally who wishes to work with Native students may need additional education and exposure to historical material to connect with current issues that impact numerous Native communities throughout the country. This can be seen through the results of autoethnographical examples and investigator triangulation which re-emphasize the importance of self-education, humility, and a holistic and sustaining view of social justice for American Indian student populations. Considerations to the model for non-Native student affairs professionals include:

- a historical and cultural understanding of *us;*
- focusing the problem on institutionalized racism in the education system;
- the implications of service/mission trips to reservations;
- a cultural understanding of current work for future generations;
- awareness of high context communication style critiques and feedback;

- implications of White privilege's contribution to removal, forced assimilation, and genocide of Native peoples.

Student affairs professionals who work to provide themselves with further education about historical and contemporary incidents surrounding American Indian populations will have a richer view of Native student experiences in higher education. This will deepen connections with students, encourage ally identity development, and further social justice work with American Indian populations whose cultures offer beautiful variety to student development, higher education, and this world.

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APPENDIX A.

Considerations for American Indian Student Populations

	Aspiring Ally for Self-Interest	Aspiring Ally for Altruism	Ally for Social Justice	
Motivation	Selfish—for the people I know and care about	Other—I do this for them	Combined Selfishness—I do this for us	**Historical and cultural understanding of *us*.**
Ally to . . .	Ally to a person	Ally to target group	Ally to an issue	
Relationship with Members of Oppressed Groups	Working *over* members of the target group	Working *for* members of the target group	Working *with* members of the target group	
Victims of Oppression	Individuals with personal connection are or could be victims—my daughter, my sister, my friend	They are victims	All of us are victims—although victimized in different ways an unequally	
Focus of Problem	Individuals—overt perpetrators	Others from the agent group	System	**Institutionalized racism in the education system**
View of Justice	These incidents of hate are exceptions to the system of justice	We need justice for them	We need justice for all	
Spiritual or Moral Foundation	I may be simply following doctrine or seeking spiritual self-preservation	I believe helping others is the right thing to do	I seek to connect and liberate us all on spiritual and moral grounds	**Service trips to reservations may cause further distance**
Power	I'm powerful—protective	I empower them—they need my help	Empower us all	
Source of Ongoing Motivation	Motivator (my daughter, my sister, my friend) must be present	• Dependent on acceptance/praise from the other • Easily derailed by critique by other • Often leads to burn out	Sustainable passion—for them, for me, for us, for the future	**Cultural understanding of current work for future generations**
Mistakes	I don't make mistakes—I'm a good person, and perpetrators are just bad people	Has difficulty admitting mistakes to self or other—struggles with critique or exploring own issues—highly defensive when confronted with own behavior	Seeks critique as gifts and admits mistakes as part of doing the work and a step towards ones own liberation—has accepted own *isms* and seeks help in uncovering them	**Awareness of high context communication style critiques and feedback**
Relationship to the System	Not interested in the system—just stopping the bad people	Aims to be an exception from the system, yet ultimately perpetuates the system	Seeks to escape, impede, amend, redefine, and destroy the system	
Focus of the Work	Perpetrators	Other members of the dominant group	My people—doesn't separate self from other agents	
Privilege	Doesn't see privilege—wants to maintain status quo	Feels guilty about privilege and tries to distance self from privilege	Sees illumination of privilege as liberating and consciously uses unearned privilege against itself	**Understanding of how unearned privilege contributed to removal, forced assimilation, and genocide of Native people.**