

CHAPTER ONE

MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IN STUDENT AFFAIRS: PARALLELS AND INTERSECTIONS

It has been many years since we first wrote *Multicultural Competence in Student Affairs* and during the subsequent 15 years, there have been many times that we have discussed when or whether we would write a second edition. During this time, we have continued to write, teach, present, and consult on multicultural competence. And during that time, our beliefs, knowledge, and understanding of multicultural competence as a construct and practice have certainly evolved. Witnessing the growth in the field, in the form of publications, research, conference presentations, and others, is exciting and inspiring to behold. However, during this time we have also noticed some tensions in conversations and the literature about multicultural competence and social justice, with some viewing these two essential constructs as somewhat contradictory or unrelated. Those assumptions or beliefs have never corresponded with our view of multicultural competence and social justice as overlapping and complementary approaches to transforming ourselves, our institutions, and society. So, we began a process of

thoroughly examining the literature, reading everything we could on social justice and multicultural competence across various professions and diverse outlets. We found that the more knowledge and understanding we absorbed, the more we wanted to learn. This led us to the decision that the time had come to write a second edition and that bringing together these two ideas with their distinct literature, research, and practices would be the focus of our work. That decision led us to decide that this second edition, *Multicultural Competence in Student Affairs: Advancing Social Justice and Inclusion*, would need to begin with a chapter that explored the parallels, intersections, and overlapping connections between the values, goals, strategies, practices, and desired outcomes of multicultural competence and social justice.

EVOLUTION OF MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Multicultural competence, as both an aspiration and expectation, has been present in the student affairs literature since the late 1990s, when Pope and Reynolds (1997) first adapted the framework from the counseling field and presented it to the student affairs field. However, in the 22 years since then, our understanding of multicultural competence and what is expected in terms of the essential awareness, knowledge, and skills needed to work with marginalized students and create multicultural change on campus has also evolved (Pope & Mueller, 2017). The exploration of multicultural competence in student affairs began with a focus “less on the students and the campus programs but rather, more on the student affairs professionals who interact with those students and who design, fund, and implement those initiatives” (Pope, Mueller, & Reynolds, 2009, p. 647). From its genesis in the student affairs and higher education literature, multicultural competence has been described as “a necessary prerequisite to ethical, efficacious, and multiculturally relevant practices at colleges and universities” (Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2014, p. 14). Relying on the multicultural competence literature in counseling psychology, Pope and Reynolds (1997) first delineated and described multicultural competence in student affairs in terms of the awareness,

knowledge, and skills that were essential to working effectively with others who are both culturally different and similar.

This tripartite model has been thoroughly explored in both the counseling and higher education literature, but it is useful to briefly define these key components. Multicultural awareness “involves the essential attitudes, values, biases, and assumptions that each of us carries with us, whether we realize it or not, that influence our worldview” and are “shaped by our upbringing, education, and life experiences” (Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2004, p. 12) while multicultural knowledge is conceptualized as “our intellectual understanding or content knowledge about various cultural groups and specific multicultural constructs” (p. 13). Such knowledge can be gleaned through books, media, relationships, and life experiences. Last but not least, multicultural skills are about applying “our multicultural awareness and knowledge to our interactions, interventions, and our daily lives” (p. 13). Pope and Mueller (2017) argue that “although the tripartite model of multicultural competence has remained constant, the conceptualization of multicultural competence within student affairs has evolved during the past twenty years” (p. 394).

Although social justice work has been around for hundreds of years, often through religious and community organizations, the construct and nomenclature of social justice *within* student affairs and higher education was newly emerging when *Multicultural Competence in Student Affairs* was first published in 2004. There was certainly language and emphasis within the original book that highlighted the need for action, advocacy, and institutional change within higher education (Reason & Watson, 2011). For example, in the first edition of this book, we (the authors) made the case for *conscientização* or critical consciousness, championed by Freire (1970), as essential for meaningful reflection of underlying assumptions. Or within the discussion of multicultural competence in helping and advising, we suggested that moving beyond helping individual students address their concerns and barriers is essential and “advocacy and activism on the individual and organizational levels are crucial skills that student affairs professionals need if they are to contribute to or initiate a multicultural change process on campus” (p. 93). Similarly, when exploring multicultural competence in administration and

management, multicultural organization development (MCO) was promoted as a unique framework to support the “transformation of organizations into socially just and socially diverse systems through questioning and assessing underlying beliefs, everyday practices, and core values” (p. 55). Through the incorporation of MCO within the Dynamic Model of Student Affairs Competence, which is steeped in social justice strategies and approaches, we sought transformative efforts in higher education. And in our book *Creating Multicultural Change on Campus* (2014), we went on to expand this work to more thoroughly explore systemic and systematic methods of multicultural change on colleges and universities and argue that multicultural competence is a bridge to developing multicultural leaders who are essential in creating and implementing multicultural change efforts on campus.

As multicultural competence was beginning to take a foothold in the student affairs literature, the issue of social justice and its role in higher education was also building and gaining attention. Much of that early literature focused on defining social justice and discussing the role of social justice allies (Edwards, 2006; Reason, Broido, Davis, & Evans 2005; Reason & Davis 2005). As suggested by Lechuga, Clerc, and Howell (2009), “In recent years, student affairs professionals have introduced social justice into their programming to empower students to become engaged citizens committed to working toward social justice and systemic change” (p. 229). This focus on how to instill social justice attitudes and actions within students is somewhat different from how multicultural competence has been framed with a focus on the importance of developing multicultural awareness, knowledge, skills, and action among staff, administrators, and faculty. More current writing has turned toward considering social justice in the services we provide, the campuses we strive to create, or how we conceptualize the very work we do on our campuses (Davis & Harrison, 2013; Reason & Davis, 2005; Watt, 2015a).

Social justice is defined in fairly consistent ways, often building on the work of Bell (1997), who calls for “a society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure” (p. 3). Reason and Davis (2005) highlighted the distinction between distributive and procedural justice. Distributive justice focuses on how the limited goods

and resources in society are distributed based on need, fairness, or equality, whereas procedural justice is about which members of society or groups are able to have influence and input in any decision-making process. The growing need for social justice is based in the reality that there is significant and meaningful injustice in how resources are distributed and how various groups are treated. There is no place where this is truer than in higher education. Reason and Davis highlighted how financial aid and college admission are examples of both distributive justice (who has access) and procedural justice (how these decisions are made). However, that doesn't address the other aspect of Bell's definition, which is that all students should be able to feel psychologically and physically safe and secure. This is hard to ensure when campuses are rife with microaggressions and other expressions of discrimination, hostility, and oppressive actions and systemic and systematic structures that maintain inequality and oppression. Further, Chizhik and Chizhik (2002) argued that in addition to the unequal distribution of resources, there are discriminatory practices based in unequal power distribution, which is the "difference between those with power (i.e., the privileged) and those without (i.e., the oppressed)" (p. 792). Social justice work then becomes about coming together "to work for the common good by transforming the social organizations and processes that contribute to power inequalities, oppression, and marginalization" (Caldwell & Vera 2010, p. 164). At the core of social justice attitudes is the belief that every person should have the "opportunity to reach her or his academic, career, and personal/social potential free from unnecessary barriers" (Lewis, Ratts, Palodino, & Toporek, 2011, p. 7). This evolution in terminology and conceptualization of how to create change, via multicultural competence or social justice efforts, has led to some challenges and tensions both within higher education and beyond. There have been some who have criticized multicultural competence for falling short of its ideals by primarily focusing on assisting individuals of privilege in their efforts to help those from marginalized groups rather than creating true systemic change (Racial Equity Tools, n.d.). Reason and Watson (2011) suggest that emphasizing the intergroup communication aspect of multicultural competence and "ignoring the realities of target group members' lived oppression

can lessen the emphasis on creating structural changes to further social justice” (p. 270), thus weakening multicultural competence as a tool for change. Many scholars have suggested the importance of moving beyond the interpersonal expressions of bias and how individuals interact and instead focusing on dismantling the structural biases issues inherent in higher education and counseling. Within the counseling field, Vera and Speight (2003) argued that multicultural competence must expand beyond the classic counseling dyad, address systemic barriers, and include a wider array of interventions, including the “ability to function as a change agent at organizational, institutional, and societal levels” (p. 255). This is also true within higher education where multicultural competence must be so much more than helping staff and faculty learn how to be more culturally sensitive. Kumagai and Lypson (2009) stated very clearly that cultural competence is “not a static requirement to be checked off some list but is something beyond the somewhat rigid categories of knowledge, skills, and attitudes: the continuous critical refinement and fostering of a type of thinking and knowing – a critical consciousness – of self, others, and world” (p. 783).

While these critiques are compelling, there can be, at times, some misunderstanding of what multicultural competence is really about and what it is capable of achieving. Multicultural competence, as defined by Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller (2004), is so much more than “a minimum expectation for student affairs educators to effectively support and engage students from a variety of backgrounds” (Linder & Cooper, 2016, p. 381); rather, it is an expectation that student affairs practitioners consistently challenge themselves to increase their awareness and knowledge of self, of others, and of the relationship between the two; understand systems of oppression and inequities to create a deeper understanding of structural barriers within higher education; and develop the advocacy and action skills essential to eradicate the structural barriers, eliminate the inequities, and create multicultural change on campus and in society. Such expectations were firmly embedded in early writings on multicultural competence in student affairs such as Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller (2004) and have continued to be emphasized by Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller (2014).

It is also essential to remember that “multicultural competence is not the panacea to all multicultural challenges facing campuses today, but it can serve as a transformational tool or vital construct used to reshape and change individuals, groups, and organizational units (e.g., programs, departments, divisions) within higher education” (Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2014, p. 14). When discussing the multicultural competence perspectives offered by Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller (2004), Reason and Watson (2011) suggested that through its emphasis on action and advocacy, “the perspective forwarded by Pope and her colleagues avoids many of the weaknesses . . . inherent in other multicultural competence perspectives, and moves us closer to a blending of multicultural competence and social justice” (p. 270).

In addition to these critical appraisals of multicultural competence, some scholars, such as Ratts (2011), suggest that social justice in a vacuum without the influence of multicultural competence can be problematic: “Engaging in social justice advocacy without having developed a sense of multicultural competence may lead to advocacy strategies that ignore clients’ cultural background” (p. 27). There have also been some critiques of the social justice movement by Freedman (2007) and others in terms of the challenging dynamics that social justice efforts may create on campus. Some scholars have reproached social justice advocates and activists of being instigators and indoctrinators and challenging the very notion of education as a neutral and impartial enterprise (Freedman, 2007). Many who advocate for social justice might actually agree with that last criticism and believe that education has never been an impartial process and actually having a goal of change (among individual attitudes or within institutional practices) is essential to combating oppression in all of its forms and may, in fact, be a small price to pay. As Reason and Watson (2011) offer, “interrupting the status quo on college campuses might require social justice advocates to use controversial methods in order to create campus environments that are equitable and safe for all community members” (p. 273). Given that not all members of our campus communities will support such advocacy and activist approaches, it is also important to acknowledge that there are challenges that need to be considered as suggested by Reason and Watson, “How can we affirm our commitment for social justice

while continuing to support *all* students and work within the administration?” (p. 273). Finally, Manning (2009) offers a caution for many educators who advocate for social justice: “Just as diversity became a catch-all phrase for all practice related to difference, social justice is unfortunately becoming the generic phrase for the same. Yet without an understanding of oppression, action related to transformational change, and passion for equitable sharing of power, claims of social justice may be another perspective in disguise” (p. 17). Gorski (2013) offers a similar caveat when he says, “I worry that our evolution from ‘diversity’ and ‘multiculturalism’ to ‘social justice’ is more a shift in language than a shift in consciousness or shifts in institutional culture” (p. 1). Stewart (2017) underscores this point in a critique of how efforts to move from diversity and inclusion to equity and justice have been co-opted, ultimately allowing appeasement rather than transformation. This is why when advocating for multicultural competence and social justice on campus, we must clearly communicate what we mean and be transparent as we identify our desired outcomes. Regardless of the critiques of both multicultural competence and social justice, it is vital that we explore any barriers that may interfere with our task of creating inclusive and affirming campuses and dismantling systems of oppression inherent in higher education that hinder achieving equitable opportunity and just communities.

IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE AND ASSUMPTIONS

Fundamental to the challenges we face when trying to find such common cause are the assumptions we make and the language we choose. The language and terminology used around multiculturalism and social justice often varies across time and space and can be easily shaped and influenced by where we learn, when we learn, who we learn it from, and how it is taught. Using, for example, the three terms *cultural competence*, *multicultural competence*, or *intercultural competence*, individuals may develop strong preferences for specific terms and have a well-developed rationale as to why a particular word or phrase is the most meaningful and possibly most effective in describing various phenomena. Such conclusions are

certainly influenced by specific assumptions and our underlying beliefs. It is also true that over time certain words fall out of favor and even sometimes take on negative connotations, like the term diversity, which used to be a common and inclusive umbrella term used to discuss differences. Eventually the term diversity began to connote more numerical diversity or mere diversity – simply bringing a certain number or percentage of individuals to the campus, rather than actually welcoming and including them or altering the campus to ensure that their voices mattered – and it certainly did not address broader structural issues that limited their full participation. As Manning (2009) suggests, “This first step most likely needs to be taken by higher education leadership before the more complex perspectives (for example, social justice) can be pursued. But the danger and the negative expression of this perspective occur when diversity is viewed as the end goal” (p. 14).

Sometimes the words we use as student affairs professionals change because there are developments in the literature and the common lexicon evolves. This is particularly true in multicultural and social justice work. For example, in the initial Joint Task Force on Professional Competencies and Standards developed by ACPA and NASPA (2010), the language used was *Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion*. However, when updating the document in 2015, there was a belief that the literature had evolved from a “shift in awareness of diversity . . . to a more active orientation” (p. 4), thus causing the competency to be renamed *Social Justice and Inclusion*, with the intent to “integrate the concepts of equity, diversity, and inclusion within the active framework of social justice” (p. 5). Tharp (2012) highlights the power of words and the importance of the language we use and makes the argument that many on campus critique the terms used, such as social justice, as a means of expressing resistance or discomfort with addressing some of the reasons their campus may be falling short in their multicultural efforts. He identifies six key words that he believes need to be understood and offers a rationale for their importance: privilege, oppression, cultural salience, intersectionality, critical consciousness, and social equity. Tharp suggests that these terms are essential in educating the public about social justice and that not using these terms can actually have negative effects such as perpetuating ignorance and social injustices, resisting accountability for

participating in injustice, and valuing political correctness over “authentic cultural sensitivity” (p. 23). Instead of minimizing the importance of the language used or simply reacting strongly to particular word choices, taking the time to equip ourselves “with the appropriate knowledge and language, we can ensure that important conversations take place, identify cultural concerns on campus, and affirm and challenge the cultural experiences of students at key moments in their development” (p. 23).

A final note about language is necessary before we move forward. As first discussed in the preface of this book (and in the 2004 edition), some of the words used in education, such as multicultural, international, or even social justice, are chosen, either consciously or unconsciously, in part to eschew discussions of race and racism (Banks, 2014; Neville & Awad, 2014). It is vital that we acknowledge these tensions and how it is often challenging to maintain a central focus on race and racism in this work. When efforts are made to specifically focus on racism in social justice work, there is often pushback that such efforts are not inclusive. A perfect example occurred when ACPA – College Student Educators International launched its Strategic Imperative for Racial Justice and Decolonization in 2016: There were immediate questions of why the imperative did not focus more broadly on social justice. Sometimes a desire to only focus on a broader social justice discussion, even by those individuals who report a commitment to social justice, masks a deeper desire to avoid discussions of race, racism, and racial justice (Student Affairs Live, 2017). Discussions of social justice are often difficult. Somehow, talking specifically about race, racism, and present-day colonization is even more difficult. Of course, the broader issues of social justice are extremely important and must be discussed. In fact, we believe that all forms of systemic and structural oppression are inextricably linked, and must be dismantled. *And* we must be inclusive and acknowledge multiple identities and intersectionality. The use of diunital reasoning is crucial here (see Preface). We believe it is possible to center our social justice work in dismantling racism while also embracing and honoring an inclusive and unified understanding of oppression. This is why we (the authors) embrace a both/and definition of multicultural that is both race-based and inclusive (e.g., race, ethnicity, indigeneity, gender, social class, religion,

sexual orientation, age, gender expression, disability, ethnicity). We believe that unless we acknowledge this truth, then we will not be able to face the barriers that really prevent us from combatting oppression.

FINDING COMMON GROUND IN MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

These differences in language and assumptions can make it appear at times as if multicultural and social justice movements are incongruent frameworks (Crethar, Torres-Rivera, & Nash, 2008). Ratts (2011) suggests “the labeling of multiculturalism and social justice as separate ‘forces . . .’ raises a need to clarify the harmonizing nature between these two paradigms” (p. 26). There have been increasing calls to explore the complementary nature of these perspectives and find common ground (Crethar et al., 2008; Toporek, Lewis, & Crethar, 2009).

Arredondo and Perez (2003) suggested that social justice was always central to the multicultural competence movement, particularly within the field of counseling psychology. This is why many definitions of multicultural competence include references to social justice attitudes or actions. For example, Vera and Speight (2003) insisted that multicultural competence involves “the ability to function as a change agent at organizational, institutional, and societal levels” (p. 255), while Sue (2001) argued that within the counseling field, multicultural competence “must be about social justice – providing equal access and opportunity, being inclusive, and removing individual and institutional barriers” (p. 801). Ratts (2011) suggested that the inclusion of multicultural competence and social justice and advocacy as being central to ethical practice demonstrates their congruence. Ratts, relying on the work of Lewis and Arnold (1998), describes “multiculturalism and social justice as two sides of the same coin” (p. 26). He further suggests that when used together, these competencies can both improve and boost our ability to work with and help others as well as engage in community action and advocacy. Toporek, Lewis, and Crethar (2009) firmly stated, “the importance of multicultural

competence cannot be understated, particularly in understanding cultural relevance and appropriateness of advocacy interventions, sociopolitical histories, and current context” (p. 262). Embracing the interdependent and complementary nature of multicultural competence and social justice actions or advocacy has been challenging at times because of our reliance on either/or thinking. Linda James Myers (1993) has suggested that our tendency toward dualistic or dichotomous thinking, where we rely on a more comparative approach to examining the world, leads to a suboptimal worldview firmly rooted in an oppressive epistemology. Such thinking is particularly problematic in a multicultural context because “it leads to classifying the values of the dominant group as superior or the norm rather than classifying the values of both dominant and nondominant groups equally” (Jun, 2010, p. 33). Myers suggests that we seek diunital (both/and) reasoning as a more optimal epistemology. While acknowledging the common ground for multicultural competence and social justice is a good place to start, there has been growth in the development of models that deliberately and more specifically integrate the connections between social justice and multicultural competence.

INTEGRATIVE MODELS AND PERSPECTIVES

Through examination of these integrative frameworks, models, or perspectives in the counseling literature, we can not only expand our understanding of the linkages between multicultural competence and social justice but also adapt some of these models to our work in student affairs. Such models can be easily adapted to work in student affairs and higher education more broadly and offer much to our evolving understanding of how to make transformational changes to our institutions that truly lead to equity and justice rather than merely altering compositional diversity and using the language of inclusion and social justice.

Goodman (2013) offers a list of competencies that she refers to as *cultural competence for social justice*, which she suggests is particularly well suited to assist those working as faculty members or higher education professionals. Goodman identified five key

aspects to her framework: (1) self-awareness, (2) understanding and valuing others, (3) knowledge of social inequities, (4) skills to interact effectively with diverse people in different contexts, and (5) skills to foster equity and inclusion. While these general components are discussed in the Dynamic Model of Student Affairs Competence (Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2004), the words used by Goodman make a more direct connection to the language of social justice and equity.

Cultural competence for social justice is the ability to live and work effectively in culturally diverse environments and enact a commitment to social justice. Social justice refers to creating a society (or community, organization, or campus) with an equitable distribution of resources and opportunities. In socially just environments, all people are safe (physically and psychologically), can meet their needs, and can fulfill their potential. This notion of social justice entails equity (fairness) and a sense of real inclusion. (pp. 1–2)

Two of the components in her framework, Knowledge of Social Inequities and Skills to Foster Equity and Inclusion, are particularly focused on social justice.

Goodman posits that her model is more focused on social justice action and advocacy than previous competency models and suggests that “framing diversity and social justice initiatives in the language of cultural competence is sometimes more readily accepted by people reluctant to buy into these efforts” (p. 3). While there is likely truth in her statement, this mindset may punctuate the points made by Stewart (2017), who warned against the appeasement that often occurs when we are focused on making others comfortable in our multicultural change efforts.

Within the counseling field there have been several frameworks focused on applying social justice values, principles, and attitudes to the behaviors or actions of counselors. Much of that work is relevant for the student affairs profession and after reviewing these counseling-oriented models, we will focus on applying them in a higher education context.

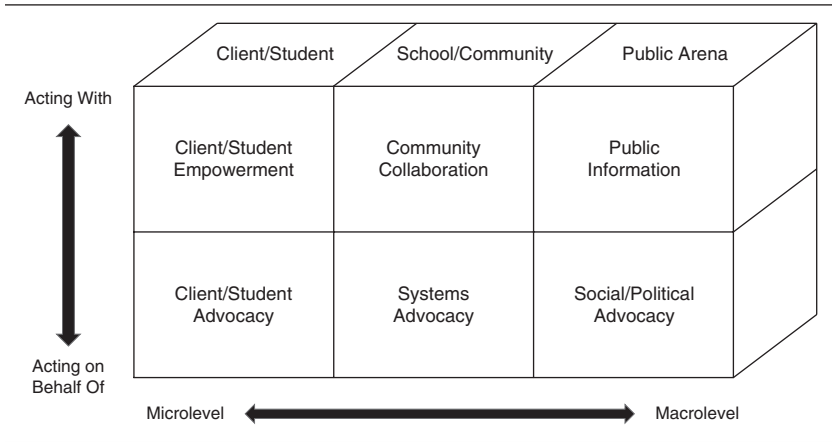
Toporek et al. (2009) suggest that “counselors have always been change agents and advocates” (p. 260) and that there has

been a long history of counselors and counseling psychologists striving to challenge the traditional paradigm of focusing counseling services on the individual rather than the system. The American Counseling Association (ACA) formally adopted the advocacy competencies (Lewis, Arnold, House, & Toporek, 2003) in hopes of providing counselors with the tools and ethical mandate to actively incorporate advocacy into counseling. This focus on social advocacy and action is one of the ways in which social justice values are currently being conceptualized and implemented within the fields of counseling and counseling psychology (Ratts, Lewis, & Toporek, 2010). Social advocacy emphasizes the importance and value of empowerment of the individual and social action within the environment. Empowerment means focusing on increasing the awareness of internal, external, and institutional barriers that may inhibit well-being, whereas social action calls for advocacy efforts within the larger social environment (Toporek et al., 2009).

The ACA Advocacy Competencies are a practical framework that can be used to help counselors, educators, or student affairs professionals determine where to focus their social advocacy efforts (Toporek, Lewis, & Ratts, 2010). These competencies were originally conceptualized to be used by counselors in mental health and school settings (K–12), so the language used is client/student. Such framing can be easily adapted to college students, although the examples used would need to be changed. This framework is organized around two intersecting dimensions, Extent of Client/Student Involvement and Level of Intervention, which incorporate six domains: (1) client/student empowerment, (2) client/student advocacy, (3) community collaboration, (4) systems advocacy, (5) public information, and (6) social/political advocacy (Lewis et al., 2003) (see Figure 1.1).

The first dimension, Extent of Client/Student Involvement, addresses the issue of doing *advocacy work with someone* or *advocacy work on behalf of someone*. While advocacy work should be propelled by the client/student or community/school, there are times when the client/student will be more directly involved, and “collaborate on identifying the issues, discussing possible courses of action and consequences, and potentially acting on the advocacy plan” (Toporek et al., 2010, pp. 12–13). If a student

FIGURE 1.1. ACA ADVOCACY COMPETENCIES.



Source: From J. A. Lewis, M. S. Arnold, R. House, and R. L. Toporek, *ACA Advocacies*, 2003. Retrieved from https://www.counseling.org/Resources/Competencies/Advocacy_Competencies.pdf

leader complains to an assistant director of campus life about how zir group’s advisor is acting transphobic, the assistant director might brainstorm with the resident on how to handle the situation and work together to identify how to address the issue, rather than just listening to the complaint and then confronting the advisor without the student involvement. Such empowerment is particularly important when addressing the needs of marginalized students. If the student does not feel comfortable confronting zir advisor, then the assistant director could directly intervene in the system, acting on behalf of the student, and speak directly with the advisor.

The second dimension, Level of Intervention, examines where on the continuum the advocacy needs to occur, from the microlevel to the macrolevel. Interventions can happen simultaneously at the individual (working directly with the student/client), school/community (focusing on institutional or structural level), or public arena level (enhancing public awareness or intervening on a public policy level). All of these levels have value and are important in creating social change. Using the example previously described, the range of interventions could be focused on the specific relationship between the student and

group advisor, developing trans training for all group advisors, or doing an awareness campaign on campus to address transphobia or lobbying the board of trustees to include transgender in the diversity statement.

The six domains highlighted in the advocacy competencies framework offer a blueprint for assisting student affairs professionals in their efforts to provide advocacy on their campuses. In addition to providing a clear conceptual model for understanding advocacy, the framework identifies specific skills and knowledge areas needed to enact the various types of advocacy strategies. Ratts and Hutchins (2009) identify specific competencies for social justice advocacy at the client/student level that are helpful and applicable to the work of student affairs professionals. They succinctly operationalize those advocacies under client/student empowerment and client/student advocacy. The specific competencies identified under client/student empowerment include: (a) identify strengths and resources of clients and students; (b) identify the social, political, economic, and cultural factors that affect the client/student; (c) recognize the signs indicating that an individual's behavior and concerns reflect responses to systemic or internalized oppression; (d) help the individual identify the external barriers that affect his or her development, (e) train students and clients in self-advocacy skills; (f) help students and clients develop self-advocacy action plans; and (g) assist students and clients in carrying out action plans.

The specific competencies identified under client/student advocacy include: (a) negotiate relevant services and education systems on behalf of clients and students, (b) identify barriers to the well-being of individuals and vulnerable groups, (c) develop an initial plan for confronting these barriers, (d) identify potential allies for confronting barriers, and (e) carry out the plan of action. They suggest "moving beyond a paradigm in which counselors are helpers/responders who fix clients/students to a paradigm that is proactive in scope, that is preventive in design, and that addresses sociopolitical forces that impede human development" (p. 274). They highlight the need to "become social-advocacy-oriented critical thinkers" (p. 274). This operationalization of social advocacy offers a way to make social justice values more concrete and obtainable.

While the Advocacy Competencies have not been directly applied to higher education, Diemer and Duffy (2010) offered a detailed case example to explore how college and university counseling center staff can use the advocacy model to specifically address racism on campus. They argue that “advocating for changes in campus structures and practices does diverge from the historical focus on helping students adapt to their environment in campus outreach and psychoeducation” (p. 121). Diemer and Duffy suggest that relying on traditional tools will “do little to address entrenched and longstanding injustices such as racism” (p. 122).

In addition to the Advocacy Competencies, there is another framework within the counseling field that offers a way to integrate and operationalize multicultural and social justice counseling competencies. In 2014, the American Multicultural Counseling and Development Association decided to enhance and extend an earlier set of multicultural competencies (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992) that would incorporate the expanding role and importance of social justice advocacy: “the term social justice is incorporated into the title of the revised competencies to reflect the growing changes in the profession and society at large. Moreover, this change reflects the increasing body of literature on the interactive nature of multicultural and social justice competence” (p. 30). These new competencies focus on incorporating intersectionality and the complexities of identity, and the expectation that individuals be understood in the context of their environment. From these assumptions, the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (MSJCC) were developed (Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMillan, Butler, & McCullough, 2015). Their belief is that multicultural and social justice competencies inherently intersect and need to be incorporated into our practice or praxis. The model they developed offers a multifaceted and multidimensional approach by considering privileged and marginalized statuses, developmental domains, and competencies.

One compelling aspect of this model is its emphasis on how identities/statuses (both privileged and marginalized) impact the role of privilege, power, and oppression in working relationships. While their examples are counseling oriented, this same dynamic can be applied to student affairs. So, the four quadrants used to

explore those dynamics are: (1) privileged student affairs professional, (2) marginalized students/supervisees, (3) marginalized student affairs professional, and (4) privileged students/supervisees. Too often when discussing multicultural competence, the assumption is that the student affairs professional is a person with privilege by race or gender or some other identity who is working with a student or supervisee from a marginalized identity. This is one of many ways that student affairs professionals of color, LGBT student affairs professionals, and other marginalized professionals are often erased. It is essential that we move beyond such narrow conceptualizations because they do an injustice to the complexity of identities, statuses, and power dynamics that exist within our working relationships. Yes, there are times when the student affairs professional has a privileged status and the student or supervisee is from a marginalized status identity group, but there are also times when a student affairs professional of color is working with a White student or supervisee who may or may not be aware of issues of White privilege. The MSJCC also acknowledges that sometimes student affairs professionals and students/supervisees are from the same identity status groups, which may affect how they interact with one another.

An additional component of the MSJCC that is particularly relevant to our work is its conceptualization of multicultural competence as including four aspirational and developmental competencies: (1) attitudes and beliefs, (2) knowledge, (3) skills, and (4) action. Action was added to the original competency model offered by Sue et al. (1992) with the belief that “operationalizing attitudes and beliefs, knowledge, and skills (AKS) is critical to achieving multicultural and social justice outcomes” (Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMillan, Butler, & McCullough, 2015, p. 38). This framework offers a way to conceptualize how to provide multicultural and social justice competent practice and provides opportunities for student affairs professionals to determine whether to utilize individual interventions or strategies or social justice advocacy. Finding that balance between individual interventions and social justice advocacy is particularly important when working with students and supervisees with marginalized identities/statuses. Similarly, Pope et al. (2014) describe how “multicultural competence can occur at the micro level, focusing on the individual or group,

as well as the macro level, or institutional efforts to develop multicultural competence among students, staff, administrators, and faculty members of an institution” (p. 14).

We can use these integrative frameworks and models to reconceptualize and expand our understanding of multicultural competence in a higher education context where the focus is often on ensuring that our campuses embrace inclusion and equity. Applying these counseling models to a higher education context with its unique roles, environment, and context is a meaningful way to embrace and extend multicultural competence and ensure it continues to grow and evolve. Earlier conceptualizations of multicultural competence were based on what was known at the time and, over time, newer language, understandings, and frameworks have been introduced and examined. Over the past 20 years our own work has evolved and progressed to focus on linking multicultural competence with multicultural change efforts to support our efforts to transform our campuses into inclusive, equitable, and socially just environments. Much of what follows in this book is an evolution and enhancement of the Dynamic Model of Student Affairs Competence to ensure that student affairs professionals have the tools, strategies, and competencies to enact change and transform our campuses.

MOVING FORWARD AND ENVISIONING TRANSFORMATION

As we move forward in our efforts to integrate multicultural competence and social justice, we must actively consider what our roles and responsibilities are. Melton (2018) argues that psychologists view being allies, activists, and/or advocates for social justice as central to their multicultural competence. This mindset is relevant for student affairs professionals as well. Melton also identifies some of the challenges and role complexities that occur when engaging in action to challenge the status quo, combat structural barriers, and take risks in supporting those who are marginalized. Such challenges include dealing with pushback from those who view advocacy work as political, which doesn't fit with their belief that we should remain neutral. However, being neutral when pushing

for transformative change is inherently political (Harrison, 2010). Ellis (2016) states, “It is important for student affairs professionals to take politics into consideration when making decisions because politics affect the institution where they work, the communities where they live, current and future colleagues, and the lives of tens of thousands of students and their families” (pp. 457–458). In order to create multicultural change on our campuses that leads to more just and equitable policies and practices, we must be willing to address the varied challenges and barriers that exist.

As Stewart (2017) so profoundly opined, our efforts toward transformation have been hampered at times by the language we have used and the goals we have chosen. Our dreams and goals have not really changed that much in the past 50 years and, while some could argue that higher education is using more structural and programmatic means (e.g., appointing senior diversity officers, campus-wide diversity programs, enrollment managers charged with increasing student diversity) to address these perpetual problems of underrepresentation, bias, and microaggressions on campus, undertrained staff and faculty, and the need for safe and brave spaces, it is apparent that the underlying issues and barriers are not changing. Many campuses are genuinely excited about their efforts to invest in outside consultants, hire diversity officers, and expand financial aid, among other initiatives, without fully understanding their inability to truly change (Stewart, 2017). Stewart claims “by substituting diversity and inclusion rhetoric for transformative efforts to promote equity and justice, HWIs [Historically White Institutions] have appeased their constituents and avoided recognizable institutional change” (p. 3). Similarly, Pope et al. (2014) claim that “if institutional resistance is not addressed and limited efforts are made to garner support for lasting institutional change, multicultural change efforts will likely fail” (p. 8).

Take, for example, the growing trend of campuses’ hiring senior diversity officers to lead their multicultural efforts. Often these leaders do report directly to the president or at least the provost, which means they have direct access to the most powerful individuals on campus. However, sometimes hiring a senior diversity officer can have limited impact on the campus because they are not given the resources and supports they need to create campus transformation. Many senior diversity officers report that their

offices are understaffed (staffed often only by the diversity officer and an administrative support person or at best one additional junior administrator), face severe financial and structural limits, and that the level of the institutional resistance they experience is untenable. Additionally, sometimes having a senior diversity officer may allow other campus leaders to eschew responsibility for multicultural change and not see this work as part of their job.

Stewart (2017) suggests that our continual use of language focused on diversity and inclusion is limited because it changes the questions we ask and therefore the actions we take. Stewart proposes that if we asked questions targeting equity and justice, our responses would differ. While focusing on language and the words we use may seem reductive, Stewart demonstrates the power of the questions we ask:

- Diversity asks, “Who’s in the room?” Equity responds: “Who is trying to get in the room but can’t? Whose presence in the room is under constant threat of erasure?”
- Inclusion asks, “Has everyone’s ideas been heard?” Justice responds, “Whose ideas won’t be taken as seriously because they aren’t in the majority?”
- Diversity asks, “How many more of [pick any minoritized identity] group do we have this year than last?” Equity responds, “What conditions have we created that maintain certain groups as the perpetual majority here?”
- Inclusion asks, “Is this environment safe for everyone to feel like they belong?” Justice challenges, “Whose safety is being sacrificed and minimized to allow others to be comfortable maintaining dehumanizing views?”
- Diversity asks, “Isn’t it separatist to provide funding for safe spaces and separate student centers?” Equity answers, “What are people experiencing on campus such that they don’t feel safe when isolated and separated from others like themselves?”
- Inclusion asks, “Wouldn’t it be a great program to have a panel debate Black Lives Matter? We had a Black Lives Matter activist here last semester, so this semester we should invite someone from the alt-right.” Justice answers, “Why would we allow the humanity and dignity of people or our students to be the subject of debate or the target of harassment and hate speech?”

- Diversity celebrates increases in numbers that still reflect minoritized status on campus and incremental growth. Equity celebrates reductions in harm, revisions to abusive systems, and increases in supports for people's life chances as reported by those who have been targeted.
- Inclusion celebrates awards for initiatives and credits itself for having a diverse candidate pool. Justice celebrates getting rid of practices and policies that were having disparate impacts on minoritized groups (p. 3).

CONCLUSION

Tracing the evolution of multicultural competence and its connection to social justice is essential to understanding what is needed to transform our campuses. Multicultural competence in student affairs, as introduced by Pope and Reynolds (1997) and Pope et al. (2004), always acknowledged the need for systemic and systematic change in higher education at the structural level; however, the language of social justice had not yet fully entered the student affairs or higher education lexicon when that earlier work was published. Exploring the linkages and intersections between multicultural competence and social justice provides a stronger, deeper, and more expansive approach to addressing the limited multicultural and social justice awareness, knowledge, skill, and action within higher education. Attending to the language we use, the questions we ask, and the action we take is the first of many steps needed to create multicultural change on campus. If we are to move forward and create inclusive, equitable, and just campuses, we need to rely on new and integrative frameworks to expand and enhance our work. Seeking transformation in higher education requires that we continually challenge what we know and how we act and, incorporating both multicultural competence and social justice is essential to our efforts.