

Innovations for Transforming Practice

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Message from the Dean

2006/2007 Grant and Contract Awards

2008 University Grant Program Awards

2008 College of Education Awards

Featured Research Summary

Message from the Dean

Welcome to the newest issue of Innovations for Transforming Practice, the College's newsletter highlighting faculty scholarship and initiatives designed to transform professional preparation and/or practice to improve client outcomes in the field. This issue summarizes external grant and contract awards to faculty during the 2006/2007 and lists internal grants and awards received during 2008.

This issue also highlights research conducted by Frank Harris III, in the Administration, Rehabilitation, and Postsecondary Education Department.

2006/07 External Grant and Contract Awards

Between July 1, 2006 and June 30, 2007, 39 education faculty and administrators serving as Principal Investigators and Project Directors for 104 grants, contracts and externally funded projects garnered a total of \$13,428,402 for the College of Education at the San Diego campus and an additional \$247,010 at the Imperial Valley campus. *Grants, Contracts, and Other Externally Funded Projects / July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007* provides a list of awards and project abstracts.

2008 University Grant Program Awards

Five faculty members in the College were awarded a total of \$40,027 from the University Grant Program. The following faculty members received these research grants:

Charles Degeneffe, Administration, Rehabilitation, and Postsecondary Education,
Planning for an Uncertain Future: Perspectives of Parents and Adult
Siblings of Persons with Traumatic Brain Injury, \$6551

Nan Hampton, Administration, Rehabilitation, and Postsecondary Education,
Cultural Values and Attitudes toward People with Psychiatric Disabilities in
Asian American and Hispanic American Students, \$5940

Frank Harris, III, Administration, Rehabilitation, and Postsecondary Education,
Exploring the Nexus between Race and masculinities among African
American and Latino College Men: A Grounded Theory Study, \$8946

Bonnie Kraemer, Special Education, Transition for Youth with Autism Spectrum
Disorder: An Examination of School Preparation, Family Involvement and
Outcomes Achieved, \$8838

Soh-Leong Lim, Counseling and School Psychology, Strengthening
Intergenerational Ties in Sudanese Refugee Families: A Contextualized
Child-Parent Relational Therapy (CPRT) Approach, \$9752

College of Education Awards

2008 Dean's Excellence Faculty Awards

Dean Hovda presented the first annual Dean's Excellence Awards for Faculty at the Honors and Awards Program on May 6, 2008. Awards were presented to the following faculty.

Lasisi Ajayi, Teacher Education, Imperial Valley Campus, Excellence in
Research & Scholarship

Cristianna Alger, Teacher Education, Drebsky Award for the Teaching of Critical
Thinking

Audrey Hokoda, Child & Family Development, Excellence in Collaboration

Shulamit Ritblatt, Child & Family Development, Excellence in Collaboration

Pamela Ross, Teacher Education, Excellence in Service

2008 Course Redesign Institute Awards

Seven faculty members participated in the Course Design Institute in May 2008. The institute continued the theme of designing and redesigning courses for hybrid or distance learning. In addition to attending the 4-day workshop, faculty will receive stipends, summer-long instructional design assistance from the College's instructional designer, Andre Saltzman Martin, and support from the Help Desk Coaches.

Christianna Alger, Teacher Education, Redesign TE 933, Teaching Reading in
the Secondary School

Jose Luis Alvarado, Special Education, Redesign SPED 651, Legislation,
Leadership and Management in Special Education

Soh-Leong Lim, Counseling and School Psychology, Redesign CSP 606A,
Ethical and Professional Issues in Mental Health Practice

Valarie Pang, Teacher Education, Design MAT in Teacher Education, TE 677,
Research-based Pedagogy for Diverse Learners

Cynthia Park, Teacher Education, Design MAT in Teacher Education, TE 693,
Measuring and Assessing Student Achievement in School

Carol Prime, Teacher Education, Redesign TE923, Psychological Foundations of
Education, TE 910B, Teaching Social Studies in the Elementary School,
TE 960, Basic Student Teaching Seminar and 961 Advanced Student
Teaching Seminar

Shulamit Ritblatt, Child and Family Development, Redesign CFD 560, Theories
in Socio-Emotional Development and CFD 590, Children with Special
Needs

Featured Research Summary

Exploring the Meanings College Men Make of Masculinities and Contextual Influences on Behaviors, Outcomes, and Campus Norms: A Grounded Theory Study Frank Harris III, American Educational Research Association - Division J
Dissertation of the Year, Presented at AERA, 2007, Chicago

What problem was investigated?

Gender-specific research in higher education has traditionally focused on experiences of women. While this inquiry is urgently necessary and continues to be important, recent behavioral trends on college campuses suggest a need for increased scholarly attention to the gender-related challenges and issues of men. For example, college men comprise the majority of students who are cited for non-academic violations of campus judicial policies (Harper, Harris III, & Mmeje, 2005). In addition, more than 90 percent of students who are accused of sexual assault, relationship violence, and sexual harassment on college campuses are men (Hong, 2000). Lastly, reports of academic underachievement (Sax & Harper, 2007), disengagement in campus programs and activities (Davis & Laker, 2004), substance abuse (Capraro, 2000; Courtney, 1998), homophobia (Rhoads, 1995), and other gender-related challenges among college men also suggest a need to further explore masculinities on college campuses.

Given the aforementioned trends and issues, the purposes of this study were to: (1) examine shared conceptualizations of masculinities among college men who represented a range of social group identities and experiences, (2) understand the contextual influences (e.g., socialization, campus culture, peer

group interactions) that shape and reinforce college men's gender identity and behavior, and (3) propose a conceptual model of college men's conceptualizations of masculinities and the socio-cultural factors that influenced them.

The primary research question that guided the inquiry in this study was, "What are the meanings college men make of masculinities?" Additional research questions included: (a) In what ways do these meanings influence college men's behaviors and outcomes? (b) From the participants' perspectives, what are the dominant and negotiable boundaries of masculinities on a university campus? (c) What are the shared conceptions of masculinities among various subgroups of male students? and (d) How do college men negotiate pressures to embrace and/or reject dominant and alternative concepts of masculinities? Theories regarding the social construction of masculinities, male gender role conflict, ethnic and sexual identity development, campus environments, and social norms comprised the conceptual framework and informed the design and initial research protocol for this study.

What methods were used to conduct the research?

The study was conducted at an urban research institution in the western region of the United States. A total of 68 undergraduate men who represented a range of races/ethnicities, group affiliations, socio-economic backgrounds, and academic majors served as participants in this study.

Data collection occurred in two phases. First, face-to-face, semi-structured individual interviews with 12 of the 68 participants—each representing one of nine identity groups (described later in this paragraph) were conducted. During phase two of the data collection, nine focus groups with a total of 56 the participants who represented the following sub-groups were convened: (1) Members of predominantly White fraternities, (2) members of historically Black fraternities, (3) Asian American students, (4) Latino men, (5) first-year students, (6) openly gay and bisexual students who were affiliated with the campus's student center, (7) Jewish male students, (8) White student-athletes, and (9) African American student-athletes. All of the individual interviews and focus groups were audio-taped, transcribed, and organized using the Atlas.Ti Qualitative Software package to facilitate data analysis. Data analysis for this study followed the techniques and procedures proposed by Charmaz (2006) and Strauss and Corbin (1998) for developing grounded theory. The aforementioned analyses and interpretations of the data lead to the development of a conceptual model to present the findings in a grounded theory.

What were the key findings?

Meanings of Masculinities

The participants offered several conceptualizations of masculinities that informed their gender-related behaviors and perspectives. These included: "being respected," "assuming responsibility," "being confident and self-assured," "having sex with women," and "embodying physical prowess." According to the participants, these were some "defining characteristics" of men and reflected the attitudes and behaviors about masculinities that were learned and reinforced both prior to and during college.

Contextual Influences

Several interactive socio-cultural factors emerged as significant contextual influences on both the meanings the participants ascribed to masculinities as well as the ways in which they expressed masculinities in the campus context: pre-college gender socialization, the campus environment, campus involvement, academic interests and experiences, and male peer group interactions. Each of these factors is summarized and discussed below in greater detail.

Pre-college gender socialization. The participants' pre-college gender socialization emerged as a significant socio-cultural factor that influenced the ways in which they conceptualized and expressed masculinities in college. Specifically, they identified three factors that informed the beliefs and attitudes about masculinities they learned prior to their matriculation to college: (1) parental influences, (2) peer interactions, and (3) participating in sports and other "masculizing" activities. Parents, especially fathers, socialized the participants to behave and interact in ways that were deemed acceptable by traditional expectations of masculinities. Avoiding feminine behaviors and attitudes as well as expressing masculinities through physicality and toughness were notable in this regard. Middle and high school peers held similar expectations of expressing masculinities. Youth sports provided a context in which these expectations of masculinities were reinforced and celebrated during the participants' pre-college gender socialization.

Campus environment. The campus environment also emerged as a socio-cultural factor that influenced the participants' gender-related beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. The participants described the campus environment in three ways and discussed the corresponding effects on the expression of masculinities: "diverse," "patriarchal," and "competitive." The diversity described by the participants provided space for a wide range of masculine expressions, particularly among men who did not express masculinities according to traditional expectations. While discussing the campus environment, the participants often referenced their high schools (which were not as diverse) where the expression of masculinities was heavily restricted to stereotypical male behaviors and attitudes.

Patriarchy also characterized the campus environment, as the participants noted that men who fulfilled traditional and stereotypical expectations of masculinities were privileged above those who did not do so. While the participants generally agreed that masculinities were wide and varied at the campus, the dominant masculine norms that characterized the campus were established, in large part, by fraternity members and student-athletes. The high visibility and success of the campus's fraternity system and men's sports teams fostered a perception within the larger male campus community that these men were more popular and respected than other men on campus.

Lastly, the participants described the campus environment as competitive in that they felt constant pressure to compete with and outperform their peers in both social (e.g., sports, partying, consuming alcohol, pursuing sexual relationships) and academic endeavors.

Campus involvement. The participants' involvement in campus activities and programs influenced their beliefs and attitudes about masculinities. They spoke of the ways in which their involvement provided opportunities for meaningful interactions with male peers from different backgrounds and encouraged them to be more accepting of masculinities that were different from their own. Campus involvement also allowed the participants to exhibit leadership, a value they also associated with masculinities.

Academic interests and experiences. The participants' academic interests and experiences also influenced their masculine conceptualizations. Many of the men in the study indicated a desire to pursue careers in traditionally-masculine fields (e.g., law, medicine, real estate, engineering) upon graduating from college, which influenced their choices of classes and majors. A primary motivation for these participants was their willingness and/or desire to fulfill the traditional "breadwinner" role that is culturally defined as masculine in American families.

Male peer group interactions. Lastly, the participants' interactions within exclusively male sub-groups influenced their behaviors, beliefs and attitudes about masculinities. The men in the study spoke of the interactions and conversations that often took place within their respective male peer groups. Partying, consuming large quantities of alcohol, playing video games, watching and discussing sports, and sharing the details of sexual relationships were consistently noted by the participants as activities in which they regularly engaged with male peers.

Male Gendered Campus Norms

The outcomes of the interactions between the participants' conceptualizations of masculinities and the contextual influences discussed herein revealed several male-specific behavioral norms that were situated within the campus environment. Pursuing meaningless sexual relationships, misogynistic exchanges with male peers, and drinking and partying excessively while privately balancing intense academic and co-curricular demands were reportedly prevalent among male students at the campus where the study took place. In addition, there was a generalized fear of femininity and concern about being perceived by as gay among heterosexual men at the campus. Consequently, these students were both cautious and anxious in their public interactions with openly gay male peers. Despite the stereotypical norms and expectations that governed the expression of masculinities at the campus, cultivating bonding relationships with male peers, particularly those who held similar interests and perspectives, was a shared norm among male students at the campus.

What are implications of the study?

This study's findings have implications for educators who aim to facilitate healthy and productive identity development among college men and for researchers who engage in future studies of masculinities in college contexts.

Implications for Educators

Efforts to help male students expand their conceptualizations of masculinities and to express their gender identities beyond what is culturally defined as masculine are warranted. Programs and service opportunities that facilitate critical reflection about masculinities among male students are especially necessary. Guest speakers, course readings, class discussions, service-learning projects, facilitated support groups, and other interactive exchanges that provide opportunities for men to raise questions about the gender-related messages that they often consume and the consequences of conforming to stereotypically masculine norms will facilitate the type of thinking and reflection necessary for male students to re-consider the strategies they rely upon to express masculinities.

The participants indicated the need for opportunities to bond with other men. Thus, institutions should consider providing space for men to interact in meaningful and productive ways (preferably without relying upon alcohol). Camping trips, campus retreats, and organized excursions to sporting events were offered by the participants as possible programs that may be effective in facilitating bonding among male students. To maximize impact and ensure that anticipated outcomes are met, these activities must be facilitated by educators who understand the gender-related issues that challenge college men.

Some institutions may find it useful to host sessions for the parents of male students during new student orientation. Educators can use these sessions as opportunities to inform parents of the difficulties that male students often face during their college matriculation. Educators can also provide parents with effective strategies and resources they can utilize in supporting their sons' development during college. Faculty members, coaches, residential education staff, fraternity advisors, and other campus personnel who work with male students should be available during these sessions to provide insight and address area-specific concerns that are raised by parents. Parents should leave with an understanding of their roles as partners in supporting their sons' development during the college years.

Finally, it is important to publicly acknowledge men who demonstrate leadership and achieve success in areas other than fraternity life and athletics. Male students who demonstrate commitment and service in campus and community-based programs also deserve recognition. Doing so communicates to all students that it is possible to achieve a masculine status while also being academically-oriented, actively involved, and well-rounded.

Implications for Future Research

Given the findings and implications reported herein, several rich and potentially insightful areas of future research on college men and masculinities are evident. First, there is a need to further explore the intersections of masculinities and other identity dimensions. The aim of the present study was to identify conceptualizations of masculinities that were consistent across diverse subgroups of college men. One goal of future inquiries should be to identify the

masculine conceptualizations that are salient within specific male subgroups. For instance, researchers may consider limiting their research participants to Latino men, student-athletes, or fraternity men.

Second, researchers should also examine masculinities in other institutional contexts. For example, collecting data from male students at community colleges, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and single-sex institutions would likely reveal new insights about the influence of campus environments on the expression of masculinities among college men.

Lastly, researchers should employ longitudinal approaches in future studies of college men and masculinities. Examining the gender identities of male students when they enter college and through their graduation is one example of a potentially insightful study. Following a cohort of men beginning in middle or high school through college graduation may yield even greater insights.

Where can I learn more?

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