CSSA Portfolio: Gearing Up

Miwa Tokunaga-Griffin

Oregon State University
Table of Content

1. Student Development theory is like an x-ray for students and a mirror for professionals

1. Knowledge and Understanding of Higher Education and Student Affairs
   - Understand the primary challenges and opportunities being presented to student affairs professionals
   - Understand systems of privilege and oppression and the impact of these on institutional systems or organizations
   - Identify goals, trends, and key issues related to the future of the student affairs profession

3. Knowledge and Understanding of Student Populations and Student Development
   - Understand the impact of student identity, cultural heritage, and institutional and societal systems (including power and privilege), on identity development, personal growth, individual perspectives, and students’ experiences
   - Recognize various dimensions of identity and the intersectionality of those dimensions in the lives and learning experiences of students
   - Analyze and apply concepts and theories of student and human development to enhance work with students
   - Identify and articulate issues students face when transitioning into and out of institutions of higher education

4. Delivery of Student Services
   - Apply knowledge of diverse audiences in the development, communication, delivery, and assessment of programs, curricula, and services
   - Identify target populations and use appropriate marketing strategies to maximize program effectiveness
   - Implement accessible and engaging programs incorporating innovative techniques and technology to meet the needs of a diverse audience, AND Graduates should be able to Integrate the CSSA Core Values and Principles into their Demonstration of Competencies/Portfolio

5. The Developing Professional
   - Define professional development needs and interests for continued growth including opportunities for future contributions to the body of knowledge

2. 「仕方がない」(shikata ga nai) is not giving up, but help us to continue our lives

1. Knowledge and Understanding of Higher Education and Student Affairs
   - Understand the primary challenges and opportunities being presented to student affairs professionals
• Identify goals, trends, and key issues related to the future of the student affairs profession

3. Two Fundamental Cs: Collaboration and Curiosity.

1. Knowledge and Understanding of Higher Education and Student Affairs
   • Articulate knowledge of historical and philosophical underpinnings of past and current issues shaping the field of student affairs and the student experience
   • Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the range, scope, and roles of different functional areas within higher education

2. Professional Skills and Organizational Management
   • Comprehend organizational structure, dynamics, and systems
   • Communicate and collaborate effectively and appropriately with constituents both internal and external to the institution, considerate of cultural and linguistic diversity

4. Delivery of Student Services
   • Apply knowledge of diverse audiences in the development, communication, delivery, and assessment of programs, curricula, and services
   • Identify target populations and use appropriate marketing strategies to maximize program effectiveness
   • Implement accessible and engaging programs incorporating innovative techniques and technology to meet the needs of a diverse audience, AND Graduates should be

5. The Developing Professional
   • Establish a commitment to engage in ongoing inquiry throughout one’s career or articulate the value/appreciation of ongoing inquiry and engagement, AND Graduates should be able to Integrate the CSSA Core Values and Principles into their Demonstration of Competencies/Portfolio

4. The Constitution is like a shield, but some people may not be able to use it.

1. Knowledge and Understanding of Higher Education and Student Affairs
   • Identify legal issues that impact higher education, field of student affairs, institutional policy and the student experience, AND Graduates should be able to Integrate the CSSA Core Values and Principles into their Demonstration of Competencies/Portfolio
5. Honey Badger and the Sun

2. Professional Skills and Organizational Management

- Identify and evaluate leadership styles, including one’s own, in various settings
- Demonstrate the ability to take initiative and lead in meetings and on projects or other tasks
- Recognize best practices and challenges in human resources/personnel management
- Demonstrate flexibility and adaptability in changing circumstances, employing decision-making and problem-solving skills, AND Graduates should be able to Integrate the CSSA Core Values and Principles into their Demonstration of Competencies/Portfolio

5. The Developing Professional

- Identify one’s professional values and ethics

6. A professional has to wear multiple hats to manage budget and finance

2. Professional Skills and Organizational Management

- Synthesize fiscal information, including budget constraints and resources allocation

7. Listening is fundamental for our work, and there are various ways to do so

3. Knowledge and Understanding of Student Populations and Student Development

- Assess the impact of varied higher educational settings and institutional types on the student experience
- Apply varying approaches and relevant technology to communicating with different students and student populations, AND Graduates should be able to Integrate the CSSA Core Values and Principles into their Demonstration of Competencies/Portfolio

4. Delivery of Student Services

- Utilize research and assessment data to identify needs and establish learning outcomes for the development of programs and services
- Design and implement assessment tools and interpret data to inform future programs

5. The Developing Professional
- Define professional development needs and interests for continued growth including opportunities for future contributions to the body of knowledge
1. **Student Development theory** is like an x-ray for students and a mirror for professionals

1. **Knowledge and Understanding of Higher Education and Student Affairs**
   - Understand the primary challenges and opportunities being presented to student affairs professionals
   - Understand systems of privilege and oppression and the impact of these on institutional systems or organizations
   - Identify goals, trends, and key issues related to the future of the student affairs profession

3. **Knowledge and Understanding of Student Populations and Student Development**
   - Understand the impact of student identity, cultural heritage, and institutional and societal systems (including power and privilege), on identity development, personal growth, individual perspectives, and students’ experiences
   - Recognize various dimensions of identity and the intersectionality of those dimensions in the lives and learning experiences of students
   - Analyze and apply concepts and theories of student and human development to enhance work with students
   - Identify and articulate issues students face when transitioning into and out of institutions of higher education

4. **Delivery of Student Services**
   - Apply knowledge of diverse audiences in the development, communication, delivery, and assessment of programs, curricula, and services
   - Identify target populations and use appropriate marketing strategies to maximize program effectiveness
   - Implement accessible and engaging programs incorporating innovative techniques and technology to meet the needs of a diverse audience, AND Graduates should be able to Integrate the CSSA Core Values and Principles into their Demonstration of Competencies/Portfolio

5. **The Developing Professional**
   - Define professional development needs and interests for continued growth including opportunities for future contributions to the body of knowledge

**With Great Power Comes Great Responsibility**

Student development theory is an imperative tool for a student affairs professional to gain deeper understanding of the students whom they assist (Evans et al, 2010). By applying theories, we will be able to improve the accountability and efficiency of our work which directly influences the development of students. Learning about student development theories and observing how they are used in practice, one phrase came to mind, “With great power comes
great responsibility” (Cronin, 2015). This phrase originally came from a comic book, Spider Man, but I learned this phrase from an instructor at my alma mater in Japan. The more I learn about student development theories, the more this phrase resonated with the application of theories, and has been implanted in my mind.

If a theory is used appropriately, the support, advice, classes, and programs we offer at an institution will be meaningful and beneficial for students. On the other hand, if it is misused, the damage that we cause to students will be enormous. It is unquestionable that student development theories are irreplaceable tools for us to be more intentional and mindful of our impact on students, but at the same time, we are required to be cautious on how to apply them. We have to remember that theories are tools, not rules. If theories are used by professionals as rules, then we might invalidate students or their experiences by judging, but also take away their strength and the opportunity for them to overcome their challenges. Reflecting on my personal experience as an international student and my learning through the graduate school, there were times theories were used as rules for international students. At a NAFSA conference in Alaska last October, there was a professional who pointed out the difficulties of applying student development theories to the entire population of international students. Although we have to be mindful and cautious of how we apply the theories, I still believe that student development theories will help us to understand and assist our students.

In this section, I would like to reflect on the application of student development theories. First, I would like to discuss in detail how some theories might not illustrate students’ development by focusing on two theories. After covering the basic knowledge of those theories, I will address elements which professionals must consider in order to not misuse the theories. Furthermore, although using student development theories requires great caution, they are still
useful tools for us to deepen our understanding of students. I will also introduce a couple of theories which may be more applicable for the population of international students. At the end, I am going to reflect on how I, as a professional, am planning to apply student development theories and what I can do to utilize them effectively.

**Moral Development and Self-Authorship**

In this section, I will reflect on the application of two student development theories: Kohlberg’s moral development theory (1985) and Baxter Magolda’s self-authorship (1992) (as cited in Evans, et al., 2010). First, before covering what those theories are, I would like to talk about why I chose these theories. Through my experience as a Graduate Teaching Assistant of the Sponsored Student Program, I had the opportunity to interact with both domestic and international students who are sponsored by a government or company. The majority of communications with them were held via email, but I seldom had the opportunity to talk to them in person. When students are facing difficulties related to their sponsorship, sometimes their attitude became blunt or aggressive reflecting their stress. Of course, it is natural to be upset in this kind of situation; however, some of their reactions or communication styles overwhelmed me because they were not hesitant to explicitly express their negative feelings such as anger or frustration towards us. After I got some experience in the office, some colleagues told me that people have to negotiate regarding administrative procedures, be persistent about negotiations, and are allowed to express both positive and negative emotions directly in some cultures. Furthermore, according to the video by Harvard Business Review (2015), negotiation styles can differ drastically depending on a culture. For example, Japan, where I am from, is listed among the countries on the video which are “emotionally unexpressive.” On the other hand, Saudi Arabia, where many sponsored students are from, is listed as one of the “emotionally expressive”
nations (Harvard Business Review, 2015). After learning a little more about their cultural background and reflecting on my own cultural background, this understanding of cultural differences helped me to not take interactions with them personally. This also helped me be more empathetic towards students and the situation they are in, and my communication with the students became more productive and calm. These experiences reminded me that the behaviors or customs which are considered to be acceptable or normal in one culture are not necessarily perceived as acceptable in another culture. This experience provided me with opportunities to consider the relationships between moral developments, cultural expectations, and different ways of expressing emotions. In some conversations with international students, I noticed that some professionals apply their own cultural background and norms to international students who possess different cultural background and norms. I do not deny the fact that international students need to learn a new system, culture, and the customs of their host community in order to make their studying abroad experience fruitful. However, we, the people of the host community, also have to learn about the students’ cultures and meaning-making frameworks in order to effectively assist them.
Another theory which I found unfamiliar was Baxter Magolda’s theory of self-authorship. Before I start talking about why I felt unfamiliar with the theory, I would like to share a Japanese phrase, 「空気を読む」 “Kuuki wo yomu”, which literally means “read the atmosphere.” In English, this phrase is similar to “read between the lines”. However, the meaning of “Kuuki wo yomu” does not simply mean sensing your surroundings, but also behaving in an expected way by others. This ability is a critical skill for adults to maintain their relationships. I am not stating that all Japanese feel this way; however, based on my experience in Japan, I felt that this notion came up not only at work, but also in my personal life on a daily basis. After I worked in Japan for several years, I have learned that the ability to read the atmosphere is considered to be a sign of maturity in Japan. However, living in the United States for the third time, I have also learned that articulating one’s thoughts or opinions, even if others disagree with them, is considered to be a characteristic of maturity. In fact, participating in discussions during class is an important part of the grade. These two characteristics are contradictory; however, they are both perceived as part of maturity depending on the culture. For example, a student may prioritize his parents’ desires or interest. This student may be considered to be mature because he is following what is expected of him without being selfish in one culture. However, this student could be considered immature because he has not stood up for himself to pursue his desired path in another culture.

What is considered a sign of maturity changes depending on the culture. Although the United States is described as a multicultural nation, it is dominated by Western culture. If instructors or educators at an institution do not possess any understanding of other cultures and apply their culture to non-Western students, those students’ intentions and behavior can be misinterpreted.

In order to discuss the application of these two theories, brief explanations of the theories are covered in the following section.
Kohlberg’s Moral Development Theory

Lawrence Kohlberg is an America psychologist who is a leading theorist of moral development theory (Evans, et al., 2010; Gielen, 1991). Kohlberg’s study stemmed from a study by Jean Piaget studying how children develop their moral reasoning, and Kohlberg focused on adolescents and adults (Evans, et al., 2010; Kohlberg, 1991). From this study, Kohlberg identified three different stages: preconventional, conventional, and postconventional levels, and each level contains two stages. Kohlberg (2011) suggests “think of them as three different types of relationships between the self and society’s rules and expectations” (p.402).

Individuals who are in the first level have not built a strong connection between themselves and the rules and expectations of society; those social impositions are external to them. For instance, people in the first stage, Heteronomous Morality, can control themselves from harming others; however, their avoidance of violence to others is not from morality but to avoid punishment. These people rely on authorities to decide what is right or not, and they also do not concern themselves with their own rights or others’. People in the second stage, Individualist Instrumental Morality, are not only aware of the needs and wants of others, but also their own interests may not align with others’. In this stage, rightness is decided by fairness and agreement; however, they tend to follow rules which benefit themselves.

When people move to the conventional level, they have a better understanding of society’s rules and expectations, and those rules are internalized. Reflecting on this characteristic, authorities have more power to influence people in the conventional level. Individuals who are in the third stage, Interpersonally Normative Morality, care greatly about earning the approval of family and friends and maintaining an image of a “good person” (p.104). Consequently, people in this stage may put others’ interests over their own. When people move
to the next stage, *Social System Morality*, they strive not only to follow society’s rules, but also try to fulfil the duties or responsibilities which they agreed to. Their definition of rightness is defined whether their actions or decisions contribute to “society, the group, or institution” which they belong to (Kohlberg, 2011. p.405).

The highest level of Kohlberg’s moral development theory is postconventional. People in this level have a better understanding of society’s rules and expectations than people in the other levels, but also can separate themselves from those social impositions. Accordingly, they are capable of “defin[ing] values in terms of self-chosen principles.” (Kohlberg, 2011. p.403). When people achieve stage five, *Human Rights and Social Welfare Morality*, they no longer follow the rules, but start to evaluate the imposed rules from society and whether they value and promote fundamental human rights such as life and liberty. According to Kohlberg, only a few individuals reach this highest stage, *Morality of Universalizable, Reversible, and Prescriptive General Ethical Principles*. (as cited in Evans et al, 2010). Famous historical leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr or Mahatma Gandhi are a few of the people who are said they have reached this level. People in this level follow the rules presented by society as long as they value ethical principles. If society’s rules such as laws violate ethical principles, they start to follow their self-chosen ethical principles. The self-chosen ethical principles “are universal principle of justice: the equality of human rights and respect for the dignity of human beings as individual persons.” (Gielen, 1991. p.29).

A major criticism of the theory is whether this it is truly universal and applicable in non-Western cultures. Kohlberg himself went to Taiwan and conducted a follow-up study borrowing help from his anthropologist friends in 1962 (Kohlberg, 1991). In addition to the study, Kohlberg (1991) states that at least over fifty studies were conducted to examine whether the theory is still
valid, or not when it is applied in other cultures. In the same article, he states that preconventional and conventional levels are identified in most cultures, and the fifth stage was also observed in non-Western countries such as Taiwan, Japan, and India (Kohlberg, 1991).

In the section, What to Consider when Applying Theories, I will illustrate why we have to be cautious when applying the theory to international students.

**Baxter Magolda’s Self-Authorship Theory**

Another theory which requires us to be extra circumspect on its application is Baxter Magolda’s self-authorship theory (as cited in Evans et al. 2010). Through her past studies, she found that “epistemological development was intertwined with the development of their sense of self and relationships with others.” (Evans et al. 2010). In order to examine the development process of self-authorship, Baxter Magolda studied college students at Miami University following a study of Kegan (p.183). According to Baxter Magolda, self-authorship means “the internal capacity to define one’s beliefs, identity, and social relations” (Baxter Magolda, 2008, as cited in Evans et al., 2010. p.183). Consequently, people who successfully constructed their sense of self-authorship are able to make decisions on their own, even if others may not agree with their decisions. In order to reach the highest phase, Baxter Magolda states the following elements are critical for the development of self-authorship: “trusting the internal voice, building an internal foundation, and securing internal commitment” (as cited in Evans et al. 2010, p.186). According to her theory, there are four phases in order for people to develop self-authorship.

Individuals who are in the first phase, *Following Formulas*, rely on “external authorities” to make decisions (Evans, et al, 2010). Those people may think that they are making decisions
on their own; however, their decisions are greatly influenced by authorities such as parents, partners, or mentors. It is also crucial for them to maintain relationship with those people. People who are in the phase two, *Crossroads*, realize that they cannot obtain fulfillment or happiness by following authorities, so they start to explore new solutions. In the third phase, *Becoming the Author of One’s Life*, individuals become capable of choosing their beliefs and their perspectives even if others do not agree with the point of view. They also realize that life contains ambiguities and start to take context of situations in their consideration. Individuals who are in the last phase, *Internal Foundation*, succeeded to construct “their self-determined belief system” (Evans et al., 2010). They have a clear sense of who they are and how to build relationships with others. They examine external influence; however, they will not be affected by them greatly anymore. Those people are not only capable of “accepting of ambiguity”, but also are “open to change” (p.186).

Baxter Magolda acknowledges that one of the weaknesses of the theory is the homogeneous nature of participants, and she calls for more research to examine this theory with diverse participants. Furthermore, in order to apply the theory effectively, she emphasizes “the need for students and educators to work together to develop student self-authorship. (p.191). As her words indicates, theories are not rules to judge our students, but tools to understand them better.

**What to Consider When Applying Theories**

In order to utilize tool effectively, we also have to familiarize ourselves with the tools down sides. In this section, I would like to discuss three elements of what to consider when we apply a theory to students and our work: demographics of participants of study, critique of theories, and cultural differences.
The first element to consider is whom researchers studied in order to support their theories. According to Henrich, Heine, and Norenzayan (2010), not only that the majority of behavioral science research has been studying “WEIRD” populations, but researchers have also been claiming their findings as applicable to people universally. The word, “WEIRD”, stands for “Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic” (Henrich et al., 2010. p.61). A recent analysis of top psychological journals unveiled that 68% of participants of behavioral science research are from the United States, and 96% of participants are from “Western industrialized countries, specifically those in North America and Europe, as well as Australia and Israel” (As cited in Henrich et al., 2010. p.63). Another research indicates that 70% of psychology citations are from the United States while the citation number of the field of chemistry remains 37% (Henrich et al., 2010). As the numbers indicate, the demographics of behavioral science research has been mainly studying “the nature of WERID people, a certainly narrow and potentially peculiar subpopulation.” (p.62). The researchers also claim that the lack of diversity in participants would have been less problematic if researchers did not generalize their findings for all of “human or people based on research done entirely with WEIRD undergraduates” and publish them in leading scientific journals or university textbooks as if they are universally applicable (Henrich et al., 2010. P.63). The Western countries’ population is 12% of the total world population, and how could those 12% of people can represent the rest of people (Henrich et al., 2010)?

For instance, Henrich et al (2010) refers to the moral development theory of Kohlberg. One of the studies they reviewed indicates that there are three dimensions of morality (p.73). The morality which “reply principally on justice- and harm/ care-based principles” can be observed people in Western countries. This “dominant justice-based morality” which is also called as an
‘ethic of autonomy’, aligns with what Kohlberg’s moral development theory (p.73). The second morality is “an ethic of community” which comes from an individual strives to fulfil “interpersonal obligations that are tired to an individual’s role within the social order” (p.73). Another morality is “an ethic of divinity” which people believes that their body is like a temple, “so personal choices that seem to harm nobody else are sometimes moralized (e.g., about food, sex, and hygiene)” (p.73). People who believe in this morality also strives to have a positive relationship with holiness by fulfilling religious obligations. (p.73). Kohlberg’s theory is captures moral development of “WEIRD” population. However, when we apply the theory to people from different populations, their development may not be captured by Kohlberg’s theory. If a professional determines that those people are underdeveloped, then this professional is using Kohlberg’s theory as a rule instead of a tool. Instead of using student development theory as rule, we should explore solutions from broader perspectives using other tools by such as utilizing other theories, learning new culture or education system to understand situation and students. As it is mentioned at the beginning, student development theory is like an x-ray when it is applied to students. It shows a moment of students’ development; however, we cannot obtain a full story. We have to use different theories and take other elements such as cultural and educational background in our consideration in order to deepen our understanding of students.

Another factor we have to keep in our mind is to understand critiques of theories along with theories themselves. As it is already discussed, there are number of researchers who claims that Kohlberg’s theory is not universal (Evans, et al., 2010). Baxter Magolda also acknowledges that more research studying diverse population is needed “particularly those who come from more communally oriented cultures” (as cited in Evans, et al, 2010). By understanding critiques
of theories, it will help us to decide which theory to apply, and also prevent us from obtaining inaccurate information of students.

The last element which we must pay attention is cultural differences. This notion came up earlier multiple times; however, I would like to discuss about this topic in depth. First of all, what is culture? According to Brett (2014), cultures can be seen “in the patterns of peoples’ belief, attitudes, norms, and behaviors as well as in the nature of the social, economic, political, legal, and religious institutions that structure and organize groups.” (p.25). She states that like all of us have personalities; cultures also have characteristics. Moreover, culture is reflected in a cultural norm which determines “appropriate behavior, that guides effective social interaction” (Brett, 2014, p. 26).

Although it is impossible to describe all of cultures, there are three prototypes of cultures which captures its characteristics: dignity, face, and honor. Every prototype is explained in terms of “power and status, sensitivity to insult, confrontation style, trust, ad mindsets” (p.30). By being aware of those cultural prototypes, we can avoid misinterpretations of others’ behaviors, and gain stories of the other side. This helps to build tolerance towards unfamiliar customs or practices, and not to take things personally. Brett (2014) made those points in terms of international negotiation; however, her points can be applied to student affairs professionals when they interact with students who have different cultural backgrounds.

The prototype of Western culture is called dignity culture (Brett, 2014). One of the characteristics of people in the culture is how they come to determine their self-worth. Self-worth is intrinsic and individuals determine on their own, not by others in the society. Moreover, because their notion of power and status is egalitarian, there is not much hierarchy compared to other cultures. People are “equal to every other member of the society” (Brett, 2014. p.31).
Therefore, people are entitled to express their opinions in a direct way as long as they remain rational and unemotional. People in this culture have low sensitivity towards insult from others because their self-worth is not easily threatened.

The prototype which can be found in Asian cultures, especially in East Asia, is face culture (Brett, 2014). Unlike the dignity culture, self-worth is determined by others in the society. Accordingly, retaining harmony among the group is critical, and conflicts are considered to be something that needs to be avoided. If one failed to do so, it is considered to be as “violation of duties and obligations” (p.34). Reflecting this characteristic, the communication style of face culture tends to be indirect and emotion must be controlled. When a conflict occurs, people tend to refer to authorities to resolve the situation.

The third prototype of culture is honor culture which can be found in the areas such as the Middle East, Latin America, and North Africa (p.29). Their determination of self-worth has both element of dignity and face cultures, and it is “an individual’s estimate of his own value as socially claimed from and recognized by society” (p.37. Their social structure also has both side of dignity and face cultures, and explained as “hierarchical” but also “dynamic” (p.30). Recent studies found that people in honor culture tends to respond to insult “aggressively, defensively, and directly to others” (p.37). However, because honor is bestowed by others, another aspect of their communication is described as “trustworthy and gracious” (p.37).

I do not believe that we will be able to know everything about international students’ background or their cultures by knowing these three different types of cultural prototypes. As we already know, coming from the same country does not mean they are the same people. Every single person is a complex individual who has different cultures and identities. Therefore,
knowing the types of culture is not enough to truly understand who they really are. However, I believe knowing the basic knowledge, it will offer us a starting point to get to know our students.

Evans et al (2010) states that applying multiple theories can give us “more comprehensive understanding of development” by “integrating concepts from several theories” (p.28). In addition to that, keeping in our minds who participated in research, what critiques or advice were made by other researchers and theorists, and what cultural factors may be influencing the situation, we will be able to utilize theories effectively and gain more information about students.

**Gilligan’s Theory of Women’s Moral Development**

In this section, although there are many theories that are applicable to understand a diverse population of students, I would like to introduce two theories that I found more useful in understanding some populations of international students. However, I would like to emphasize that no matter what theory we use, we must always ask ourselves why we are using the theory and whether there are any prejudices reflected in our applications. In addition to these questions, we have to be aware of the critiques of the theories. In the following section, brief explanations of the two theories and the reasons why I thought they are applicable to use for some international students will be covered.

The first theory I thought which may help us to understand some international students is Gilligan’s theory of Women’s Moral Development (1982). While a number of theorists including Kohlberg had not considered women “as a group worthy of psychological study,” Carol Gilligan studied the moral reasoning of females (Evans et al. 2010). The former researchers defined that individuals who are at an advanced level of morality as autonomous, universalist, and individualist (Evans et al. 2010. p.111). Instead of focusing only on males and
those characteristics of morality, Carol Gilligan studied women’s moral development which brought “the themes of care and justice” (p.111). All of her participants were female who were confronted with making a decision about whether to have an abortion, or not.

According to her theory, there are three levels and two transition periods to reach the highest level of morality. The first phase they experience is level one, *Orientation to Individual Survival*. People who are in this level only focus on themselves and cannot differentiate between one’s personal needs and wants and the needs and wants of others. Accordingly, they tend to isolate themselves from others and cannot construct relationships. Their primary focus is to satisfy one’s needs and wants in order to survive. The following phase is first transition: *From Selfishness to Responsibility*. Individuals who move to this transition phase can differentiate between what they want and what they need, and start to value building relationships with others. Their moral decision making starts to consider “[r]esponsibility and care” (Evans et al. 2010 p.112). When individuals transition to level two, *Goodness as Self-Sacrifice*, their understanding of survival becomes inclusive of social acceptance. Some people at this level might sacrifice their own needs or desires in order to be accepted by others. Although they can identify both their own and others’ necessities and desires, they tend to put others’ first. However, that causes them to have an internal conflict, which is hard to observe from others’ eyes. The last transition is *From Goodness to Truth*. People in this transition phase start to explore solutions which consider both sides, desires and needs of others and their own. This transition is the first time for them to consider their “needs as truth, not selfishness” (Evans et al. 2010, p. 113). Although they attempt to resolve the struggles between their own needs and responsibility, this struggle cannot be resolved at this transition yet. The highest morality is level three, *the Morality of Nonviolence*. The moral judgment of people in this level avoids hurting both others and also
themselves; their priority is to be nonviolent. They resolved the struggle of “dichotomization of selfishness and responsibility,” and they integrated self respect in to their moral judgement (p.113).

Similar to other theories, one of the critiques of this theory is whether it is applicable to people outside of Western culture. One study to test the validity was conducted in Korea, Thailand, the People’s Republic of China, and the United States among both female and male students in college. They answered questionnaires, and females exhibited a higher ethic of care than male students in all four countries (p. 115). Although the result of the study shows a similar result from Gilligan’s original study in some non-Western cultural contexts, studies which examine the validity of a study in different cultural settings must be continued to deepen our understanding of the theories and moral development of diverse populations.

Considering the characteristics of face culture, such as emphasis on maintaining harmony among the group, it seems that Gilligan’s theory might be able to capture the moral development of people from face cultures. For instance, Huang (2012) states that the meaning of adulthood varies depending on culture. In the United States, self-sufficiency, autonomy, and independence are valued and considered as characteristics of adults. On the other hand, adulthood means “self-control and obligation to other people, giving less emphasis to individualist transitions” in Chinese culture (p.141). Taking those different definitions of adulthood, there is a high possibility that students from a face culture tend to prioritize other’s needs or wants over theirs in order to fulfill a social responsibility as an adult. Accordingly, they may be focusing on ethic of care more than “understanding rights and rules” as Kohlberg’s theory states (Evans et al. 2010. P.111). If students who are from a face culture show that they are concerned with how others
perceive themselves, it may help us to apply Gilligan’s theory instead of Kohlberg’s theory to gain more information about the students.

**Challenge and Support by Sanford**

Every student experiences obstacles when they undergo the transition to college, and this can be, as we already know, challenging and stressful. In the case of international students, their obstacles do not stay at school, but even expand to activities in daily life such as talking to others and going grocery shopping. International students encounter a number of challenges while their local support system is not as stable as most domestic students. According to Nevitt Sanford (1966), there are three conditions which produce development: “readiness, challenge, and support” (p.30). Sanford claims development cannot occur unless an individual is ready to do so. This readiness is influenced by the characteristics of individual and supportive environments. If students experience excessive challenges from the environment and do not receive sufficient support, there is a good chance that students will not be able to adequately adopt to the new environment and try to escape the challenge. If escaping is not an option, they may ignore it and do not address the difficulties. On the other hand, if a student experiences too little challenge in the environment, students feel comfortable and satisfied with the environment which does not encourage their development.

Although many student affairs professionals know that transitional experiences to college can be an adversity for students, every single student’s experiences are unique. By applying this theory, it gives us a starting point to identify what the challenges are for students. Furthermore, international students are from different countries and cultures; accordingly, their challenges are more likely to differ from most domestic students. Hearing students’ stories and also applying Sanford’s theory of challenge and support, we might be able to identify the unique challenges of
the students we are supporting. I believe this theory reminds us to always listen to students and identify their challenges in order to assist them to move forward.

**Reflecting on Applications of Theory is Our Mirror**

When we learn student development theories, our primal attention is how to apply to our students. When we apply for students, it is like an X-ray, which helps us to capture a moment of a student’s development. It provides us framework to understand what students are going through, but also may offer a hint of why they are going through. Just seeing an X-ray does not show us everything what is going on, but we gain some information to understand our students better. When we use this tool, our application of student development theory becomes a mirror which reflects our prejudices, values, and pre-conceived ideas about ourselves. For instance, when I interacted with sponsored students who were not hesitant to express their frustration, I tried to apply Kohlberg’s theory. By applying the theory, I thought these students were not still at the stage where they can manage their emotions and follow social system. However, after I learned some information of their culture, I came to understand that I was applying my cultural background, which is face culture. Furthermore, what I consider appropriate is a mixture of Japanese and American cultures. If I kept the first application of theory as truth and did not consider how my meaning-making affected the application of the theory, I could not have sincere interactions with them, and damaged relationships among the students, sponsors, and us, the institution. When we apply theories, we also have to examine our application of the theories so we will not put our cultural norms on students and misunderstand them.

Then, what are concrete plans to do so? First of all, I must not forget that student development theories are powerful tools, which help us to understand students and their experiences. However, student development theories are never rules. If I misuse them, there is
risk of silencing students’ voices. In order to avoid misusing them, I have to familiarize myself with numbers of theories and should not conclude my understanding of students based on one theory (Evans et al, 2010). Furthermore, it is critical to access “literature that discusses existing and newly introduced theory, as well as ongoing research and innovative use of theory” (Evans et al, 2010, p.27). At most of institutions, administrators can obtain an access to library and literature. If I could get this privilege, I should utilize it fully to continue learning. Furthermore, attending conference or workshops will help me to update my knowledge to the date and gain new ideas of application of theories or interventions. Unlike reading research articles, this may provide me an opportunity to ask questions to researchers, theorists, and practitioners from other institutions. I can also obtain information by even just connecting with other professionals and hearing their stories. When I attended NAFSA conference in Alaska last October, I attended a session which discussed about the application of student development theory to international students, and heard ideas and concerns regarding it. Having a big network and being able to discuss the application are undeniably beneficial for us to grow as a professional. In order to do so, sharing an application of theory in a meeting or presenting at a conference will create opportunities to expand community and also provide us opportunities to gain feedbacks from other professionals. The most importantly, I have to actively listen to students with curiosity. Without listening to them, I will never be able to offer helpful support to them. The things I listed here are already written and claimed by numbers of researchers. However, if I stop reminding myself that student development theory is a tool, the application can lead to numbers of problems.

I firmly believe that student affairs professionals should utilize student development theories so we can increase accountability and effectiveness of our services. However, in the case
of professionals who work with international students, they not only need to be familiar with student development theories which studied the WEIRD population, but also must expand our knowledge of other theories which were based on non-WEIRD populations. Combining both those theories, we will be able to understand different points of view from both the host community side and international student side. By being a bridge between international students and the host community, I believe we will be able to support international students to reach their goals, and also provide international experiences to people in the host community. In order to do so, I must not only continue to expand my knowledge, but must also advocate for voices which are new to American higher education. As I discussed earlier, not many studies are done for international students compared to domestic students. If there is a situation where student development theories are used as rules, then as a professional, I have a responsibility to raise a question and bring different students’ voices to the table. By applying student development theories as rules and advocating for minority voices, I believe we can use this powerful tool effectively and responsibly.
2. 「仕方がない」 (shikata ga nai) is not giving up, but help us to continue our lives

1. Knowledge and Understanding of Higher Education and Student Affairs

- Understand the primary challenges and opportunities being presented to student affairs professionals
- Identify goals, trends, and key issues related to the future of the student affairs profession

「仕方がない」 (Shikata ga nai). It means “It is what it is.” or “It cannot be helped.” in Japanese. When I heard this phrase, I used to take this phrase as a sign of weakness, a suggestion to give up or an excuse for not doing one’s best. However, by researching and learning about the untold history of underrepresented populations through the Ethnohistory Methodology class, my perspective on this phrase has changed. In the course, we collected historical information at the OSU and Philomath archives and analyzed them in order to create stories. At the end of the term, we conducted a Social Justice Tour of Corvallis and presented the stories we created based on the collected data. One of the stories I wrote was about two Japanese American brothers: Kay and Tsuyoshi Yasui. Both of them were born in Hood River, Oregon, and their stories have taught me two life lessons. The first lesson I gained from their story is “Shikata ga nai” is not a sign of giving up, but it helps us to accept reality and move on. The second lesson is how to work with others who possess different identities.

One of the core reasons why I decided to apply for the CSSA program was to gain and deepen my understanding of social justice and how to apply it to our work. However, I have felt powerless during the program because there were times when I could not stand up for myself, or respond to unequal situations as I wished. I will probably face similar challenges even after I become a professional; however, I believe that reminding myself of those two lessons will help me to continue my journey of social justice.
In the following section, I will talk about the stories of Kay and Tsuyoshi and how I came to find new meaning in “Shikata ga nai.” Then, I will discuss a key point of working with others which I gained from this Social Justice Tour.

The lesson of 『仕方がない』 “Shikata ga nai” by Yasui Brothers

Before introducing the story I wrote for the Yasui brothers, I would like to talk about their backgrounds. According to the book of the Yasui family’s story, Stubborn Twig, Kay and Tsuyoshi Yasui were Japanese Americans who were born at Hood River, Oregon. (Kessler, 1995). Their father, Masuo Yasui, was an immigrant from Okayama prefecture, Japan, as was their mother, Shizuyo. Masuo came to the United States in 1903, and Shizuyo came to the new country to marry Masuo in 1912. Their first child was Kay who was born in 1913, and Tsuyoshi was born 16 months later. Through the historical documents, they show that these two brothers had distinctive characteristics. For example, Kay was described in the book as a brilliant boy who loved to read and explore nature, but shy. His intelligence was also acknowledged at school. In contrast, Tsuyoshi was an outgoing and energetic boy, but did not excel in academics as Kay did. However, the data I found indicates that his easygoingness was a strength he used to overcome the challenges he faced as Nisei Japanese American. For instance, when Tsuyoshi was in middle school, his white classmates called him “Chop” because “Chop Yasui” sounds like the Chinese dish, Chop Suey (p.130). However, Tsuyoshi was not offended by this, but started to use the nickname on his own. Although his classmates came up with the nickname to make fun of his race, Tsuyoshi was not offended by this, but rather embraced his new nickname. This was one of the stories in which Tsuyoshi showed me how to move on when we face difficulty, so we do not victimize ourselves but accept it as it is and address the situation, the spirit of “Shikata ga nai.”
I wrote the story for the Social Justice Tour mainly from the perspective of Tsuyoshi talking about his life as a second-generation Japanese American (Nisei), Kay’s death, and the spirit of “Shikata ga nai.”

The blue text at the beginning and the end is a narrative to provide historical context to the Japanese-American experience. The black text is a story I wrote from the perspective of Tsuyoshi based on historical data that I collected. The green text is a poem written by Kay the year that he passed away.

---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

「仕方がない」, “Shikata ga nai” is a Japanese phrase which can be directly translated into “There is nothing I can do” or “It can’t be helped.” However, the phrase carries more meaning than that. “Shikata ga nai” means accepting reality the way it is and acknowledging that there are times that you don’t have any control over situations. It is different from giving up, more like accepting reality and moving on, so you will not be stuck.

The Yasuis, a family of Japanese immigrants and Japanese Americans, were not an exception. Their second and third generations were well-known advocates for Japanese-American rights. This is a story of “Shikata ga nai” which Ray Tusyoshi Yasui and his brother, Kay, experienced.

My Japanese name is Tsuyoshi and my English name is Ray. Everyone except my parents call me “Chop”, I got this nickname from kids I used to play with. They said the sound of “Chop Yasui” sounds like Chop Suey which is a Chinese dish. I’m not Chinese, but it probably means the same to them. Shikata ga nai.

I told my dad that I don’t want to go to college, but my parents believed that I should get an education. My mom used to say, “No one can take away inside of your brain and education”. Shikata ga nai.

So I went to Oregon Agricultural College. I majored in Agriculture so that I can support my family’s farm after graduation. But the only class that I got an A in was Physical Education. My dorm mates at Poling Hall were also impressed that I can play any kind of sport. Although it wasn’t my decision to be there, I enjoyed my time. About one year later, I needed to leave college because I had to support my dad. Shikata ga nai.

If you choose to fight every single fight, you won’t last. If you get stuck in a moment, you don’t get anywhere. My brother, Kay, he fought and got stuck. I couldn’t tell exactly what he was feeling, but this poem taught me how much he was struggling.
You call me “Jap”
And boast, saying you yourself are American.
  My hair is black,
  My nose, you say, is flat.
  You insult and torment;
  You say you are my superior
  Because you are
  American.
  American,
If such a thing be true,
By what rights do you designate yourself
  American?
In your blue eyes, I see the Swede,
  You have the red hair of the Irish,
  Your mother’s mother was of Spain,
  Your father is from Britain’s soil.
  Trace your ancestry;
  Were they Indians of America?
  By what rights then,
  American,
  Are you American?
  Because you were born in this land
  Are you American?
  I, too, claim this land as my birthplace.
  As much American as you,
    I, too,
    Am American.

(as cited in Turner, 2015)

Although he’s gone, those words still stuck with me.
Kay was an ideal son and student. He was a genius and exceeded everyone’s expectations. No one doubted that he would be a leader of the community like my father. He was so perfect that nobody could beat him at anything. But maybe that is why he knew that his look would limit his future.

On February 27th, 1931, he stopped fighting. He drank rat poison. When I saw his face, there was a little smile. The doctors call this “the death smile”.

There are many situations where you just have to move on. But is it really “Shikata ga nai” that people are judged by how they look? Is it really “Shikata ga nai”?

From learning about their life and writing this story, the notion of “Shikata ga nai” matched with another notion which was discussed frequently during the CSSA program,
“Choosing a battle to fight.” Through my time at Oregon State University, I have met professionals who are passionate about bringing equality to their work, and one challenge emerged frequently. Even though social justice is a vital part of student affairs professionals, it does not mean that things can be changed instantly. In order to make a meaningful and long-lasting change, we have to address not a symptom but the cause of an issue. In other words, it takes time to create meaningful change. If we are frustrated by the fact that it takes time to make changes, gain others’ understanding, or if there are not many options for us to act on, our time and energy will not be used effectively or efficiently. If we get caught in the moment or event, it will exhaust us and prevent from us reaching our ultimate goal, to change oppressive systems and bring equality to society. This is my interpretation of the data I gathered about the Yasui brothers’ experience, so I am probably not capturing every aspect of their life. However, Tsuyoshi’s experience reminded me that if we do not learn how to let things go, we will be caught by a moment or event, and we will not be able to move forward. As Kay expressed his experience and feelings in his poetry, life can be unfair. Even if the message we want to convey is valid, it can be dismissed. In such a situation, I believe we have to remind ourselves what our ultimate goal is and the notion of “Shikata ga nai.” Kay and Tsuyoshi’s mother, Shizuyo, said that the first generation of Japanese Americans were required to remind themselves that it is “Shikata ga nai” to survive (p.71). By saying this phrase, it helped them not complain, and bear the excruciating struggles. Their stories made me realize that the phrase, “Shikata ga nai,” is not only to give up, but there is another meaning which helps us accept reality the way it is. In addition to that, it helps us observe and analyze the difficulty we are facing to find possible solutions within our capability. We will not be able to address reality without accepting the current situation, and I believe this lesson is applicable for professionals in student affairs. Being
patient with ourselves and others, we may be able to create changes even if those changes are small. I believe that applying the spirit of “Shikata ga nai,” I will be able to build my resilience and to keep facing and addressing the inequality which exists.

**Tips on Working with Others**

In one class, Dr. Larry Roper talked about his view of ethics, professionalism, and leadership. One of the most memorable lessons was that leadership is an extension of personal narrative. He also told us to think about experiences when we were mistreated or isolated to remind ourselves how it felt. It is different from holding a grudge, I interpreted it as remembering the pain so that I will not do the same to others. It is challenging to keep a balanced relationship with pain. If we focus too much on our pain, then we are controlled by negative feelings and cannot be constructive and address them. If we neglect the pain, we are not accepting reality and are neglecting ourselves. By remembering our own pain, we can be more empathetic to others and their pain.

**Bringing and Fostering Diversity.** This has been one of the hottest topics in the student affairs field. Cultivating diversity means that we should not only bring people from diverse populations, but foster respectful relationships among them despite the differences. Although there are differences among us in various ways, I believe exemplifying the lesson Dr. Roper shared with us is the first step to empathizing with others and standing up for ourselves and others.

I am not ignoring the fact that each of our stories is unique. For instance, I had not considered or questioned my identity regarding race deeply until I came to the United States. It is because I belong to the dominant culture and majority back home, so I did not need to think about it or address it. However, many Asian Americans are required to address their racial
identity, and experience challenges. I do not have the right or do not even think I can speak on behalf of them because our identity and experience are different. Although we have a number of differences, I believe we will be able to understand others’ pain and work together to address inequality. For example, I found connections from Kay’s poetry. In his poetry, he expressed his anger and frustration concerning the reality that people mistreated him based on his race. Though I am not an American like Kay, I relate to his frustration that some people, especially those who belong to the dominant culture, label me based on my race without knowing me, or tell me what my culture is even though they have never lived there. No matter what our identities are, we do not need others to tell us what we are and silence our voices. It is impossible for me to understand the experience of every person and cannot speak on behalf of them; however, thinking about the times when I was mistreated, will help me to understand the struggle of others’ struggle. When I become a professional, I will have the opportunity to work with people who have different identities from myself. I may not have the same experiences as them; however, recalling my experiences of mistreatment or isolation will be my compass to be respectful towards others.

Applying social justice awareness to our work is like a marathon instead of sprint. If we try to run like others, we will not be able to keep running. We have to find out on our own how to manage our speed. Sometimes it is “Shikata ga nai” to slow down or even pause in order to reach our goal. However, that pause is not a sign of giving up, but rather taking care of ourselves so we will be able to get back on the road. Furthermore, not holding a grudge but remembering our own pain will connect us with people who have different backgrounds or identities. Yes. Our experience is different. But we do not want to be mistreated or isolated. The first step to working with people who are different from us is to treat them in the way we want to be treated.
3. Two Fundamental Cs of Student Affairs Profession: Curiosity and Collaboration

1. Knowledge and Understanding of Higher Education and Student Affairs
   - Articulate knowledge of historical and philosophical underpinnings of past and current issues shaping the field of student affairs and the student experience
   - Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the range, scope, and roles of different functional areas within higher education

2. Professional Skills and Organizational Management
   - Comprehend organizational structure, dynamics, and systems
   - Communicate and collaborate effectively and appropriately with constituents both internal and external to the institution, considerate of cultural and linguistic diversity

4. Delivery of Student Services
   - Apply knowledge of diverse audiences in the development, communication, delivery, and assessment of programs, curricula, and services
   - Identify target populations and use appropriate marketing strategies to maximize program effectiveness
   - Implement accessible and engaging programs incorporating innovative techniques and technology to meet the needs of a diverse audience, AND Graduates should be

5. The Developing Professional
   - Establish a commitment to engage in ongoing inquiry throughout one’s career or articulate the value/appreciation of ongoing inquiry and engagement, AND Graduates should be able to Integrate the CSSA Core Values and Principles into their Demonstration of Competencies/Portfolio

When I started graduate school for the first time, I used to think that if I submit one document to one office, the document is automatically shared with other offices because they belong to one institution. For example, when I submitted my immunization record to an international office, then that should be somehow shared with other offices such as the medical center on campus. When I found out that I needed to submit the same documents to different offices on my own, I was frustrated with the situation and thought “I submitted the document already, why can’t they just forward to other office?”

Through obtaining knowledge and experience in the student affairs field, the first simpler image of university, as one big organization which shares everything, changed to more complex version, one big organization which oversees and manages a wide range of matters like government does. Considering both side of experiences, I found two fundamental elements of
student affairs profession: curiosity and collaboration. In the following, I would like to explain in
detail about those two Cs and why they are fundamental. In order to do so, I think it is important
to understand how the current universities and colleges of the United States become the way they
are, so a brief historical background of institutions will be covered. Then, I would like to
describe how indispensable collaboration and curiosity are to our work in this field by reflecting
on my classroom and work experiences over the past two years.

**Brief History of University and College in the United States**

It is undeniable that the institutions of the United States are considered to be among the
most prestigious in the world. As a matter of fact, the number of international students who
studied in the United States is 974,926 while the second leading nation, the United Kingdom,
hosted approximately 437,000 in the academic year 2014 to 2015 (IIE, n.d.; Reidy, 2017). In the
following academic year, the number of international students in the United States became
1,043,839 (IIE, n.d.). Although this number may change due to the current social climate, these
numbers can be interpreted that the United States is favored by students from all over the world
to pursue their education. The nation now possesses leading institutions in the world; however,
have those institutions always been the center of academia? As they are popular now, have
American colleges and universities always been successful at attracting and hosting a diverse
population as they are now? How have the demographics of the student population been changed?

The very first nine institutions which were built in the United States are Harvard
University, College of William and Mary, Yale University, University of Pennsylvania,
Princeton University, Colombia University, Brown University, Rutgers, the State University of
New Jersey, Dartmouth College, and they were established respectively in that order (Cohen &
Kisker, 2010. p. 25; Rudolph, 1990). All those institutions, which were established prior to 1770, were affiliated with various sects of Christianity; however, their main purpose of education in this era was to educate young men to become leaders not only for church but also for state (Thelin & Gasman, 2011, p. 4). In order to instruct male adolescents to be American leaders, those universities followed the education tradition of England which is called the collegiate way (Cohen & Kisker, 2010; Rudolph, 1990). In the collegiate way, students resided in “a small residential college of only a few hundred members within the university, a residential college that serves as a campus home” so they could expand academic knowledge and be equipped with social manners (O’Hara, 2011). The curriculum was mainly based on liberal arts related (Cohen & Kisker, 2010. p.69).

Although institutions of the United States had their uniqueness to get where they are now, it cannot be discussed without talking about the significant influence of European universities. (Thelin & Gasman, 2011). Another model which influenced forming colleges and universities in the United States is the German universities (Thelin & Gasman, 2010, p. 11; Cohen & Kisker, 2010. p.70). By following their organizational frameworks, the value of American higher education shifted from liberal arts focused, integration of religion and education into science focused, secularism, and academic freedom (Cohen & Kisker, 2010; Rudolph, 1990; Thelin & Gasman, 2010). Professors were changed from clergymen to “civil servants” and Doctor of Philosophy programs were founded reflecting the new value. (Cohen & Kisker, 2010; Rudolph, 1990; Thelin & Gasman, 2010). It can be said that the British universities influenced current undergraduate experience, and the German universities influenced graduate schools (Cohen & Kisker, 2010. p.112). The institutions of the United States now enjoy fame as leading institutions
of the world; however, they once used to follow the steps of European universities and their influence can be observed in the current system.

One of current primary goals of the field is to create an inclusive environment and foster diversity on campus no matter who people are (ACPA, n.d.; NASPA, n.d.). However, this notion had not been established until the end of the twentieth century (Cohen & Kisker, 2010. p. 245). Contrasting with what we currently strive for, the first demographic of students was homogeneous, and only white male entered to universities (Chohen & Kisker, 2010. p.71). Although the colleges and universities proclaimed that they value “equality and egalitarianism, emphasizing that anyone with academic qualifications could attend,” those conditions were applied only to White male students (Cohen & Kisker, 2010. p. 113). In 1973, Lucinda Foote, who was a 12-year old female student, proved her capabilities at the entrance examination for Yale University, but was denied due to her sex (Rudolph, 1990. p. 307). In the early 1800s, some colleges were established for women; however, the women’s curricula were different from male students, and subjects were dedicated to train female students to be homemakers (Cohen & Kisker, 2010. P.65). Furthermore, students of colors were another population who also struggled to gain the quality education. For example, Black land grant institutions were established by the Morrill Act of 1890; however, the states where those schools were located were not willing to create those schools, but follow the bill in order to be funded (Rudolph, 1990. p.254; Thelin & Gasman, 2010. p.11). Although the bill, in terms of results, helped to found these institutions, it still allowed segregation of students of color.

As already mentioned, “Equity and Inclusion” and “Commitment to Diversity” have became core values of student affairs professions (ACPA, n.d; NASPA, n.d.). However, looking back to the past, this notion had not been established until the late 1970s (Thelin & Gassman,
The establishment and purpose of higher education was to educate students from limited populations, and the current institutions inherited some characteristics from the past. Acknowledging that institutions were not built for everyone in the past, how could we create more an inclusive and equitable environment for a wider range of the population? In the following sections, I will discuss two vital elements which I plan to apply to my work by referring to my past experience.

**Collaboration is Vital**

Collaboration is vital to any occupation, especially if one belongs to a large organization. This applies to professionals in the student affairs field. Through the experience of being a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) for the Sponsored Student Programs and internship experiences at the Office of International Services (OIS) and the Degree Partnership Program (DPP), I learned that we cannot support students sufficiently if our collaboration does not go well, but our failure to work together may even create obstacles for students. For example, taking the case of an international sponsored student, in order to stay and pursue their education, the student has to maintain their immigration status. The requirements differ depending on what types of visa the student has. If the student is here as an F-1 student, they have to be enrolled for classes as a full-time student. Furthermore, the total credit numbers which a student has to be registered for differ depending on which level of education the student is pursuing. For example, 18 credits for English as a Second Language (ESL) students, 12 credits for undergraduate degree-seeking students, 9 credits for graduate students. In the case of sponsored students, some sponsors require them to take more credits than those requirements. If a student fails to fulfill them, there is a risk of losing their sponsorship or even their studies in the United States. Even just focusing on credit hours, there are number of factors which influence a student’s life. If a
student receives different advice from multiple offices, it confuses the student and will waste his or her time. In addition to that, if an international student fails to register for classes by a certain time, another risk is that their immigration status could be terminated. Observing current professionals and how they share their knowledge and skills to support students, I gained two salient lessons. First, each of functional area offers imperative services for students. Second, if even one office fails to collaborate with other offices, it can cause a critical problem for students.

This notion also applies to assisting domestic students. For instance, when I had an opportunity to be an intern during summer orientation for DPP, the professionals who I worked with had their own strength. DPP is a program which allows students to be enrolled at Oregon State University and a community college partner school (Oregon State University, n.d.). Some of the benefits of utilizing the program are that the tuition becomes more affordable, and students can obtain a degree within a short period of time. At orientation, newly admitted DPP students, who are either First-year students or transfer students, came to a computer lab to register for both institutions. At the sessions, students and their guardians frequently had various questions regarding the resources of institutions, financial, and academic matters. My internship supervisor had experience working in the financial aid office, and another professional used to be an academic advisor. Furthermore, there were professionals who were from a local community college, and they were answering questions for their institution. Seeing how each of them cooperated with each other to provide support for the students, I came to understand that collaborating with other professionals benefit students more than knowing everything and working alone. Furthermore, students’ needs vary from student to student, and it is infeasible to know all information about a student or an institution. By collaborating with others, we are not
only expanding our support network, but also creating a community for students. This can be said not only within an institution. For example, most of sponsored students have sponsored student advisors who work for a foreign government or company. Although we must make sure to obtain FERPA forms from students and be mindful of what information to share, without collaboration between institution and sponsor organization, sponsored students will face numbers of administrative difficulties. Furthermore, having a constructive and positive relationships with professionals outside of an institution, professionals at the institution can gain beneficial information from sponsors’ sides. There are some professionals who tend to do everything for students; however, I do not think we should hand hold students. Studying abroad experience is their opportunity to learn how to be independent and solve challenges in life. However, I also think that the obstacles they face should not be caused by our errors especially when we are not just communicating each other. By building connections not only inside but also outside of the office, we are creating a network and community to support students. Each office possesses its own strengths and limitations; however, by collaborating with each other, the limitations can be minimized and we can strengthen the support network.

**Curiosity does not kill us, but helps us to build relationships**

Each of the different functional areas or organizations have their own specialties. For example, the office of Financial Aid and Scholarship holds information on a number of helpful resources for students, and they are specialized to advise students on the topic. We are aware of what each functional area’s specialties are, but that does not necessarily mean that we know what their procedures are or what they do in detail. In order to work together effectively, instead of jumping on an assumption, it is crucial to admit that there are stories we do not know. This also applies to interactions with students. The more we gain experience, the easier it becomes to
predict the problems which students are facing. However, solely relying on our experience does not help students nor us. Stone, Patton, and Heen (2010), who are the authors of Difficult Conversations, indicate in their book that it is “we don’t know what we don’t know” (p.33). However, by noting and reminding ourselves that “there is important information we don’t have access to,” it will prevent us from acting on our assumptions. (p.33). Furthermore, through the workshop of The Art of Powerful Non-Defensive Communication by Ms. Sharon Strand Ellison, who is the Director of the Institute of Powerful Non-Defensive Communication, I learned that reacting on assumptions brings multiple disadvantages for us. For instance, we will ruin reputations as professionals, lose trust and relationships with other professionals, miss opportunities to grow, and so on. In order to collaborate with each other effectively, the first step is to acknowledge that there are stories which we do not know.

The next step is to communicate with others with curiosity. Ms. Ellison mentioned in the workshop that many people make the mistake of asking questions in an investigative way. However, asking questions in such a way prevents us from fostering relationships and cooperating to achieve our mutual objectives. In order to ask questions with curiosity, it is important to be mindful of our non-verbal communications (Ellison, 2017). For instance, even if I am asking the same question such as “What do you mean by that?” depending on how my posture, voice tone, and facial expressions are, the context of the question will vary. If we ask in an investigative way, the person who was asked the question will be defensive, and our ability to collaborate is either paused or destroyed. There may be situations which will frustrate us or even make us upset; however, expressing our frustration with the other person will not get us anywhere unless the person is trying to hurt us.
Other elements to consider are impact and intent, and they were frequently discussed topic during the CSSA program. In those conversations, it seemed that the consideration of impact was discussed and questioned over intentions; however, I believe both sides have to be taken into consideration in order to foster mindful communications. Without consideration of the other person’s intention, it only allows us to consider our side of the story, and eventually it may mislead us to have unproved certainty (Stone. et al, 2010). Especially at work, instead of thinking ‘How can they think that?’ or ‘How can they be so irrational?’, we should practice asking questions with curiosity such as ‘I wonder what information they have that I don't?’ or ‘How might they see the world such that their view makes sense?’ (Stone, et al. 2010. p.37). This is easier said than done. Now that I am transitioning from student to professional, there will be many opportunities for me to practice this mindset. In order to be an effective professional, I plan to undertake this practice in my personal and professional life.

Unlike the current higher education in the United States, the field has a history of neglecting marginalized populations. However, student affairs is one of the fields which strives to foster diversity and inclusive and equality environments (ACPA, n.d.; NASPA, n.d.). This goal cannot be achieved by a single office or institution. In order to create equitable schools and society, our collaboration is vital. To cooperative effectively despite our differences, it is imperative to remind ourselves that there are always stories that we do not know, and consider both intention and impact of our actions or words. Furthermore, to foster collaborative relationships, bringing curiosity to our work will help us to strengthen our network.
4. Honey Badger and the Sun

2. Professional Skills and Organizational Management

· Identify and evaluate leadership styles, including one’s own, in various settings
· Demonstrate the ability to take initiative and lead in meetings and on projects or other tasks
· Recognize best practices and challenges in human resources/personnel management
· Demonstrate flexibility and adaptability in changing circumstances, employing decision-making and problem-solving skills, AND Graduates should be able to Integrate the CSSA Core Values and Principles into their Demonstration of Competencies/Portfolio

5. The Developing Professional

· Identify one’s professional values and ethics

I want to be a student affairs professional with the resiliency of a honey badger and the mindset of the Sun. I assume whoever is reading this must be asking the question, “What does she mean by that?” Although it is a bizarre dream, these notions became the core of my leadership style, professional values, and ethics. Those two philosophies refer to two different aspects of the student affairs professional; however, they are an imperative part of my professional identity. If I lose even one of them, I will lose my authenticity, effectivity, and sanity as a student affairs professional.

First, I would like to explain what I mean by becoming resilient like a honey badger. Following the explanation, I will discuss my plan on how to become resilient like a honey badger by referring to two theories. Afterwards, I will provide an explanation of the mindset of the Sun.
and my plan on how to develop one. At the end of this section, I will also refer to how these two notions influence my leadership style.

**What I Mean by Becoming Resilient Like a Honey Badger**

I originally got this idea from a video about the honey badger on Youtube. According to the video, “[t]he honey badger has been referred to by the Guinness Book of World Records as the most fearless animal in all the animal kingdom.” (czg123, 2011). As this sentence indicates, the honey badger is not afraid of anything and frequently challenges dangerous creatures such as wasps and cobras, both of which have dangerous poison. However, attacking everything I see and becoming vicious is not the honey badger I want to be. The honey badger I want to be is the one which can tolerate venom and is able to get back on its feet. In the video, the honey badger eats a cobra which has extremely strong venom. After a couple of bites, the honey badger falls asleep for a couple of minutes because of the venom; however, it gets back up and starts eating the cobra again. I will apply this scenario to student affairs. For example, our work involves the emotions of various people, and sometimes those emotions consume our energy. If we do not take care of ourselves and we keep experiencing negative emotions, eventually it will affect our well-being. We will not be able to bring the best of ourselves to work. The venom from cobras is like the negative emotions or exhausting situations which we sometimes face in our work. By becoming resilient like a honey badger, I believe I can obtain the ability to detoxify negative feelings and stressful events like the honey badgers’ anti-venom, and also build resilience towards challenging situations.

**How I Plan to Be Resilient Like a Honey Badger**

What can I do to be resilient like a honey badger with it’s strong anti-venom? My answer is to apply the PERMA model and Positive Psychology to myself. (Positive Psychology
Program, 2017; Seligman, 2011). PERMA is an acronym for Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. (Positive Psychology Program, 2017). According to Seligman, people will be able to “reach a life of fulfilment, happiness, and meaning” by applying the model (as cited in the Positive Psychology Program, 2017). Although each element may be self-explanatory, they are defined as follows. Positive emotions do not mean that we should only experience positive emotions in daily life, but refers to “the ability to be optimistic and view the past, present, and future in a positive perspective.” (Positive Psychology Program, 2017). Engagement means to engage with activities, such as gardening or playing an instrument, and the find the flow. Relationships means building positive relationships with others. Meaning refers to “having a purpose and meaning” in our life. The last element, Accomplishments is to have “goals and ambition in life.” By focusing on these elements in our lives, we will be able to pursue happiness and take care of ourselves. Accordingly, this model provided me with concrete ideas on how to build resilience and bring the best of myself to work.

Positive Psychology is another anti-venom which I think will help myself and others to create a positive work environment. According to the Positive Psychology Institute, Positive Psychology is “defined as the study of the strengths and virtues that enable individuals, communities and organizations to thrive (as cited in Positive Psychology Institute, n.d.). Through a course called Creating Happiness, I learned five themes of my strength: Input, restorative, adaptability, empathy, and connectedness. How did learning those strengths help? First, it helped me deal with the imposter syndrome. During the CSSA program, I do not know how many times I thought that I was not a right fit for the field or capable of pursuing my career. I have heard similar stories from others. Now that I have become more aware of my strengths, I have started to think more constructively about how they can help me overcome problems. I just started to
practice this behavior, and I think this is a lifelong endeavor; however, it has also helped me get a little bit closer to who I want to be.

I think it will take a long time to create anti-venom which is as strong as the honey badgers. In order to be resilient like a honey badger, I have to keep applying these frameworks in my life. My steps to become an effective professional will take time; however, I believe I can become closer by practicing applying the philosophy of honey badgers.

What I Mean by Having a Mindset like the Sun

How about the notion of the Sun? I obtained this idea of the Sun from a conversation I had with my Graduate Teaching Assistant supervisor, Ms. Marigold Holmes. When I was sharing my struggle of bringing social justice awareness to my work and life and the frustration of not being able to act on it, she shared that social justice work is like one of Aesop’s fables, The North Wind and the Sun. For those who do not know the story, here is the story of The North Wind and the Sun.

The North Wind and the Sun had a quarrel about which of them was the stronger. While they were disputing with much heat and bluster, a Traveler passed along the road wrapped in a cloak.

"Let us agree," said the Sun, "that he is the stronger who can strip that Traveler of his cloak."

"Very well," growled the North Wind, and at once sent a cold, howling blast against the Traveler.

With the first gust of wind the ends of the cloak whipped about the Traveler's body. But he immediately wrapped it close to him, and the harder the Wind blew, the tighter he held it to him. The North Wind tore angrily at the cloak, but all his efforts were in vain. Then the Sun began to shine. At first his beams were gentle, and in the pleasant warmth after the bitter cold of the North Wind, the Traveler unfastened his cloak and let it hang loosely from his shoulders. The Sun's rays grew warmer and warmer. The man took off his cap and mopped his brow. At last he became so heated that he pulled off his cloak, and, to escape the blazing sunshine, threw himself down in the welcome shade of a tree by the roadside.

(Whispering Books, n.d.)

My interpretation of this story is that the other person will not listen if we only communicate forcefully. However, if we communicate with others respectfully, they will listen
to our side of story. In order to bring social justice awareness to our work, there will be times when we have to communicate with people who have different perspectives. If my only argument is stating how wrong they are and presenting the evidence, that is going to make them defensive. All of us have to monitor ourselves to not become defensive; however, I also believe that the person who is conveying the message also has to be mindful of their communication style. If we choose the North Wind way of communication, the other person will be more likely to try to defend themselves and will not listen. As it is mentioned in another section of my portfolio, it is critical to build relationships with others. In order to make change, listening to different opinions, and bringing empathy and curiosity is more effective than stating how wrong someone is.

**How I Plan to Have a Mindset like the Sun**

Similar to becoming resilient like a honey badger, having a mindset like the Sun is another lifelong lesson. I believe that in order to be the Sun, as it was already discussed in the section *Two Fundamental Cs of Student Affairs Profession: Curiosity and Collaboration*, we have to bring curiosity to our work (Tokunaga-Griffin, 2017). For instance, I had an interaction with one former sponsored student over email, and the student requested that we issue a document by the next day. That week, the people who could issue the document were out of the office, and so there was no way of issuing it by the next day. It did not help the situation that the student contacted us the day before his due date. In the emails we exchanged, I could see that the student was clearly upset and becoming aggressive. Although his message sounded blunt and aggressive, I tried to be as respectful as I could. However, his email became more emotional and he started to call the office and started yelling at someone. At this point, I was ready to tell him
that he should have requested the document in advance, and that other students typically do it at least a week in advance.

Reflecting on the event, I am glad that I did not, because it would have made the situation worse. In this situation, there were two professionals who helped me support the student. The first professional is the person who talked with him on the phone. Although I was not there when she spoke to the student, I found out that the student was yelling at her. If I were her, I might have yelled back at the student, but instead of yelling, she listened to him and validated his feelings. Then, the student became calm and started to listen to what we had to say. The second professional was an international advisor who helped me communicate with the student over email. Although I tried my best to be respectful, my sentences became blunt and cold. The international student advisor helped me revise the email, which helped resolve the situation. Both of those professionals were the Sun, being respectful and empathetic, instead of being the North Wind, telling him what he should have done. After exchanging a couple of emails, I found out that the student had contacted another office three weeks before to request the document, but that request did not come to our office. This reminded me of the importance of bringing curiosity and reminding ourselves that there may be a story that we do not know. This incident has reminded me that only stating facts will not solve the situation, especially when the other person is emotional. Becoming the Sun will help me not become emotional and allow me to focus on achieving the goal, helping students.

My Leadership

I have focused on applying these notions to myself to become a better professional; however, these notions can also help supervise others or lead the group. I learned that the PERMA model and Positive Psychology can be applied to define leadership from Mr. Don
Johnson, who I took a Reading and Conference course which focused on spirituality. For instance, the PERMA model gives us concrete ideas on how to execute self-care. If I apply this to people who I supervise, it will not only help to improve the work environment, but can also influence the organizational culture of the office. I have heard that some people express a feeling of guilt for taking care of themselves; however, if our well-being goes down, our work performance also goes down and this may lead to problems for students. Furthermore, Dr. Larry Roper told us in the CSSA 588: Organization and Administration of College Student Services that “Leadership is an extension of personal narrative.” (Roper, 2016). Paying attention to our well-being will allow us to be our most authentic selves. Furthermore, applying Positive Psychology, I believe I will be able to help students realize their own strengths. I believe helping them to realize their own strengths can empower them to overcome challenges.

Throughout my GTA position, I have experienced that difficult side of student affairs. For example, the President of United States signed an executive order to ban the entrance of people from certain countries. I have seen that some professionals were affected by this because they genuinely care about students and their well-being. However, if we were affected by this and our work quality is reduced, then the students are the ones who have to pay the price. It is important to face negative emotions and address them to let them go, so we can offer the best support. Although my journey to become resilient like a honey badger and have a mindset like the Sun has just started, I believe this will allow me to show up to work with the best of myself.
5. The Constitution is like a shield, but some people may not be able to use it.

1. Knowledge and Understanding of Higher Education and Student Affairs

- Identify legal issues that impact higher education, field of student affairs, institutional policy and the student experience, AND Graduates should be able to Integrate the CSSA Core Values and Principles into their Demonstration of Competencies/Portfolio

When I was dreaming about studying abroad, two words represented American higher education in my head. The first word was diversity because I had heard that American universities host people from all over the world. Another word was freedom because this image is presented on mass media frequently such as Hollywood movies. I also heard from other students who have studied in the U.S. that American universities offer more freedom for students than the ones in Japan. Although I have learned about other aspects of American institutions, I still believe that those two words represent the institutions of the United States. However, the more knowledge I gain and learn the current practices of the student affairs field, the more it became obvious that the governance of institutions is significantly influenced by laws. Consequently, administrators must have an adequate understanding of the legal issues even though we are not lawyers.

While I was taking the course Legal Issues in Higher Education, I found a news article which says that an international student from Egypt was expelled from school due to his comment regarding the new President of the United States on Facebook (Stack, 2016). Because I thought that the Constitution applies to everyone in the country, this news stunned me. My ultimate career goal is to work with international students who are studying in the United States, or domestic students who are preparing to study abroad. Therefore, understanding the rights of both citizens and non-citizens is important. Furthermore, this news article made me realize the
possibility that non-citizens’ freedom of speech may not be protected by laws. That is why I decided to learn more about the freedom of speech and its application to non-citizens. First, I will briefly cover general information on the First Amendment and consider if it can be applied to non-citizens based on the legal literature. Following an overview of the First Amendment, I would like to illustrate the Egyptian student’s case and discuss what to consider as a student affairs professional from the case.

**What is the First Amendment?**

To understand the First Amendment, it is crucial to understand what the Constitution of the United States is. The Constitution is composed of “a Preamble, seven articles, and (at present) twenty-seven amendments” which establish rules on how to govern the nation (Greenberg, 1997, p. 22). There are two types of constitutions in the United States: federal and state. The federal constitution is the one which is called the Constitution of the United States, and all types of laws in the United States have to adhere to it. Each state also has their own constitution, and they vary from state to state. However, as with other types of laws, state constitutions also have to coincide with the federal constitution (Kaplin & Lee, 2014). The analogy which was used in the course was that federal and state constitutions are like shields to protect our rights from the federal and state governments. Although those laws are effective to use against public agencies, they cannot be used for private actors such as private institutions.

The First Amendment is the first amendment which was written in the federal Constitution as follows.

*Amendment I*

> Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of
the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.


As indicated, the First Amendment protects not only the freedom of speech, but also religion and press (Cornell Law School, n.d.a). However, this does not mean a person can say whatever they want whenever or wherever. For instance, there are three types of forums which change the regulations of speech. The most challenging forums to regulate are traditional public forums (Cornell Law School, n.d.b). The definition of a traditional public forum is a space that “has been traditionally open to political speech and debate” such as a “public park” or “sidewalks” (Cornell Law School, n.d.b). However, the government can restrict speech based on “time, place, and manner” (Cornell Law School, n.d.b). Public space which can be opened and closed is considered a limited public forum. For instance, the meeting rooms of a state university is public property; however, the rooms are not always available for public use. When they are open, the First Amendment protects speech in the space. However, if the space is closed, speech can be restricted by the government or its agencies. In order to be considered as a limited public forum, the space must be opened to the public, and cannot be constantly closed. Classrooms or offices are nonpublic forums, and government restrictions can be applied as long as they are reasonable. The regulations must not target to oppress certain view points. (Cornell Law School, n.d.b). In addition to that, content regulations can be applied if speech includes any of the following characteristics: clear and present danger, fighting words, obscene, defamation, false or deceptive advertising, and/or compelling state interest.

Then, can the First Amendment be applied to anyone who is in the country? According to Georgetown Immigration Law Journal, “By having plenary power to determine immigration
policies, Congress inherently has the ability to decide to whom the Constitutions will apply” 18 Geo. Immigr. L.J. 373, 378-379 (Winter, 2004). Furthermore, past case laws indicate that non-citizens’ freedom of speech can be protected as long as they entered the country legally and have a valid immigration status. (Tokunaga-Griffin, 2017).

Going back to the case of the international student who was expelled from school and had to leave the country, the student came to the United States and had a valid visa status. Then, why did he need to leave the country? Next, I will discuss the news in more detail and explain why this incident brought up some concerns.

**The case of the Egyptian Student**

As I will be a student affairs professional soon (hopefully), two questions occurred to me from the Egyptian students’ case. First, according to an article from the New York Times, the student posted a comment regarding the new President on Facebook saying, “I literally don’t mind taking a lifetime sentence in jail for killing this guy, I would actually be doing the whole world a favor.” (Stack, 2016). His speech included a couple elements which are subject to content regulations: clear and present danger and fighting words. However, his lawyer states that the student was not actively involved in politics (Stack, 2016). Furthermore, Caitlin Sanderson, who is a lawyer from the A.C.L.U., said in the same article that the student’s action was caused by recklessness more than an actual threat of murder (Stack, 2016). The first question is if institutions which host international students need to take action to raise the awareness of students regarding their rights.

Another question is how to communicate with external authorities as a student affairs professional. In this case, the Egyptian student was in a flight school, so his situation differs from
universities and colleges. However, the communications which the school had with external authorities made me think more about the administrative work we do. For instance, the Egyptian student’s entry visa was canceled by the State Department after the incident; however, the student was not considered to be in violation of his immigration status at this point. According to the professional who works at the school, Secret Service agents visited the office after business hours and “made the suggestion” that the student be expelled. (Stack, 2016). The student was expelled from the school, and both the visa cancelation and the expulsion from the school qualified him to be in violation of his status. When the student came to school the next day, there were ICE agents and the student was arrested (Stack, 2016).

Student affairs professionals have the duty to report to external authorities under some circumstances. If the administrators at an institution are not on the same page regarding when to report to the authorities, a students’ rights could be violated and the reputation of the institution could be ruined. The second question is how well the protocol for communicating with external authorities has been shared with the entire institution.

In the next section, I would like to consider how legal issues can influence a student affairs worker based on the two questions.

**What to consider**

The first question is whether institutions which host international students need to take initiative to inform students regarding their freedom of speech in the United States. Although more exploration on this topic is required, it seems that it is not currently common to provide workshops or orientation regarding the freedom of speech for international students. Though I do not have a specific answer for this question, considering the recent social xenophobic climate and aggressive intervention to immigration matters by the government, I believe institutions
should start considering ways to discuss this matter with their students (Jarrett & Labott, 2017; Holpuch, 2017). Furthermore, the freedom of speech or expression can be more restrictive in other countries. In the case of China, social networks and search engines such as Facebook, snapchat, and Google cannot be accessed. (Pham & Riley, 2017; wikiHow, 2017). Furthermore, a Saudi Arabian woman was arrested recently for wearing a miniskirt while walking around a town in Saudi Arabia (Batrawy, 2017). If there is no opportunity to learn about the laws of the host nation, and to see or experience things which are not allowed back home, it seems natural that some students will perceive that they have gained more freedom by coming to this country. Looking back at my experience as an international student on three separate occasions, no one ever explained my rights as a foreigner except for immigration matters. It is hard to predict something that you are ignorant of; however, learning about the case of the Egyptian international student, I wonder how many international students know their rights and the laws of the country they are studying in. This made me think that it is necessary to have conversations with the students around their rights in the United States before they make a mistake.

The second question is how to communicate with external authorities. Working in the Office of International Services, I had the opportunity to learn whom and when to refer a phone call or visitor from a government agency. Though it may be rare for a government agent to contact an office other than international programs regarding international students, I believe it is worthwhile to share a phone call or visitor referral with other offices in order to protect the rights of students’ and institutions’. This referral procedure may be similar to most institutions; however, this information must be at the top of the list for new professionals. Furthermore, not only international programs, but all offices should communicate actively in order to make each other accountable.
From learning about freedom of speech and the Facebook news threat, it taught me that part of our responsibility is to continue to learn and respond to unpredictable situations in the most mindful way possible. For professionals in international programs, immigration laws regarding J-1 and F-1 visas are imperative knowledge; however, expanding on other legal knowledge by communicating with the legal council office at institutions or designated lawyers will strengthen our support even under unpredictable situations. For professionals in other functional areas, although their specialty is not to advise on immigration matters and they should not, knowing whom to contact at the international program and the basic requirements that international students have to follow will expand the community to support the population. To fulfil our responsibilities as professionals, we have to communicate closely with others from different functional areas in order to remain aligned.
6. A Professional Has to Wear Multiple Hats to Manage Budget and Finance.

2. Professional Skills and Organizational Management

- Synthesize fiscal information, including budget constraints and resources allocation

Student Affairs professionals have to wear multiple hats. This is another frequently used phrase of the Student Affairs field, and it came up multiple times during the CSSA program. CSSA 574: Budget and Finance was my very first class to learn about how to analyze monetary data on excel sheets and plan how to spend the budget. When I just started taking the course, I did not even know the differences between finance, accounting, and budgeting.

I now understand that accounting is the process of recording transactions from the prior fiscal year. Budgeting is making a plan on how to allocate resources while considering the amount of money that is available and required for a purpose. Financing means to analyze both accounting and budgeting and assessing how you spent money in the past, and prepare for the following year’s budget. However, assignments from CSSA 574 taught me that knowing these differences is just the very first step to becoming a good budget manager. In order to effectively manage a budget, I have a long way to go. However, I remind myself that an effective budget manager wears multiple hats and will guide me to improve in this area.

The Resource Gathering and Advocating Hats

Institutions have mission statements and strategic plans to make their institutions better. However, if there is no sufficient funding, any functional area cannot start a new initiative, let alone continue the current programs they have. Though all functional areas share common goals, how to achieve those goals may differ depending on the office. However, one condition is common no matter which office we work for, that is, we cannot make do without a sufficient budget.
For example, according to Jenkins (2016), although many institutions claim that they are dedicated to social justice work, their budgets indicate otherwise. She also claims that not allocating sufficient funding is the same as letting those offices and professionals fail (Jenkins, 2016). During the Professional Development course, Dr. Roper told us that it is important for student affairs professionals to not only identify problems, but also explore solutions and offer them along with the challenges.

All professionals who are in initiating offices have to be aware of how much they are allocated. If the goals assigned to an office are not enough, then the professionals in the office have to wear the hats of “Resource Gathering” and advocating (Barr & McClellan, 2011; NAFSA, n.d.). The procedure to gather resources outside of the institution differs depending on the institution type. However, Barr and McClellan (2011) state that it is critical to include “the appropriate institutional office” if an office has to “request for outside funding.” (p.20). Furthermore, if we are aware of other functional areas’ initiatives and goals, it may be possible to “partnering with other units” (Barr & McClellan, 2011, p. 21). In addition to that, advocating for one’s office is another way to advocate for students we serve. NAFSA (n.d.) states that advocacy is an important competency for international educational professionals. When it comes to funding, not every student can attend an institution where they can express their thoughts about the budget; however, they are the ones who will be affected if our capability to serve is changed. Professionals must not only understand institutional statements and strategic plans, but must also pay attention to how the institution budgets its resources, so that we can “Talk the talk, and walk the walk” (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.).
The Data Analyst and Detective Hats

Individuals in charge of budgeting have power and impact the governance of the institution. Those professionals can make more influential changes than professionals who do not; however, they can also easily burn bridges with other professionals and other units if they fail to grasp the situation. For instance, the first project was to critique the budget of the cultural centers by answering questions. By looking only at the numbers, I thought that the fees for water and electricity were extremely high for some of the offices. When I did not know the context of the situation, I even started to think that those centers did not have a strict policy on their facility use. However, after reading through budget reports from those units and getting more context from the instructor, I learned that those facilities were remodeled recently and the students’ usage of those facilities had increased. If I had not obtained that information, I may have had an unnecessary conversation with professionals who were successfully supporting students. This could have also lead to ruining my relationship with those professionals, and losing the opportunity to collaborate with them. Furthermore, students may not be able to use the facilities any longer if I had decided to cut their budget. This assignment taught me that managing a budget in student affairs means being like a data analyst and detective. We have to analyze the budget in detail, and also put the numbers and information together to grasp the bigger picture.

The Learner Hat

There are Master’s programs which focus on managing a budget and finance. Taking a single course on budget and finance does not make me a good budget manager without further learning and practice. Furthermore, how the institution is funded differs depending on the institutional type. Accordingly, “financial policies” and “investment strategies” will differ depending on the institutional type and institution. (Barr & McClellan, 2011, p. 14). There are a
number of variables which have to be taken into consideration for budgeting. During my career, I will most likely have the opportunity to gain budgeting and finance knowledge and skills. In those situations, I must wear the learner hat. If there are people who are already familiar with budgeting tasks, listening to their perspective and advice will help greatly to improve my skill. Institutions sometimes have workshops on campus, and if it is allowed, I would like to participate in those workshops to expand my knowledge. Most importantly, I should never be afraid to say, “I don’t know.” I do not mean to be a passive learner and wait for somebody to teach me. It is more like, conveying honestly what we do not know, and then being proactive to find the answer. If there is a budget I do not understand, I should first try to decipher it on my own, then bring any questions I have to more knowledgeable professionals to find out what was right and what was not. Not ignoring topics I do not understand will help me to improve my budgeting and finance skills, even if they are baby steps.
7. Listening is fundamental for our work, and there are various ways to do so.

3. Knowledge and Understanding of Student Populations and Student Development
   • Assess the impact of varied higher educational settings and institutional types on the student experience
   • Apply varying approaches and relevant technology to communicating with different students and student populations, AND Graduates should be able to Integrate the CSSA Core Values and Principles into their Demonstration of Competencies/Portfolio

4. Delivery of Student Services
   • Utilize research and assessment data to identify needs and establish learning outcomes for the development of programs and services
   • Design and implement assessment tools and interpret data to inform future programs

5. The Developing Professional
   • Define professional development needs and interests for continued growth including opportunities for future contributions to the body of knowledge

Listening is a fundamental part of student affairs work. Some people might say we listen to others every day without even trying; however, to truly listen to others is different from just listening. In order to support various types of students, we must continue to learn and practice numbers of skills such as supervising, advising, or using technology. However, I believe a listening skill is a more critical part of our work. This is a skill which requires practice for a long time which all professionals must continue to improve throughout their career. According to Counseling Strategies and Interventions for Professional Helpers, listening is described as an art (p.88). It is also said that ‘to listen is to pay attention, take an interest, care about, take to heart, validate, acknowledge, and be moved… appreciate’ (as cited in Cormier, 2016). To truly listen to others takes more than just being quiet. A listener has to successfully execute all of those elements without losing focus from the speaker.

Through interactions with students, I learned two benefits of listening. The first benefit is that listening provides us with context of the situations and allows us to offer appropriate assistance. If I am thinking what to say next or explore solutions in my head while I listen, it is
possible that I will miss a small but critical part of a story. If I miss the important information, then my suggestions to improve the situation for students can be inaccurate. By listening to and focusing on students, it is possible to diminish human errors. The second benefit of listening truly is empowerment. Even though there are differences to show respect depending on individuals or cultures, listening to others and striving to understand their perspective conveys one’s respect to the others. By listening to them with respects, I believe we are also empowering them to see that they are individuals who are capable of overcoming their unique challenges. No matter which functional areas we work in, our duty as student affairs professionals is not to solve problems for students, but support them to face challenges. Although it may not seem obvious, I believe we can empower students by listening to them.

**Different Ways to Listen**

In the second year of my CSSA program, I had an opportunity to have an internship experience working with a local community college. My tasks for the internship were to create a handbook which has information and strategies on how to assist international students inside and outside of classrooms. In order to collect information, I reviewed literature about the topic, surveyed instructors and interviewed a student. Through this experience, I learned that there are various ways to listen to students, staff, and instructors.

The first alternative way to listen is through utilizing assessment data and tools. For the internship, I surveyed approximately 10 instructors to gain their perspectives on teaching international students. From answers to the survey, I gained new information which I was not aware of. For instance, I thought all participants of the survey were aware of the language proficiency requirements for international students. However, the answers revealed that some instructors believe that international students in their classes had not passed the requirements to
take their courses. This misunderstanding suggests that more close communication with instructors and administrators is required. Furthermore, thinking that students do not have sufficient level to take their courses, instructors may be eliminating other possibilities which are interrupting their students’ learning. This misconception can prevent us from addressing the real problems. From the same survey, I found that some instructors are already implementing some interventions to support international students in their classes. The examples of interventions are providing a glossary of the subject, or an activity to connect international and domestic students. Those activities were also introduced in literatures that I read, and they seemed like beneficial strategies to share with other instructors.

By conducting a survey, I gained information which I would not have imagined. Missing this information does not only help any situation, but also may lead to ineffective or inaccurate interventions. Utilizing assessment tools and data in our work sometimes provides us new information which we were not aware of. Furthermore, although it would be ideal if we could hear stories from each student, staff, and faculty, the reality is that we have work to be done which has a time limitation. Using survey allows us to gain stories from numbers of people within a reasonable number of hours.

Furthermore, in order to gain perspectives from a wide range of people, it is critical to update our knowledge of designing assessment tools. In the past, it was common to pass out a paper-based survey. However, because of the development of technology, we now have multiple ways to gain information. For example, swiping student IDs at an event or facility will give us information on how much students utilize those services. Another example is using a new software such as Qualtrics or Google Forms not only we can obtain information easily, but also
analyze the data faster than before. By utilizing assessment and new technology, we will be able to listen to more and various people in order to improve our services.

**Reading is Listening**

The second alternative way to listen is to read various types of articles. Although we must take into consideration different type of institution, number of students, or student demographics, reading professional essays or research articles not only helps explain the problems we are facing, but also provides possible solutions. For instance, based on my experience as a student and an administrator, I have felt that international students are categorized as a homogenous group despite the fact there are various differences among us. Although I could not articulate in detail why I felt so, the feeling of mislabeled became salient to me. Then, I encounter one research article by Lee and Rice (2007). In this paper, they discuss how international students’ experience can be different depending on their ethnicity, accent, and race. For instance, White international students who are from Western cultures experience less bias or discrimination compared to students of color who are from non-Western cultures (Lee & Rice, 2007). Furthermore, some students’ capability was doubted by instructors because the students spoke with an accent. (Lee & Rice, 2007).

If all of us can apply this knowledge to our daily work, conversations around international students may differ from the ones some of us currently have. When I attended a presentation session by an international student on her experience of studying abroad, two questions from the audience stand out to me. Although I do not remember exact wording of these questions, their questions were similar to “Why can’t other international students be like you?” In her presentation, she shared her challenges of studying abroad and being far away from her family and country. I do believe that she could overcome all of those challenges because she
worked hard. There is no doubt about that. However, listening one side of the story and apply the knowledge to the entire population is same as silencing the other voices. Although her hard work is undeniable, the student was from a country whose official language is English. Comparing the student who gave the presentation and other international students who are from countries where they do not use English in daily life seemed an unfair comparison to me. Furthermore, this ignores the fact that there are numbers of variable among international students which significantly influence their experience in a new culture. I believe the research article by Lee and Rice can raise an awareness of differences among international students’ experience if professionals read the article.

Furthermore, the research findings helped me to be catch myself from applying my own story to others. I am also an international student; however, my experience should not invalidate other experiences of international students. When I was working as a GTA for the Sponsored Student Programs, there were times that I applied my story for cases of other international students. By applying my story, I was judging students without realizing and I believe my support was not as helpful as I hoped. The article by Lee and Rice reminded me that, even though there are similar challenges international students face, our stories are different. This helped me to change my questions in my head from “Why can’t/couldn’t you….?” to “What are the stories I don’t have?” Listening to Lee and Rice by reading their research article, it provided me more information on a wide range of international students’ experiences, and it also helped me to listen to students.

Conducting research on our own will also help us to understand the reality; however, it may require time and energy of our own, and understanding and collaborations from colleagues. Although as much as all professionals hope to conduct research on our own, that may be a
privilege which not every professional can afford. However, reading articles of the current practice and research takes less time but provides us new information. In order to gain experience and perspectives, we need to take time to read and expand our knowledge.

I have mainly discussed listening so far; however, just listening itself does not make much difference to our work. After expanding our knowledge, we need to apply the knowledge to our work. Applying to our daily work is one way to do so; however, there are more ways to make changes. For instance, attending a conference and presenting our work provides us an opportunity to share knowledge, but also to gain feedback from other colleagues from different institutions. This will help us not only to deepen our understanding, but also to examine our work from the third person perspective. Whether a professional can attend a workshop or conference depends on the office or their supervisor; however, whenever there is an opportunity to do so, we should embrace the opportunity and connect also with professionals with other institutions to improve our services.
References

1. **Student Development theory is like an X-ray for students and a mirror for professionals.**


2. 「仕方がない」 (Shikata ga nai) is not giving up, but helps us to continue on our life.


3. **Two Fundamental Cs of Student Affairs Profession: Curiosity and Collaboration**


NASPA. (n.d.) About NASPA. Retrieved from https://www.naspa.org/about


Oregon State University. (n.d.) Degree Partnership Program (DPP). Retrieved from http://partnerships.oregonstate.edu


4. Honey Badger and the Sun

[czg123]. (2011, January 18). The crazy nastyass honey badger (original narration by Randall) [Video File]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4r7wHMg5Yjg


Roper, L. (2016, November 29). Addressed at Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR.


Tokunaga-Griffin, M. (2017). *Two fundamental Cs of the Student Affairs Profession: Curiosity and Collaboration.* Unpublished manuscript. Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR.


http://whisperingbooks.com/Show_Page/?book=Aesops_Fables&story=North_Wind_And_The_Sun

5. The Constitution is like a shield, but some people may not be able to use it.


Cornell Law School. (n.d.a.). *First Amendment.* Retrieved from

https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/first_amendment


6. A Professional Has to Wear Multiple Hats to Manage Budget and Finance.


NAFSA. (n.d.) International education professional competencies. Retrieved from [http://www.nafsa.org/Professional_Resources/Career_Center/IE_Competencies/International_Education_Professional_Competencies/](http://www.nafsa.org/Professional_Resources/Career_Center/IE_Competencies/International_Education_Professional_Competencies/)

7. Listening is fundamental for our work, and there are various ways to do so.
