Culture Centers in Higher Education: Perspectives on Identity, Theory, and Practice edited by Lori D. Patton. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, 2010. 212 pp. ISBN 978-1-57922-232-1.

As higher education broadens its lens to examine diversity on college campuses, an area minimally studied is that of culture centers. Patton's edited book, *Culture Centers in Higher Education: Perspectives on Identity, Theory, and Practice*, fills the vacuum of knowledge for higher education practitioners and scholars when it comes to these important spaces of support and education for Students of Color. In the foreword, Gloria Ladson-Billings succinctly describes the value of these centers by stating, "In addition to providing social and psychological support for students of color, well-developed centers also serve as an important educational corrective" to address hostile campus racial climates (p. xii). For professionals and scholars unfamiliar with the missions, forms, and functions of these spaces, Patton's edited volume provides a solid introduction to culture centers while also offering recommendations for administrators overseeing the centers.

The book is organized into three sections: Part One: Racial/Ethnic Group-Specific Culture Centers; Part Two: Theoretical Perspectives and Culture Centers; and Part Three: Administrative and Practice-Oriented Issues for Culture Centers. With ten chapters in total, along with an appendix of recommendations on how to perform a campus audit for culture centers, this book covers a range of perspectives and approaches to understanding culture centers. The authors for each of the chapters represent both higher education faculty and student affairs professionals, most with experience working in culture centers. This review will present a few highlights and critiques within each section.

Part One comprises four chapters focusing on Latino, Asian American, American Indian, and Black culture centers. Three of the four chapters provide anecdotal evidence or present case studies to create a picture of culture centers as spaces that mediate hostile environments, assist with retention, provide community, reinforce cultural values, and develop leadership among Students of Color that extends into the broader campus community. Adele Lozano in her chapter on Latina/o culture centers posits that "a culture center is often the only space on campus to offer a holistic learning experience allowing Latina/o students to explore racial/ethnic identity development and engage in social justice activism, political education, community outreach, academic mentoring and support, leadership development, social and professional networking, and alumni outreach" (p. 11). Her statement is arguably applicable to culture centers regardless of the community they serve.

Whereas the chapters on Latina/o (Chapter 1), American Indian (Chapter 3), and Black (Chapter 4) culture centers provide concrete examples of how

culture centers support students, the chapter on Asian American culture centers (Chapter 2) puts forth suggestions for what an Asian American culture center should be rather than examining what is already in existence. Given the number of Asian American culture centers in existence (30 are listed following the chapter), this is a missed opportunity to highlight centers that are doing innovative work on their campuses. For example, Patton in her chapter on Black culture centers, highlights the Malcolm X Institute (MXI) at Wabash College, a private liberal arts college in Indiana. She elaborates on the unique structure at MXI: "While small staff are not uncommon for small colleges or BCCs, the role of the MXI director sets it apart from other BCCs … the director oversees the facility and budget, yet the MXI chairman and other students who comprise the elected leadership body actually run the center" (p. 72). By identifying unique or model centers, the authors shed light on centers that rarely receive attention outside of their campuses and communities. In addition, the partial listings of the different types of centers at the end of each chapter (27 Latina/o, 30 Asian American, 15 American Indian, 50 Black, and 31 multicultural/intercultural centers) create new opportunities for center staff to connect across the country.

Part Two identifies theoretical frameworks for use within culture centers. In one of the strongest chapters of the book, Tara Yosso and Corina Benavides Lopez apply critical race theory to culture centers as a way to critique Vincent Tinto's stages of student departure in Chapter 5. The authors successfully frame culture centers as counterspaces for Students of Color, as well as Faculty of Color, who are confronting racial microaggressions and institutional contradictions around diversity. In examining the case of Inland State University, where student demands led to the creation of five culture centers, the centers "function as social, epistemological, and physical counterspaces fostering social justice efforts in and around the university" (p. 92). The voices of Latina/o students at Inland State provide a richer perspective of how culture centers provide validation and encouragement as students deal with culture shock, build on their cultural wealth, and exercise "critical resistant navigational skills."

In Chapter 6 on student development theories, racial identity development models serve as frameworks for understanding the conflict between student protesters and administration at Middle Urban University, where there is no culture center. In Chapter 7, a social justice framework is used to make an argument to be more inclusive by making room for the examination of Whiteness. Michael Benitez calls for "administrators and faculty to see the value of these spaces in engaging White students in conversations about Whiteness, racism, and other issues related to power, dominance, and social justice education from a critical non-Eurocentric antiracist lens aimed at cultivating politicized discourse and shattering homogeneous ideology" (p. 130). These two chapters have useful frameworks; however, they are both missing opportunities to apply the frames to

existing culture centers. Racial identity development theories are easily applied to Students of Color and White students who utilize culture centers, especially considering the main focus of the centers is typically on education and cultural awareness of race, racism, and ethnic heritage. In addition, culture centers that may use a social justice framework may have already created opportunities for inclusion of dominant social identities as a way of critiquing systems of oppression.

Part Three focuses on administrative and practice-oriented issues and is geared toward staff and administrators looking to support culture centers and their staff. Toby Jenkins' chapter (Chapter 8) on strategies for culture center staff utilizes the Tri-Sector Practitioners Model (community building and outreach, cultural programming, and administrative practices) while also providing examples of programs from the Paul Robeson Cultural Center at Penn State. Chapter 9 covers the challenges of multicultural affairs/culture center professionals in securing senior-level administrative positions. Salvador Mena offers areas of consideration for administrators as they look to create or re-evaluate culture centers (Chapter 10). The book closes out with an Appendix by Patton on the process of auditing a culture center, along with a series of questions that can be used for assessment.

Overall, this book is a valuable contribution to higher education scholarship on cultural resource centers. It is useful for practitioners and researchers in providing an overview of cultural resource centers in higher education. The layout of the book and the purposes for each chapter indicate a clear vision; however, there are a number of chapters that fall short in fulfilling their purposes due to the lack of connection to existing cultural resource centers and explicitly stated data sources. The authors ground their assertions primarily in their own professional experiences with cultural centers, which is understandable. However, their positioning needs to be more explicitly stated within the chapters themselves. Cultural resource centers need to have empirical support for the work they are doing, especially in times of resource scarcity when services for Students of Color are viewed under a microscope and precariously situated in budget cuts. More importantly, existing dissertation research on cultural resource centers needs to be published to supplement this edited volume. This book gives a basic introduction for individuals unfamiliar with cultural resource centers, illuminating contributions of the centers, as well as offering suggestions for how centers can be structured. It also provides an opportunity for cultural resource centers to connect through the partial listing of culture centers. However, the methodology and criteria used for inclusion in the listing are unclear. Scholars looking for the next steps in this research can build off some of the ideas introduced in this book, such as applying student development theory, critical race theory, and social justice frameworks to understanding student outcomes related to cultural resource

centers. Connecting cultural resource centers to retention of Students of Color is an additional line of inquiry that would be useful in creating the case for the protection and growth of the centers. More evidence is needed, both quantitatively and qualitatively, to understand the landscape of cultural resource centers and how they serve as what Ladson-Billings calls the "educational corrective" for college campuses.

Reviewer

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