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A Reflection Paper

Resilience and Education—A Link to Positive Results and Healthy Communities

Reflecting on the papers presented by Gross and Lederach, my comments will center on the role of education in the composite of variables that impact a healthy community. Whether viewed in the context of Lederach's place, safety, or voice or from Gross's perspective of the capacity to absorb, change or accommodate the unexpected, education framed in the context of social justice, ethics and social and global perspectives, creates a opportunity for action that positively impacts our communities. My premise is that colleges and university's, when outward facing, have an opportunity to provide graduates with a social justice grounding that can positively impact healthy communities

Specifically, I draw on my experience working in the adult serving Union Institute & University (UI&U) and its mission that speaks to engaging, empowering and enlightening learners. Degree programs are designed with learning outcomes that aim toward competencies at the undergraduate, master's and doctoral levels in communication, critical and creative thinking, ethical and social responsibility and social and global perspectives. Cross cutting these outcomes are the themes of social justice and ethics.

What skills does a graduate have in their tool kit when confronted with issues that impact their community becoming a healthy community? In Gross's thesis, resiliency stems from the ability of J0 -2.35TD0 06TcSaritisany@coming a healthyIn G0007

social, ecological, geographical, sociological,

sociopolitical and cultural context, as well as an individual one. This position allows learners to develop more robust versions of people's lives and see individuals as separate from, and resilient to, problems, and adopt a non-pathologizing perspective in their training. Learners develop the knowledge, attitudes and skills to identify and address the effects of these overarching sociopolitical and cultural contexts, and work in clinical environments to combat racism, heterosexism, sexism and the like. This emphasis is evidenced in all aspects of the program, including curriculum development, and practicum and internship placements. All learners begin with a required course in "Clinical Psychology and Systems Theory," being presented with an overview of the profession, an introduction to systemic theory, and an understanding of the contextual nature of healthcare issues. Learners then have two required courses "Cultural Influences on the Self" and "Cultural Competence in Clinical Practice," examining their own lives, beliefs and clinical knowledge and practices within the context of the current literature. These courses provide a foundation for future discussions and critical examination of traditional and contemporary psychological thought and practices, not only in the program, but throughout the learner's professional career. All learners are encouraged and supported to find practicum placements within community agencies and organizations.

The Union Ph.D in Interdisciplinary Studies has concentrations in Ethical and Creative Leadership, Humanities and Society, and Public Policy and Social Issues. The outcomes of social justice and global perspectives described above are applied to learners in this program. The Ph.D is particularly suited for cohort groups from a community to participate and move toward their degree as a coherent unit. While individual learners will work toward their degree requirements, the cohort from a given community is able to work on specific community issues or challenges from an interdisciplinary perspective. A community issue or challenge might become the topic of four or five individual

community that is resilient and has the capability to “bounce back, move quickly and act in a collaborative manner to impact change.

In closing and related to my two previous curriculum and program examples, I hold up the model advocated by Hanmin Liu in his *Commentary* distributed on July 31, 2008. The Union curriculum model provides the opportunity to positively impact the challenges noted by Liu. Liu has identified informal leaders as important in revitalizing communities. Specifically, he asks, “Is there an understanding of the role of informal leaders?” Liu posits that “these informal leaders work closely and collectively together to establish a leadership formation that is the backbone of a community.” Union graduates with the set of social justice and global perspective competencies and skills have the potential to understand how informal leaders work and impact their community working with a knowledge base that allows graduates to bridge the gap between their formal training and how the community actually works, thrives and grows.