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Editor’s Corner: Strengthening Perspective by Exploring Complex Cases, Outcomes, and Literature

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Editor’s Corner: Strengthening Perspective by Exploring Complex Cases, Outcomes, and Literature

Students aspiring to become higher education professionals can, with almost certainty, expect to be challenged in and out of the classroom through the examination of case studies. Building upon existing knowledge, case studies provide a means for extracting theoretical principles to generate practical solutions to real-world problems. In the realm of higher education, these problems may be ethical, organizational, systemic, student-focused, or institutional. Case studies may highlight issues of academic integrity, campus climate, inclusiveness, support for student populations, or university administrative decisions. In any case study, students can expect to examine complex ideas and to encounter a wide array of possible outcomes that could be applied to real-world settings. In this special issue of College Student Affairs Leadership, a compilation of case studies is shared to further dialogue and critical discussion of these cases and similar cases that we as student affairs practitioners may encounter. The goal is to develop a trend in which we examine these cases and consciously become aware of our actions and approaches to addressing similar cases in our work with students and colleagues. Each case study presents the audience with critical questions that will assist readers in producing thoughtful case outcomes.

Theories such as intersectionality and critical race theory are evidently seen throughout the pieces in this issue. One case study examines systematic racism on a campus and its impact on Black students, while another case study specifically brings the topic to a student life context surrounding controversy over Halloween costumes. Further, this issue highlights two case studies surrounding administrative response to accommodations needed for students with disabilities. One case study sets this topic in the setting of a community college, while another frames the case around a student showing signs of Autism Spectrum Disorder. This issue would not be complete without the addition of a literature review that stands alone from the case studies, yet provides an invaluable wealth of insight into the evolution of online learning.

It is not surprising that some of these topics, particularly the case studies, may be challenging to discuss. Through examining these discussions, it is our hope that readers will engage with fellow learners, colleagues, and mentors as new ideas and perspectives are developed.
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