

Exercising ManoPAUSE

Pietro A. Sasso, Ph.D., Monmouth University

Historically, higher education was the domain of men. The college campus was a bastion of privilege, specifically for White males. Men were educated in the noble professions of *artes liberales* in law, medicine, teaching, and clergy. Oberlin College became the first college to admit women in 1833. This set the precedent for other colleges to consider primarily White women for admission through the late Nineteenth century (Thelin & Gasman, 2011). By 1910, women made up approximately 35% of students attending higher education institutions (Allen, 2011). While women were attending college, equality certainly didn't exist as they were often excluded from activities and majors. Many colleges and universities still prohibited women from attending or had quotas for admission or for various courses or majors (Thelin and Gasman, 2011). In 1970, men made up approximately 59% of student enrollment in degree-granting institutions across the United States. Ironically, in 2011, this number exactly shifted to women making up approximately 59% of overall student enrollment (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2011). Although this number continues to increase, women continue to encounter challenges. However, male administrators, educators, and advisors can play a role in supporting women while they address these challenges.

In the contemporary context, even with the passage of Title IX, many issues still exist for women on our campuses. Current issues include sexual harassment, sexual violence, campus safety, limited advancement in STEAM areas (science, technology, engineering, architecture, math), and educational practices that cater to men (Sasso & DeVitis, 2015). Therefore, while there is some movement towards equality, additional effort is necessary so that higher education is a more welcoming space to women. Both as supervisors and as educators, fraternity/sorority advisors, especially males, should be mindful of these historical issues in their conversations with women. In facilitating any conversations, either developmental with a student or collegial with a staff member, it is essential to really understand how men can be advocates by exercising *manopause*. Essentially, men should pause to reflect and be sensitive to statements they may make in serving as an advocate for women's identity development. If men own their privilege, they can also serve as role models to fraternity men who often suffer from a continuing "Peter Pan" syndrome (Sasso, 2015).

Understanding Women's Advocacy in Multiple Identities

In order to effectively address these issues, men need to understand the complexity of female identity development. Early identity development theorists have studied developmental processes for undergraduate women students since the early 1980s (Belenkey, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1997; Gilligan, 1982). However, these studies were limited to White females and were not inclusive of the lived experiences of women of color and LGBTQIAA women (Jones & Abes, 2013), nor did they consider intersectionality. Women's identity is nonlinear and is often intersectional.

A more contemporary conceptual framework for women's identity development was established by Jones and McEwen (2000) with the Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity (MMDI). This model explores both the fluid nature of identity development, as well as accounting for the

context in which it occurs. The model establishes identity as comprised of a triad: (1) the core of identity which includes personality traits and self-description; (2) social identities which include race, gender, and sexual orientation or social groups such as sororities; and (3) and context, which is the space in where identity development occurs. MMDI has also been expanded to include meaning-making in which the concept of “filters” is applied. This is utilized to explain the varying degrees by which students may conceptualize the mixed messages they receive about their multiple identities. For example, a sorority woman may be told by a fellow chapter leader that they cannot be both a lesbian and Jewish, but may hear differently from her Muslim roommate. Filters help the student contextualize and conceptualize this lived experience from her own lens (Abes, Jones, & McEwen, 2007). This is supported by King (2011), who found that women who navigate intersectional identities encounter significant social integration challenges. King found similarities between the experiences of not being “brown enough” and not being “gay enough” among multi-racial queer women who were challenged to fit into either the LGBTQIAA community or communities of color.

When applied to student leaders or women activists, the research suggests women who engage multiple identities often report feeling marginalized by their peers. Research by Linder & Rodriguez (2012) suggests women who engage in activist work and focus on gender issues, such as women within sororities, often unintentionally relegate women with other identities, such as women of color, LGBTQIAA, or women with disabilities. Within their own development, women report exhaustion and burnout when attempting to explore their many identities in spaces designed with homogeneity. The irony is that organizations such as sororities claim to be welcoming and inclusive and focus on the gender development of their members, but tend to do so with a singular purpose and thus unintentionally marginalize others. The complexity of helping students navigate their experiences is very essential and difficult work, in which educated men can serve as advocates.

Advocacy

Women’s fraternal organizations were founded to foster “a sense of belonging, character development, and cultural awareness through ritual, traditions, and the shared experiences of members” (Wells & Worley, 2011, p. 298). These are often characterized by espoused values codified in publications and ideals of womanhood reflected in philanthropic activities, rituals, and sisterhood activities. In doing so, sororities traditionally reflected primarily economically privileged White women. However, women’s fraternal organizations have become increasingly diverse and accepting of female students who encounter intersecting identities. In fact, a number of national and local sororities were established to support women from a variety of racial backgrounds and from the LGBTQIAA community (Wells & Worley, 2011; Sasso, 2013). Therefore, men as both student affairs professionals and fraternity/sorority advisors should move past the pages of the “Green Book” and understand they can facilitate student development through their efforts. By exercising reflection or *manopause* and by seeking to understand the student narrative and their lived experiences, men can become serious advocates for women in fraternal organizations.

When working with women, men should utilize *manopause* and be thoughtful about the words and phrases they use and their own conceptions of identity. MMDI provides a framework by

which one can become intentional about their relationship development and rapport building with all students. In constructing a task force or a committee, selecting programming, or when sending students to leadership conferences, consider those students who fit between the margins with intersectional identity. Provide a safe space to explore what it means to be a modern woman with intersecting identities. Engage MMDI in your work with students. Be aware of its effect on students' daily lives. Committing to advocacy for women's identity development will engage students across multiple progressive points in their self-authorship process as student leaders, and men can become partners to help facilitate these efforts.

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