Co-Curricular Engagement for Non-Traditional Online Learners

Sherry J. Fontaine, Ph.D.
Creighton University School of Medicine
sherryfontaine@creighton.edu

Shawn M. Cook, MPA
Creighton University
shawncook@creighton.edu

Abstract

Engagement in co-curricular activities is a means of educating the whole student, providing an opportunity for the integration of academic, professional, and personal development. Residential programs offer students campus-based, co-curricular experiences that foster the development of student knowledge and personal development outside of the classroom. For online learners, engagement in co-curricular campus experiences is limited by geographic access and time constraints.

A challenge for online programs is developing co-curricular experiences that are adaptable and accessible to an online learning environment. Through a review of the literature and an examination of virtual co-curricular activities and organizations in academic programs within the School of Pharmacy and Health Professions at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska, the authors present an example for co-curricular engagement for online students that is applicable across health services and post-graduate professional programs.

Introduction

Educators are experienced in designing courses and curricula that assure the subject matter is conveyed in breadth and depth in our courses. We develop learning objectives and tools of measurement to ascertain if learners are mastering learning objectives. We take pride in graduating students who are skilled in understanding and applying the knowledge they acquired through their coursework. While much attention is given to assuring students master their disciplines, educators realize that learning experiences must also foster the personal development of students. Educating the whole student, striving for an integration of academic knowledge, professional socialization, personal development and co-curricular engagement that transcends the traditional boundaries of academic learning; underscores the importance of creating a learning environment for our students that is academically and personally transformative (Fried, 2012).

Residential programs have the benefit of offering campus experiences outside of the classroom that deepen academic learning and foster personal development. Opportunities for co-curricular engagement are generally under the umbrella of student affairs, exemplified in campus activities such as student clubs, on-campus workshops, service activities, as well as on-campus student professional organizations. However, for online learners, many of whom are part-time, non-traditional students, access to campus-based co-curricular experiences are limited by geographic access and time constraints. Earlier studies of non-traditional students

suggested that these students are concerned with balancing coursework, families and work obligations; and have less interest or time to devote to other co-curricular activities (Tucker, 2003). For online learning programs to be able to educate the whole student, avenues for co-curricular engagement adapted to the learning styles and personal development goals of non-traditional, distance learners need to be offered. Transformative learning extends beyond the classroom, be it a physical or virtual one. Student affairs professionals, faculty, and administrators of online programs recognize that there is a need to provide co-curricular experiences for non-traditional leaners that provide the same depth of learning experiences as the traditional campus-based programs (Dare, Zapata, and Thomas, 2005; Dadabhoy and Dadabhoy, 2003). In order to create and sustain online learners' interest in co-curricular activities it is necessary to explore what types of activities are of value to distance learners, design these activities to be accessible to online learners and develop co-curricular opportunities that support a learning experience that strives to educate the whole student.

Co-curricular engagement and non-traditional online learners

The Center for Postsecondary and Economic success reports that non-traditional college student enrollment will increase faster than traditional college age enrollment over the next ten years (Center for Post-Secondary Economic Success, 2011). Non-traditional students, who are also defined as non-traditional learners, are categorized as students who are twenty-five years of age and over. The National Center for Education statistics (NCES) predicts that the number of students over twenty-five years of age or older will remain constant or increase from 2007-2018 (Hussar and Bailey, 2009) While age is a defining characteristic of non-traditional learners, it is too simplistic to characterize non-traditional learners by age without considering other variables. As the numbers of non-traditional students increase, so do the characteristics of students who are classified as non-traditional students. Non-traditional students can fall between the age ranges of 25- 75 years of age, work-full time or part-time, may have children or other dependents, can be enhancing their careers or changing their careers (Pelletier, 2010). The flexibility of schedules that meet the life and learning preferences of nontraditional students is one of the most commonly cited factors for why non-traditional students enroll in online courses (Ross-Gordo, 2011). Online learning does provide more flexibility and access for courses and degrees, however, it does not ameliorate the difficultly of balancing work, family life, and education for non-traditional learners.

The characteristics of non-traditional learners, and by extension online non-traditional learners, relates to their willingness to engage in co-curricular activities. In an earlier study by Graham and Gisi (2000), the authors examined engagement of non-traditional learners. The authors premise is that engagement in multiple campus experiences promotes learning outcomes and enables students to integrate social and academic skills with other areas and ideas. The results of the authors' survey of undergraduate students and non-traditional students, mirrors the observations of Tucker (2003) concluding that non-traditional students were concerned with balancing work and family obligations and were unable devote time to other campus activities. Studies also indicate that non-traditional students are more focused on career development advancement (Croix, 2006; National Center for Education Statistics, 2002; Graham and Gisi, 2000). Geographic distance exacerbates the circumstances that limit extra-curricular engagement. Unlike part-time commuting students, online learners are not bound by geographic proximity to an institution and therefore are in part enrolling in online programs because of the access, flexibility and scheduling convenience of online courses (Chen, Gonyea, and Kuh (2008).

Non-traditional learners may not value the same type of engagement and social support

provided by co-curricular activities oriented to traditional students. Furthermore, the unique characteristics of non-traditional students do not lend themselves to replicating the same co-curricular activities that are offered to traditional students. Rather than trying to encourage non-traditional learners to engage in extra-curricular experiences designed for traditional students, consideration needs to be given to transforming co-curricular experiences to adapt to the personal and professional needs of non-traditional learners.

Benefits of co-curricular programs for distance learners

The continued development of online programs at colleges and universities turns a critical spotlight on the role of student affairs professionals in meeting the co-curricular needs of distance students. As Dare, Zapata, and Thomas (2005:52) note:

> ....*student affairs must now recognize that students who choose to learn from a distance are part of the institutional community and should be provided equitable resources, services, and programs."*

While campus-based student activities are unlikely to be a factor in non-traditional, online learners' choice of programs, access to student services are important. As the movement to complete online programs expands, virtual student services become a critical factor in student satisfaction and retention (Jones and Meyer, 2012). Student affairs professionals are adapting student support services to accommodate the growth of online non-traditional learners. Higher education institutions with online programs offer a varying range of virtual student support services which commonly include registration, advisement, tutoring, textbook ordering and library services. The convenience of online student services is not only a necessity for distance students but a preference for campus-based students as well (Shea, 2005).

Although there is an increasing array of online student services available to distance learners, Dare, Zapata, and Thomas (2005) posit that there has been weak relationship between student affairs and distance education with discussions often limited to a narrow set of transactional student services. Correspondingly, little discussion is found in the literature on co-curricular activities for distance learners (Dare, Zapata, Thomas, 2005; Kretovics, 2005). In an effort to begin to address the gap in developing, adapting and extending co-curricular activities for distance learners, it is valuable to identify co-curricular concepts and activities for distance learners that offer generalizable approaches for co-curricular programming for distance learning.

Dare and colleagues (2005) developed a more holistic approach to assessing distance learner needs from a student affairs perspective. The authors drew upon the literature and found two administrative philosophies for meeting the needs of distance learners: (1) offering separate services for distance learners that were the similar to the on-campus student services, or (2) integrating student services, such as registration and advising, that meet the needs of both on-campus and distance learners. With the widespread use and availability of information on the Internet, the latter administrative philosophy is considered a more effective and efficient means of meeting the needs of all learners (Conover, 2008).

In addition to the value of co-curricular learning in educating the whole student, there are other dimensions of co-curricular engagement that strengthen the social bonds among learners and their academic institution. Non-traditional distance learners are more likely to feel disconnected with campus and a have correspondingly weaker identification with their academic institution (Hardy and Boaz, 1997; Kretovics, 2003; Ruth, 2005). The lack of

personal interaction can also impart feelings of isolation and invisibility among distance learners (Kanuka and Jugdev, 2006; McInnerney and Roberts, 2004). Isolation and the lack of social and peer interaction is linked to problems in the retention of online, distance learners (Kanuka and Jugdev, 2006; Rovai and Wighting, 2005). Astin (1984) and Tinto (1975) focused on undergraduate students linking retention to the desire for students to be involved in co-curricular activities. The areas of involvement leading to effective retention efforts include student organizations directly related to the chosen profession, classes built as cohort groups of students that foster a supportive community, and peer mentoring to partner students together to ensure successful coursework assignments. DiRamio and Wolverton (2006) evaluated the application of a specific campus program, learning communities, as a means of improving the retention of online learners. The authors surveyed attendees of a student learning and engagement conference regarding the use of learning community principles in online learning. One of the resulting recommendations from the study was for faculty to design and students to participate in extracurricular activities in their online courses as a means of fostering a sense of community in online courses.

Lastly, co-curricular activities are a means of fostering professional socialization among learners. Socialization is a process and the core elements of which are knowledge acquisition, investment, and involvement. Professional socialization occurs in different ways: (1) through formal educational preparation such as practicums and internships, and (2) through informal interaction with professionals and peers in their respective fields (Holley and Taylor, 2008). In the latter instance, co-curricular activities play a role in developing an informal learning process. Since non-traditional, distance learners are often part-time, working students; they may already possess work experience and are more likely to have an affiliation with a professional community. Holley and Taylor (2008) posit that for those students who have an affiliation in a professional community, socialization occurs within two contexts: the learner's role in an academic context and in an enhanced practitioner role in a professional context.

Another important consideration for non-traditional distance learners is that professional socialization, particularly among peers, occurs in a virtual rather than a physical environment. In an online environment the lack of in-person interaction is supplanted by technology which allows learners the opportunity for peer and professional socialization and collaboration (Holley and Taylor, 2008). The critical role of technology in developing social and professional identities and communities for distance learners extends to facilitating the design of co-curricular activities that engage non-traditional distance learners.

It is important to recognize that there are differences in the career paths and socialization processes in graduate and professional programs. Weidman, Twale and Stein (2001), define the graduate socialization process as "the process through which individuals gain the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for successful entry into a professional career requiring an advanced level of specialized knowledge and skills" (p. iii). Weidman and his colleagues' research focused on the preparation of doctoral students in graduate programs seeking to become faculty. What is applicable for professional students are the conceptual elements of the socialization process namely, exploring stages of socialization through formal and informal experiences, implementing professional standards, creating a student peer culture, the impacts that these strategies have, and finally the ways to involve others through structured forms of engagement (Weidman, et al., 2001). While professional students are typically seeking a professional degree in an area that is clinically-based or vocationally specific, the process of socialization serves as a good basis in which to compare the experiences of students beyond undergraduate coursework. Furthermore, the advanced

nature of the academic doctoral programs can easily apply to professional school students seeking a doctoral degree in the health sciences.

Grander and Barnes (2007) study of Ph.D. students reinforced the importance of involvement at the graduate level and the linkages of the socialization process to their career path. Their results offer a slightly different perspective on how student involvement changes from the undergraduate to graduate level; with a shifting emphasis on the importance of involvement in co-curricular activities being directly related to a chosen career path rather than an area of possible interest and exploration. The authors also noted that graduate students shifted away from the campus-level involvement to involvement with organizations at the national level to gain more exposure to the global workings of their profession (Gardner & Barnes, 2007). Involvement in campus-based co-curricular activities is a critical aspect of life for undergraduates and it should continue as students enter graduate and professional school. As Gardner and Barnes (2007) findings indicate, there is an ongoing need to encourage students to fulfill their professional development through co-curricular involvement at the level of graduate and professional school.

Creighton University School of Health Professions: An example of co-curricular engagement for online non-traditional learners

To better understand how to design co-curricular activities that are relevant for non-traditional, distance learners, it is beneficial to examine a successful co-curricular program which can serve as an example for the development of co-curricular educational activities on a broader scale. Creighton University's School of Pharmacy and Health Professions (SPAHP) offers an example of successful efforts at building co-curricular programs that engage distance learners across the health professions by providing opportunities for academic, personal and professional development outside of the classroom. While there are opportunities for engagement in informal social media channels such as Facebook and institutional or departmental wikis and blogs, attention is focused in this review on the more formal institutional and departmental co-curricular activities that can be extended virtually to non-traditional, online students. The co-curricular activities referred to include student government, student clubs and organizations, as well as student chapters of professional associations.

At Creighton University in the School of Pharmacy and Health Professions, academic programs in occupational therapy and pharmacy offer opportunities and the ability for a student to receive their clinical doctorate through distance education. Unlike some graduate and professional programs, the distance education model is cohort and hybrid-based. Students advance throughout their academic program in a lock-step curriculum with the same cohort of students each year. The students in pharmacy are required to complete a campus component for skills-based learning for a designated amount of time while the students in occupational therapy are required to be near an academic institution to complete their lab component. Although these programs are not strictly online, the didactic portion of the curriculum is entirely distance-based and students are not required to fulfill on-campus requirements that are required of campus-based students. As students are welcomed and become assimilated into their academic environment, faculty and staff turn their attention to meeting the individual needs of each student in terms of academic and professional development.

As noted, non-traditional learners in an online setting need to be connected to their academic program but may feel certain constraints or barriers that keep them from participating. Involvement is important to student success regardless of age, location of coursework and

perceived issues that may prevent engagement with the program. In the School of Pharmacy and Health Professions, the students in the distance pathways can be active in their professional associations; the American Pharmacists Association and the American Occupational Therapy Association as well as the local student chapters at Creighton University. Upon admission, first-year students are asked to become members of the local student chapter in addition to the national organization. The national organization membership dues are paid for by the school and in many cases, the local dues are waived. The barrier of cost into the professional association, from the very beginning, is removed so that students can gain the important skills necessary to begin transitioning and socializing into their new profession. This also allows time for students to determine if the association is providing the proper needs for their continued success and to budget for the upcoming years' dues. Memberships at the local and national level also allows for the opportunity for travel to the annual national associations' conference. A school-sponsored stipend is provided which offsets a portion of the costs for students.

What is critical to the success of distance students in their respective professional organization is the involvement with their campus counterparts. Although the leaders of the organizations are typically campus students, the organizations encourage distance student involvement through executive roles within the organization. As such, distance students have opportunities to liaise with the executive leadership and committee chairs, as well as become involved in applicable programming that can take place in the local communities such as safe prescription drug usage for children and disposal and educational presentations of current trends in occupational therapy.   The connection for distance students to the organizations that meet on the physical campus can easily translate to additional opportunities that broaden the scope of their involvement in student organizations.

Aside from the professional associations that students are involved in, there are additional, uniquely positioned campus organizations that have distance students members. As noted above, the specific professional organizations are an impetus to engage distance learners initially but there is also an opportunity to broaden students' experience. In occupational therapy, students have four additional organizations that recognize academic achievement, awareness and advocacy of those with disabilities and specialty areas of clinical practice in geriatrics and pediatrics. In occupational therapy, these organizations include the national honor society, Pi Theta Epsilon, and the Student Empowerment Network that focuses on advocacy and awareness related to disabilities. Lastly, occupational therapy has collaborated with fellow health professions colleagues in physical therapy to create the Interprofessional Geriatric Organization and Jays for Peds focusing on very specific areas of practice within the health professions.   As the Creighton University moves toward a model of interprofessional education, the future of these organizations will be stronger once the other health professions, not only those in the school, but university-wide, will participate and be active members.

In the field of pharmacy, the student and professional organizations are numerous. Similar to occupational therapy, pharmacy has a national honor society, Rho Chi, and a local chapter at Creighton University.   Additionally, there are local chapters of the National Community Pharmacy Association (NCPA) focusing on student pharmacists interested in the practice area that includes small, locally owned pharmacies to the national chain pharmacies; Phi Lambda Sigma, a pharmacy-specific leadership society recognizing student involvement outside of the classroom, and the local chapter of the Student Society of Health System Pharmacy, which focuses on the career paths of clinical, ambulatory and further education in residency programs. All of the aforementioned organizations offer a distance component

where students are able to log into a university-supported conferencing system that has the ability to record all meeting business and discussion. Non-traditional distance learners can choose participate in real-time during scheduled on-campus meetings or listen to the recorded meeting. This allows for active participation, the continued connection to the academic program, as well as interaction with peers that share similar interests in clinical practice and sense of being connected professionally to the academic program.

Participation by non-traditional distance learners has been both challenging, for the distance learner to determine how best to engage by adapting to their new professional obligations and schedule but also for the existing groups that previously had only included membership of campus-based learners. The examples provided above, which could be considered seismic in engagement of non-traditional distance learners, included both the structure and involvement of distance online learners has taken a considerable amount of time and resources in addition to a shift in scope and practice of the organizations day to day business operations. At Creighton University, the pharmacy program was used as a model for the occupational therapy program when it implemented distance education. The organizations with a pharmacy focus had piecemealed together ideas and implemented strategies over time, but with the vast improvement of technology when the occupational therapy program was introduced, it allowed for immediate implementation of those students entering the distance pathway. Although membership numbers were not and continue to not be directly tracked for each student organization within the School of Pharmacy and Health Professions, this review of literature and documentation of changes that have taken place over the previous decade could lead to insightful perspective from faculty moderators of the groups, students in both the distance and campus pathways, and how the organizations have adapted to leadership and professional preparation for non-traditional distance learners.

Through socialization and professionalization, students become involved in their professional associations which could lead to additional involvement in other student clubs, organizations, and virtual community building activities in the class cohort. Students are encouraged to seek leadership roles and through these opportunities can further contribute to their professional development.

Participation in Leadership Development

Co-curricular leadership development in the School of Pharmacy and Health Professions at Creighton University is rooted in the Social Change Model (SCM) (HERI, 1996) encouraging students to seek leadership positions at the grassroots levels and beyond the anointed, appointed or elected leader. The encouragement of student leadership is based on the SCM and the premise that leadership is a "purposeful, collaborative, values-based process that results in positive social change" (Cilente in Komives, Wagner, and associates, 2009). Although leadership positions are important and necessary, students are also asked to seek a variety of roles that may or may not be associated with their academic program. In order to maximize participation among students, co-curricular leadership development at the SPAHP encourages students to tailor participation and pursue leadership positions in professional organizations in accordance with their own circumstances and future career objectives.

The most tangible way to sharpen leadership skills for students who are non-traditional distance learners in occupational and pharmacy is serving as class officers of their cohort group. Class officers are elected by their peers each year to serve the class and guide how the class will interact with each other, maintain lines of appropriate communication to keep the class informed of news, announcements from instructors or simply general ideas about

how the class should be operating. The election of officers is very purposeful to ensure class camaraderie and community building that is critical to student retention and success. The officers are challenged to create an appropriate support system in consultation with the SPAHP Office of Academic and Student Affairs (OASA) in order to ensure the community is being supported both within and by faculty and staff.

The aforementioned efforts lead to a collaborative relationship not only within the class cohort but also with academic and student affairs professionals in the SPAHP's joint support office. The Office of Academic and Student Affairs is available to distance and non-traditional learners via email 24 hours a day and during the normal business hours. When the university is open it is an opportunity for students to connect with faculty and staff, but a majority of the interaction takes place via email or virtual sessions using the university supported technology, Skype, or Google Chat. There are a number of additional advantages that the collaborative relationship between the between academic and student affairs staff and non-traditional distance learners. First, student leaders have the ability to hold class meetings and keep their classmates updated on the business matters of the class. Secondly, students can work together to create study guides and practice exams through email distribution groups that help in sharing information to ensure cohort success. Thirdly, students are able to work virtually with each other to create study groups, ask questions on course material, and keep everyone on schedule for class assignments and upcoming exams.

Unique to the culture of Creighton University is that it is a Jesuit institution. Values-based-Jesuit education creates the natural connection between the concept of Magis, care for the whole person, and men and women, for and with others and student affairs priorities related to distance non-traditional learners. The concepts that the Society of Jesus has embraced over the 450 year history of the organization translates well into higher education and how students interact with faculty and staff, how they approach their coursework, and the relationships they construct with their fellow peers. Students in distance education programs, especially at the doctoral-level, must be highly self-motivated and willing to devote a significant amount of time and effort into their coursework. The Jesuit concept of Magis, or striving for the greater good, keeps students aware that they must find and make time for their academic commitment while balancing their personal and social responsibilities. The cohort classes led by the officers set the tone for class community building, encouraging the sense of caring for the whole person by keeping up with classmates and their needs. Additionally, the doctoral-level, clinical-based programs, emphasize the importance of interacting with clients or patients and that each should be recognized for who they are personally and how we can better serve them to meet their needs. The Jesuit values are woven together into the concept that students are men and women for and with others. Service to others, particularly the underserved, is a key component of Creighton University's academic programs, both inside and outside the classroom. Students are challenged to get involved in their own communities and serve those that are in need. SPAHP's campus programs have established community partnerships locally but students are challenged to engage and help determine priorities in their local community and how best they can serve them. The focus on serving one's community illustrates a unique perspective on how the Jesuit values can continue to be reinforced among distance students who are not physically on-campus and in the presence of the Catholic priests whose role it is to continue to espouse the core values of care and service.

Leadership development in the co-curricular setting in the SPAHP is designed through a theory-based program that allows distance non-traditional students to tailor their involvement based on their priorities. This design for co-curricular activity allows the

flexibility to engage as time permits. Leadership in a chosen professional association is highly regarded in the academic program and in career recruitment and selection at the completion of students' degree requirements.

Conclusion

Moving from a residential model aimed at engaging traditional students, requires that student affairs professionals, distance program administrators, and faculty adapt co-curricular activities to a virtual model that focuses on the professional and social engagement preferences of non-traditional, distance learners. The challenge of creating community and connectedness in a virtual environment for non-traditional students continues to be a process of discovery and experimentation. What is becoming more evident in the literature on student affairs and distance learners, is the belief that creating virtual communities and designing a virtual campus experience does hold promise in providing a learning experience for non-traditional distance learners that strives to educate the whole student (McKeown, 2012; Compton, Cox, Laanan, 2006; Holley and Taylor, 2008; Dare, Zapata, Thomas, 2005; Kretovis, 2003).

The co-curricular activities for distance learners at the Creighton University School of Pharmacy and Health Professions demonstrates a methods for developing and delivering co-curricular programs and activities that engage non-traditional online learners. Moreover, attention to co-curricular efforts exemplifies Creighton University's commitment to educating the whole student whether or not they reside on-campus or at a distance.

References

Center for Postsecondary and Economic Success. (6/28/2011). *Yesterday's nontraditional student is today's traditional student*. Center for Law and Social Policy.

Chen, P., & Gonyea, R. and Kuh, G. (2008). Learning at a distance: Engaged or not? *Innovate.* October 1, 2013.

Compton, J., & Cox, E. and Lahaan,F. (2006). Non-traditional learners in transition. *New Directions for Student Services, 114.* (Summer), 73-80.

Conover,A. (2008), *A case study of development and impact of online student services within community colleges. (Unpublished Dissertation).* University of Arizona, (UNI No. 3297575).

Croix.W. (2006). Non-traditional learners and new traditions in higher education. *Education Advisor,* September 15, 2013.

Dadabhoy, Z. and Dadabhoy.,K. (April 2003). Understanding today's non-traditional student and providing for their needs. *Campus Activities Programming,* 32-37.

Dare, L. A., and Zapata, L. and Thomas, A.G. (2005). Assessing the needs of distance learners: A student affairs perspective. *New Directions for Student Services, 112*, 39-53.

DiRamio, D. and Wolverton, M. (2006). Integrating learning communities and distance education; possibility or pipedream? *Innovative Higher Education, 31* (2), 99-113. Floyd,D. and casey-Powell, D. (2004). New roles for student support services in distance learning. *New directions for Community Colleges, No. 128*: 55-64.

Fried, J. (2012). Transformative Learning through engagement: student affairs perspective as experiential pedagogy. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.

Graham, S. and Gisi,S. (2000). Non-traditional undergraduate students: What role does college involvement play? *National Association of Student Personnel Administrators Journal, 38* (1), 99-121.

Hardy, D. and Boaz, M. (1997). Learner development: Beyond the technology. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning, 1997* (71), 41-48.

Holley, K. and Taylor,B. (2009). Undergraduate student socialization and learning in an online professional curriculum. *Innovations in Higher Education, 33*, 257-269. doi:10.1007/s10755-008-9083-y

Jones, S. and Meyer, K. (2012). The "virtual face" of distance learning at public colleges and universities: What do websites reveal about administrative student support services? *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration, 15* (3), September 15, 2013.

Kanuka,H. and Jugdev,K. (2006). Distance education MBA students: an investigation into the use of an orientation course to address academic and social integration issues, *Open Learning.* 21 (2): 153-166.

Keeling.

Kretovics, M. (Fall 2003). The role of student affairs in distance education: Cyber-services or virtual communities. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration, 6*(3), December 3, 2013.

McInnerney ,J. and Roberts, T. (2004). Online learning: Social interaction and the creation of a sense of   community. *International Forum of Educational Technology and Society.* 7 (3): 73-81.

McKeown, K. (March 13, 2012). *Can online learning reproduce the full college experience?* (Discussion Paper, No.3 ed.). Washington, DC: The Heritage Foundation.

Pelletier, S. (2010). Success for adult students. *Public Purpose.* Retrieved June 27, 2014 from http://www.aasu.org .

Ross-Gordon,J. (Winter 2011). Research on adult learners: Supporting the needs of a student population that is no longer traditional. *Peer Review*, Vol. 13 (No. 1. Retrieved on June 30, 2014 from http://www.aacu.org/peerreview

Rovai, A. and Whiting, M. (2005). Feelings of alienation and community among higher education students in a virtual classroom. *Internet and Higher Education, 8*, 97-110. doi:10.1016/j.iheduc.2005.03.001

Ruth. D. (2005). An investigation into the need for co-curricular student services for distance education students. Ph.D. dissertation, Drexel University, Philadelphia, PA. Retrieved October 15, 2013 from https://idea.library.drexel.edu/islandora/object/idea%3A499

Stevens-Long, J., Schapiro, S. and McClintock, C. (2012). Passionate scholars: Transformative learning in doctoral education. *Adult Education Quarterly, 62* (2), 180-198.

Tucker, M. (April 2003). Attracting non-traditional students to campus activities and leadership programs. *Campus Activity Programming,* 38-40.

Weidman, J., Twale, D., and Stein E.. (2001). Socialization of graduate and professional students in higher education: A perilous passage? ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report, 28.