

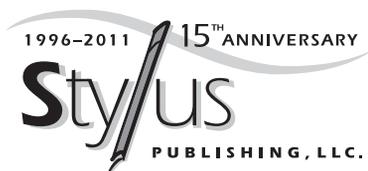
# DIVERSE MILLENNIAL STUDENTS IN COLLEGE

Implications for Faculty and Student Affairs

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*Edited by*  
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*and Mary F. Howard-Hamilton*



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## A NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

### Testing Our Assumptions About Generational Cohorts

*Gwendolyn Jordan Dungy*

#### Introduction

Labeling generations has become a lucrative career line for entrepreneurs, authors, and consultants. Once a generation is labeled, however, there is a tendency for our students to become strangers to us. Rather than testing our own observations and checking our own assumptions, we begin to ask the “experts” to tell us what our students are like. After my review of the material available on contemporary college students, the majority of them labeled Millennials, I can only conclude that the jury is still out on who these students are as a generation. What we do know is that there are some similarities among students who complete secondary school and enter college as a cohort. We also know that these similarities are gleaned, for the most part, from a small survey conducted in an affluent suburb of Washington, D.C., which has “one-third fewer African Americans than the rest of the United States” (Hesel & May, 2007, p. 18).

I became interested in the characteristics of African American Millennials in the spring of 2007, when I spoke to approximately 400 African American students at the Southwest Black Student Leadership Conference at Texas A&M University. To test my assumptions about Millennials and African American students, I engaged the students in discussions about whether the descriptors generally given for Millennials were accurate for them. I was surprised that most of the students had not even heard of the term *Millennials*. And in most instances, they said the descriptors might apply to White students but not to them.

During my observations of students, in general those who had begun college in 2000 and after, I found that while there were similarities across the board, there were also distinctions between what I call the first-wave Millennials, those who had begun college in 2000, and the second-wave Millennials, those who had begun college in 2004–2005 or after. In talking with these first- and second-wave Millennials, it was obvious that some were able to see they have some characteristics of this generation of students (in college since 2000) and some characteristics of the previous generation of students. More than one person I interviewed who fell within the first wave of Millennials said that they were on the “cusp” of the Millennials with many characteristics of the previous generation of students, referred to as the “Transitional Generation” by Levine and Cureton (1998, p. 156). *Transitional Generation* did not take hold as a label, so Millennials may be referring to what we called *Generation X* (or Gen X).

Students who have attended college during the first decade of the 21st century are either undergraduate students now (second-wave Millennials) or they are graduate students, coworkers, employees, or even supervisors. Making the effort to understand characteristics of all our students is a duty and an obligation of every educator. However, it is important to check assumptions and avoid falling into the trap of applying generalizations across the board.

I am convinced it is important that we understand who our students are in order to create a campus climate that supports their learning and success. Knowing who our students are is “more than a notion,” as this generation of students’ great-great grandparents might have said. We must consider the multifaceted identities that characterize our students—including, but certainly not limited to, race, class, gender, and sexual orientation—and how these different identities intersect. We also want to see how this generational cohort is similar across all groups, and how they may differ depending on demographics and particular identities. Beyond this, we need to explore how students relate to their respective colleges or universities. That is, what do they want out of college, what motivates them, and how do they prefer to learn? To answer these questions, we will need more research and we will need to observe and test many of our commonly held assumptions.

### Similarities Among All Millennials

According to Levine and Cureton (1998), it is possible to develop a broad-brush understanding of our college student populations mainly because,

Every college generation is a product of its age. The momentous occurrences of its era—from wars and economic shifts to the elections and inventions of its times—give meaning to the lives of the individuals who live through them. They also serve to knit those individuals together by creating a collective memory and a common historic or generational identity. (p. 19)

Through informal conversations with students and new professionals (those who began college in 2000 or later and are now in the workforce), I began to test some of the assumptions regarding the Millennial generation. These conversations took place over a period of 2 years (2007–2009) in my travels to various campuses and conferences across the country. Following are some of the responses given when I asked these students and new professionals what they saw as defining moments for their generation:

1. September 11, 2001
2. Reality television
3. Mobile phones and social networks
4. Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois University mass killings
5. YouTube
6. Recession of 2008
7. Wikipedia and mass collaboration
8. Election of President Barack Obama

Although these events have had an impact on how they see and relate to the world, in the final analysis, as educators we will have to consider each student as an individual. We will need to know how students make sense of their world and what their perspectives are.

### *Technology*

The Millennials, as a group, have been labeled the *net generation* and the *digital generation* because of their reliance on and facility with technology. However, all technology is not created equal when it comes to that which is used for social activities or to access information that contributes to learning and success in college. In the *NASAP Journal* article “African American Millennial College Students: Owning the Technological Middle Passage” (Marbley, Hull, Polydore, Bonner, & Burley, 2007), the authors noted that “African American children own cell phones, iPods and MP3 players, CD and DVD players, and yet . . . are lagging behind when it comes to having

computer tools and Internet access” (p. 12). This is of particular concern for colleges and universities that may make the assumption that all students have access to and facility with online learning. Hawkins and Oblinger (2006), for instance, suggested consideration of the following questions:

1. Do we know whether students have a computer? Do we know their skill level? . . . Is ownership the same for all students, or are there significant differences between groups? . . . Are there different needs based on academic discipline?
  2. Do we look beyond who has Internet access to consider online skills? What online skills, support, and freedom of use define an appropriate threshold for digital access and use on campus?
  3. Do we limit the definition of digital divide to a haves and have-nots dichotomy? . . . Beyond computer ownership lie issues of Internet access at a reasonable speed, as well as availability of support.
  4. How limiting will inadequate online skills be to students? . . . If students are regularly expected to participate in online discussions or use tools such as wikis, campuses should provide reasonable support to ensure that students can participate effectively and autonomously.
- (p. 13)

### *Social Justice, Change, and Service*

An African American female student who is among the first wave of Millennials said that many of her peers have deep desires to understand the world and what it will take to make it a place where humans are valued and life is affirmed. To this end, she said that her generation is “hell-bent on change.” Her cohort and the current cohort of Millennials are action oriented, particularly in regard to social justice and environmental issues. One professional who works with student groups concurred, saying, “These students are about action, and they will fight for social justice as they define it based on where they fall on the conservative–liberal continuum.”

The Millennials are particularly known for taking action through service, contributing more hours in this effort than preceding generations (Stone, 2009). An Asian American male, first-wave Millennial commented that second-wave Millennials “don’t have money to give to charity, but they are eager to give their time if the activity taps into their passion.”

Some professionals, while acknowledging the service students provide, have concerns about the amount of time many students commit. These professionals note that some of the best students are overcommitted in their volunteer and out-of-class activities and have high stress levels. In response

to an advisor's caution about the potential negative impact of outside activities on grades, one student responded, "After all, employers don't look at transcripts!" For this student, service took priority over going to class and getting the best grades.

Professionals also comment on group accountability. One attitude seen among students is that people cannot expect them to be held accountable for all that is expected of them in service positions since they are only volunteering. Some supervisors observe that they seem not to have qualms about the impact on others with whom they are working or the reputation of the organization if they do not fulfill their commitment. Because of this attitude among some Millennials, a professional who gave me written comments about Millennials expressed skepticism about whether the amount of service students did correlated with their degree of altruism. It seems that the reasons for service are not always clear.

Although some of the students who are putting innumerable hours into service projects may not be entirely committed, a number of Millennials, whether first wave or second wave, are choosing careers from among non-profit, service-oriented fields. Although their reasons for participating in service activities as students might be unclear, student affairs professionals note that some are choosing careers in the areas in which they may have provided service, and these are decidedly different choices from those selected during the previous generation, when "enrollment patterns peaked in careers with a vocational orientation such as business" (Levine & Cureton, 1998, p. 120).

### *Impact of Parenting*

Parents became the focus of attention with the initial class of Millennials. Because parental involvement was a new phenomenon, some administrators saw the involvement of parents as a nuisance, and the best way to deal with it was to find humor in the situation and share these incidents with colleagues. When professionals came together for meetings it was almost a "one-upmanship" atmosphere, where each successive horror story of parental involvement was worse than the previous one. The term *helicopter parents* became the generally accepted term to describe these parents. Today college educators are much more prepared to collaborate with parents on helping students become successful. Some educators said, "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em," while others realized that students really wanted their parents' continuing involvement in their day-to-day activities. Given the advances in communications technology, this generation of students agrees that they are always connected, and that connection extends to parents.

Experts on Millennials seem to agree that the parents of Millennials were the ones who made the “Baby on Board” sign in cars ubiquitous. This generation is known as the most-loved and the most-wanted generation in history. Howe and Strauss (2000), in *Millennials Rising*, gave the following examples to describe how the times and parents’ attitudes changed for this new generation of children:

*The era of the wanted child had begun.*  
*The era of the protected child had begun.*  
*The era of the worthy child had begun.* (pp. 32–33)

In *Generation Me*, Jean M. Twenge (2006) wrote that “Parental authority also isn’t what it used to be,” citing a *Chicago Sun-Times* article in which family studies Professor Robert Billingham notes that “Parents are no longer eager to be parents. They want to love and guide their children as a trusted friend” (p. 30).

It appears that parents really have become their children’s best friends, especially when it comes to discipline. Penn’s (2007) book *Microtrends* presented the results of a poll in which parents were asked what they would do if their 9-year-old son cursed at them and said he hated them. “Overwhelmingly, the top answers, across age and gender of parents, were ‘sit down and ask him why he feels that way’ and ‘tell him that you’re sorry he feels that way, but that you love him anyway’” (pp. 114–115). Although these responses were consistent across age and gender, they were not compared across ethnicities and racial categories, and perhaps more saliently, across class lines. What is more, when it came to consequences, the poll showed that “barely 2 in 10 parents said they would take the child’s privileges away for at least a week” (Penn, 2007, pp. 114–115).

Perhaps related to this is the lack of respect for older adults and hierarchy that many first-wave Millennials with whom I spoke pointed out about the Millennials who followed them. The first-wave Millennials also said that, more than their cohorts, the second-wave Millennials seemed to think that “their parents would be a constant source of economic and emotional support.”

### *Work Expectations and Work Ethic*

A first-wave Millennial said that she came into the workforce with the expectation of working her way up. By contrast, she sees the second-wave Millennials coming into the workforce wanting to be treated as equals immediately

because they have a lot of skills. Noting what she sees as a lack of perspective and interpersonal skills, she said, “They seem to have super high expectations and lack humility.”

This observation is confirmed by Bruce Tulgan (as cited in Jayson, 2009), who stated “The classic thing is they show up on Day One and want to tell you how to change your business” (para. 18). Tulgan is founder of Rainmaker Thinking, a research and management training firm in New Haven, Connecticut, and author of multiple books advising employers about Millennials. He describes this generation as upbeat, self-confident, prone to customizing their work and personal life, and expecting to be “thrilled” by their employers while enjoying a comfortable work environment (Tulgan & Martin, 2001).

In looking at similarities across Millennials, there seems to be a consensus or stereotype that expectations are high. Tulgan and Martin (2001) found that Millennials have lofty goals, and they fully expect to meet those goals: It is not a matter of high hopes, but rather of high expectations. According to Eric Chester, president of the consulting firm Generation Why, these different expectations often lead to misunderstandings in the workplace: “[Millennials] may have skills and are techno-savvy and book-smart and streetwise, but they don’t understand what the big deal is if they’re five minutes late” (quoted in Jayson, 2009, 17).

William Galston of the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C., stated: “Such attitudes aren’t just about work but rather about hierarchy. . . . These young people have grown up in very flat, horizontal relationships. So, the idea of deferring to someone older, simply because that person is there, is not part of their makeup” (Jayson, 2009, para. 20).

Some have said that the work ethic is dead with this generation. Millennials reply that they “work to live”; they do not “live to work.” This ethic and the matter of work expectations are both areas that experts note when they label Millennials the “Entitlement Generation.” What are the characteristics that earn Millennials this label?

They are . . . the upstarts at the office who put their feet on their desks, voice their opinions frequently and loudly at meetings, and always volunteer—nay, expect—to take charge of the most interesting projects. They are smart, brash, even arrogant, and endowed with a commanding sense of entitlement. (Halpern, 2007, para. 3)

Despite this kind of description of our new and future workforce, Michael S. Malone (2009) wrote in *The Future Arrived Yesterday* that we,

as a nation, “need these young people desperately because they are bright, (infinitely) confident, and entrepreneurial” (p. 12). Although previous generations too often concentrate on what they perceive as the negative qualities of those that follow, it is important that we honor in a positive manner what each successive generation offers and use that constructively to facilitate learning. Each generation is “right” for its time, and the Millennials are right for this time. It falls to educators to meet students where they are and actively engage them in learning.

### *Materialistic*

Another common characteristic that has stuck to today’s college students is that they are materialistic. Whether they describe their penchant for material things with hip-hop language such as “the bling-bling generation” (Dilworth & Carter, 2007) or whether they want to buy more things for privacy and to distinguish themselves (Twenge, 2006), they agree that they want to own things that make them stand out as different. Twenge (2006) further stated that they don’t want to share rooms, and the iPods and headphones give them their own private world of selected music; they want their own ringtones and special combinations of coffee choices. An advertisement in an upscale catalog appealing to the Millennial generation read, “You are the I in Icon.”

By contrast, at least one student affairs professional who works with Millennials daily suggested that “we think about the ‘silent majority’ of Millennials who do not fit the general consensus about feelings of entitlement and materialism.” After all, materialism may be a symptom of age. Each generation of a certain age may appear materialistic from the perspective of the mature generations that came before them. Twenge (2006) allows that “GenMe has always lived in a time when possessions were valued” (p. 99).

### **Do Cultural Differences Matter?**

Economic class and immigration status are two defining variables for first-generation students. While Millennials may cohere because of their age, common contextual experiences, and interests, first-generation college students and their more privileged peers occupy two different worlds as members of the academic community.

Where one comes from is particularly salient for African American male students. Because of the economic class from which they come, many African American males may be the first—not only in their families, but in their

neighborhoods or communities—to attend college. To their peers, going to college may be seen as betrayal and going over to the other side. In a discussion with several African American male students who attended a conference with their mentor and faculty member from Morgan State University, these traditional-aged students shared that communities from which first-generation students come in many cases do not value education. For example, one said, “A brother coming home from prison will get a bigger party in the neighborhood than a brother graduating from college.”

Data from the 2009 NASPA Assessment and Knowledge Consortium survey on “Ethnicity Differences in Diversity/Multiculturalism” clearly demonstrate the effect of race on students’ perspectives on campus climate and the campus’s engagement in diversity-related issues:

- Not surprisingly, White students felt more positive about the campus climate and campus’s response to diversity issues than Asian/Pacific Islander and Black/African American students. They also felt more positive about the campus climate than students who are multiracial. White students were least likely to have been the target of potential discriminatory or harassing events.
- Black/African American students perceived significantly more racial/ethnic tension on campus when compared to White and multiracial students and students who preferred not to respond to the ethnicity question.
- White students were the least engaged with diversity-related issues on campus (significantly so when compared to Asian/Pacific Islander, Black/African American, Latino/a/Hispanic, and multiracial students). Black/African American students were the most engaged with diversity-related issues (significantly more than all groups other than indigenous/Native American students).
- Multiracial students were the most likely to have learned more about diversity from their families (significant compared to White and Asian/Pacific Islander students and students who prefer not to respond to the ethnicity question).
- Black students were the most likely to report having learned more about diversity in workshops (significant compared to White, Asian/Pacific Islander, and multiracial students and students who prefer not to respond). Black/African American students were the most likely to report learning more about diversity in dialogue groups (significant compared to White, Asian/Pacific Islander, Latino/a/Hispanic, and

multiracial students and students who would prefer not to respond to the ethnicity question).

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Our assumptions about how students experience the college or university climate should be tested in order to address feelings and perspectives of all students. Dialogue is needed throughout the campus in order to create a campus climate that supports students. The recommendation for dialogue throughout the campus should be taken seriously because White students and students of color experience the campus differently, and these differences could have a powerful impact on their success. According to researchers (Marbley et al., 2002), “Recent literature suggests that the academic success of students of color is due in part to those higher education institutions with knowledge, understanding, and cultural sensitivity, as well as responsive pedagogy and activities that integrate cultural differences” (p. 43). Strayhorn (2007) found that African American Millennials have lower aspirations than White Millennials and lower aspirations than preceding cohorts of African American college students. What might be the cause of lower aspirations among African American students?

When I asked first- and second-wave African American Millennials about their thoughts on achieving “The American Dream,” none were familiar with the phrase, yet when Levine and Cureton (1998) described characteristics of students between 1992–1997, they said that they were “optimistic about our collective future and desperately committed to preserving The American Dream” (pp. 156–157). By contrast, one of the students I spoke with said that “if this is some ideal, I’ve not seen a lot of evidence of this for Black people.” She said that she was aware of a lot of hard-working Black people who, despite their efforts, will never achieve what might be called “The American Dream.”

Dilworth and Carter (2007) completed focus groups with African American students and found:

These students viewed economic prosperity as something that they were working toward instead of something that they or their parents had already achieved. While financial security and social perceptions were important themes, race was embedded in almost all of the students' responses. . . . Students' responses tended to suggest that the millennial descriptors capture the experiences of their white peers. (pp. 122–124)

Race does matter. However, we must keep in mind that “students of color are not monolithic in nature” (Rendón, 2004, p. 182), a truism that holds for any given demographic or identity group. Rendón speaks of the “complexities inherent in their lives” that make it imperative that educators understand the nuances of “regional differences and diversity within and across groups” (p. 182). Class differences, for instance, may mean that more affluent African Americans find more in common with their White peers with a similar socioeconomic background than with their Black peers who experienced a less privileged upbringing.

At the 2007 Institute on College Males at Morehouse College co-sponsored by ACPA—College Student Educators International and NASPA—Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education and held in Atlanta, Georgia, I observed a group facilitated by Shaun Harper, assistant professor at the University of Pennsylvania, on the topic “Men of Color.” The majority of the participants at this professional development opportunity were African American males. It became clear during the discussion that these students, staff, faculty, and administrators thought that gender made a difference. They did not think the African American female college experience was the same as the experience of African American males at predominantly White institutions. Some of their comments included the following:

1. Men on campus are not taking charge as leaders.
2. Black men of a certain class and low economic status can't go home after attending college. There is no support group.
3. Black males on campus, for the most part, are in subservient roles and are not considered as role models.
4. African American men tend to remain in college for longer periods than expected but their rate of graduation does not seem to increase.
5. Many African American males are athletes first and they are often underprepared for the academic rigor expected. They also are not involved in the college beyond their sport affiliations.

6. There should be more attention to the celebration of the African American males who are being successful and less time focusing on African American males who are failing or at risk.
7. We must help African American males find space to dialogue with one another on questions such as “Am I who society says I am?”
8. Educators need to learn more about identity development in African American males and men and masculinities.

During this discussion, the participants noted that programs should be created for *all* men of color, as many of the same issues named for African American males also apply to indigenous peoples and Latino males in predominantly White colleges and universities.

Gender also makes a difference in how contemporary students relate to technology. In the use of the current most popular social networks among college students, preliminary research at one institution indicates that women report using social networks at higher levels than male students, and students of color use social networks more frequently than their White counterparts (Strayhorn, 2009).

Cooper and Longanecker (2009) found that race matters in college enrollment and college completion; fields of study and graduate education; perceptions of campus climate; and hiring, tenure, and compensation policies. They questioned “Why the difference? Is it because we all see the world from our own worldview, and that worldview is shaped by our race and ethnicity?” (para. 10). They recommend that colleges and universities use today’s increasingly bitter racial climate to “begin a dialogue on race in our institutions—and not just in orientation and freshmen seminars, but also in faculty senate meetings, staff retreats, board meetings, and the like” (para. 13). The authors encouraged “faculty and administrators to engage students, inside and outside the classroom, to have deliberative dialogues on topics of race” (para. 13).

## Implications for Learning and College Success

Students’ motivations for attending college are powerful incentives for them to do what is necessary to be successful in college. Their motivations vary both across and within generations. When the freshman class of fall 2008 was polled on “Objectives considered to be essential or very important,” 76.8% of the respondents chose “Being well off financially,” 75.5% chose

“Raising a family,” and 69.7% chose “Helping others who are in difficulty” (UCLA Higher Education Research Institute, 2009).

The responses to this inquiry confirm some of the characteristics that Millennials share:

- They want material things because they are accustomed to having what money can buy;
- They value family and will strive for balance between work and family; and
- They will most likely continue their habit of service that they have developed during their developmental and college years.

We need to consider what may be the most effective way to reach Millennials in order to encourage their learning. That is—how do they prefer to learn? The context for learning is different from when most educators were students. Educators held the keys to information and knowledge. Although educators still have the keys to knowledge, many students are not aware that there is a difference between that knowledge and the vast amount of information to be found (and even created) by anyone on the Internet.

Teaching will prove more effective if the attention of contemporary students is captured by tailoring instruction to their strengths and interests. Several researchers have explored why computer and video games are so compelling. They have found that the many intrinsic motivations that are built into games are elusive to educators. Millennials are action oriented and they want to try out rather than just read or hear about something. They want to know how it works. They want to conquer the challenge. According to Jenkins (2005), “Games foster a sense of engagement through immersion. . . . [Students] can manipulate variables and see the consequences of their choices. . . . Games create a social context that connects learners to others who share their interests” (p. 50).

James Gee, professor of education at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, is a pioneer in the use of video games in teaching. He believes that this new generation of students will be out best models to demonstrate that learning is both academic and developmental. Gee stated that “Research shows . . . that people learn best when they are entertained, when they can use creativity to work toward complex goals, when lesson plans incorporate both thinking and emotion, and when the consequences of actions can be observed” (quoted in Carlson, 2003, p. A31).

As noted earlier in this chapter, race, class, and gender do matter. They matter in how to reach students. I found that when I met with Black student leaders at their conference in 2007 at Texas A&M, they were eager to speak when I brought up topics related to popular culture. When I attempted to engage them in discussion about then-Senator Barack Obama's book, *The Audacity of Hope*, they were mildly interested. When I tied the idea of hope to songs in the current popular film *Dream Girls*, however, there was much greater interest and participation. There was little response when I asked who had read the two popular books by Senator Obama (*The Audacity of Hope* and *Dreams From My Father*), but when I asked how many had seen the film *Dream Girls*, almost all had seen it. They knew the music and could share their thoughts about audacity and hope as dramatized in the film and through the music.

When we consider the motivations of contemporary students, colleges and universities are demonstrating openness to looking at how the curriculum could change to be more congruent with the current context. Although colleges may not be ready to redesign the system of higher education to become more interdisciplinary rather than segregated by major and minor, student demand and workforce demands are the incentives for some new majors such as service science, management and engineering; health informatics; computational science; and sustainability (Glenn & Fischer, 2009).

## Conclusion

Recalling the comment of a student who thought she was on the "cusp" of the previous and current generations, I think there is wisdom in her observation that we tend to give a tremendous amount of weight and credibility to those similarities among generations of students identified by the entrepreneurs, consultants, and authors who have been deemed experts on generations. Some of the information will appear to apply to many students, and some of it won't seem remotely descriptive of the students we encounter. These experiences signal that we must make our own observations. Notwithstanding the need for more research, if we gave equal attention to our own observations and to those of our colleagues, as well as to the thoughts and feelings of students themselves, we might come closer to understanding our successive generations of students.

Our observations must include getting to know students by talking with them about who they are, what they value, and what they want from their

educations. If we discover through conversations and observations that African American students do have lower expectations than other groups of students and even lower expectations than cohorts of African American students that came before them, we must help them see their potential beyond the context that might have shaped their limiting aspirations. Acknowledging that environment has influenced them, we have an opportunity to help them understand that they need not limit their vision based on what has come before.

If we find that today's students are, indeed, always connected, we must connect with them in the manner that is most appealing to them, such as texting rather than e-mailing them. If they share that they have high expectations and we think that these expectations might be unrealistic given the way in which they are pursuing their educations, then we must help them see that the pathways to their expectations may be different from the ones they are on.

Rather than assuming that each new generation of students is completely different from the previous generation, we might begin to see students as what famed researcher Zogby (2008) calls "composites" rather than differences. From surveys, he finds that "First Globals" (his term for Millennials) are highly materialistic and self-absorbed, as well as caring, tolerant, and possessed of wisdom well beyond their years. He stated that they are the "clear and direct inheritors of the age cohorts stacked above them" (p. 191).

It is both comforting and scary to think that each generation of students is building on the foundation of the generations that preceded it. One issue that remains for each cohort of students over the decades is how we tolerate and engage with difference. If we want college students to become the citizen leaders of tomorrow, we need to address how we as educators are helping them move forward morally and ethically on the issues of diversity and multiculturalism.

It comes as no surprise that the generation of students born in the 1970s and early 1980s were uncomfortable even engaging in conversations about diversity and multiculturalism. Levine and Cureton (1998) said that students of this generation would rather share intimate details of their sex lives than discuss race relations and multiculturalism. When the authors conducted focus groups with students and interviewed chief student affairs officers between 1992 and 1997, they found that students were confounded and emotional about discussions centering on multiculturalism and that "tension regarding diversity and difference runs high all across college life" (p. 75).

The authors concluded that “Multiculturalism remains the most unresolved issue on campus today” (p. 90).

Although issues surrounding multiculturalism remain unresolved, Zogby (2008) noted that “No group of Americans more appreciates the multiethnic, multiracial world in which we all live than today’s teens and young adults, and none is anywhere near as accepting of the full range of the human experience” (p. 92). As we prepare to effectively work with students for their academic and personal success, we will need to keep alert to the common contextual experiences that students share as well as their individual experiences that are influenced by cultural differences and how each uses these experiences to help them make sense of the world. As educators, we believe in the power of learning, and we are eager to share this power with each generation of students.

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