

Cultural Competency Activities: Impact on Student Success

Jeffrey K. Coleman¹, Darryl B. Holloman², Melanie D. Turner-Harper³, and Christina M. Wan⁴

¹Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Kennesaw State University, ²Division of Student Affairs, Spelman College, ³Department of Sociology, Georgia State University, and ⁴Office of Undergraduate Evaluation, Georgia Institute of Technology

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of a cultural center on students' views and perceptions of their own cultural competency learning and ability to manage their college experience at a large metropolitan university. This exploratory analysis highlights the views of ten students who frequently engaged with a cultural center. Emerging themes include: (a) how students at a metropolitan university defined cultural competence; (b) challenges, difficulties, and problems participants experienced interacting with people from other cultures (e.g. nationality, ethnicity); and (c) successful interactions participants experienced with people from other cultures. Findings and discussion from this study suggest: (a) identity, exposure, and critical awareness; (b) navigating and negotiating conflict; and (c) engaging cultural resources are the skills students develop, through experiences with a cultural center, that impact their ability to manage their college experience. This project studied a culturally mixed group of students using personal experiences, interviews, and focus group discussions to describe meaningful and defining moments. This study and its findings are noteworthy because there is little research in this subject area. All participants were frank, cooperative, and candid throughout the process. They offered insights and shared information regarding cultural competency at Metropolitan University (MU).

Keywords: cultural centers, student affairs, career readiness, student development

Introduction

Cultural competence is one's ability to appreciate, respect, and accept differences in perspective and behavior based on cultural commonalities and differences. This skill is imperative for college students as they transition to the workplace (Chun & Evans, 2016). The acquisition and expansion of cultural competence is necessary in the student experience at cultural centers on college campuses. Mitchell Hammer (2009) suggests cultural competence is a key ability needed to work and live effectively with people from various cultural backgrounds. Notably he affirms, "cultural competence is essential for transcending ethnocentrism and establishing effective, positive relations across cultural boundaries both internationally and domestically" (Hammer, 2013, p. 7).

The promotion of cultural awareness and the increase of cultural sensitivity are primary facets of contemporary higher educational settings. American colleges and universities are being redefined by the pervasive understanding that freedoms of expression are shaped by not only the culture of our campuses but the cultural impact of our constituencies. This cultural impact, which if not clearly understood, oftentimes leads to student demonstrations or even escalate to campus crisis and institutional unrest. A better understanding of culture, its various forms, and stakeholders' perceptions of culture will allow for the incidents mentioned above to develop into places of educational opportunities.

Metropolitan colleges and universities have become prime environments for increased cultural sensitivity and promotion of cultural awareness. Cultural competence at these institutions, however, must be infused in the structural and organizational practices found on these campuses (National Education Association, n.d.). Establishing co-curricular cultural competence experiences that target students will vary across metropolitan institutional types because of the cultures, contexts, and choices that evolve in the design process found on each campus. The purpose of this study was to better understand the impact of a cultural center on student views and perceptions of their own cultural competency learning and ability to manage their college experience at a large metropolitan university. This study was guided by the following central research question: What is the impact of a cultural center on student views and perceptions of their own cultural competency learning and ability to manage their college experience at a large metropolitan university?

Literature Review

Contemporary college graduates must be equipped with cultural competence to navigate diverse environments and identify another's sense of belonging, using critical thinking skills and academic-specific knowledge in creative ways to address major global questions in order to develop sustainable solutions to our local, national, and world problems (Hammer, 2013; McCoy, 2011; Patton, 2010). For the purposes of this study, the authors define cultural

competence as “the capability to shift cultural perspective and appropriately adapt behavior to cultural difference and commonalities” (Hammer, 2013, p. 26). “Cultural competence” as a student learning outcome at metropolitan colleges and universities include efforts supported by both academic and student affairs as well as student success units. In metropolitan campus settings cultural competence can serve as a foundation for all high impact student success practices including, but not limited to, learning communities, community engagement, study abroad, disability services, and other curricular and co-curricular activities designed to develop, educate, and prepare individuals to tackle the challenges of living in and expanding urbanized societies (Kuh, Schneider, & AACU, 2008). A cultural center may facilitate and offer some of these high impact practices.

Cultural Centers and Student Affairs

Mono-identity and intersectional focused centers, such as the one in this study, both provide spaces for students to develop their cultural competency skills by connecting around identity and cultural aspects of the university experience. To accomplish their goals, these centers must create spaces that are guided by specific standards around intentional learning, social justice education, and cultural competence skills, specific to the institution (Jenkins, 2017). In a broad list of competencies for Student Affairs Practitioners, ACPA – College Student Educators International & NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (2015) include social justice, a category under which cultural centers should frame their work. Patton and Hannon (2008) note that although the spaces responsible for this type of work are often placed within student affairs units in a college setting, to be successful in the promotion of cultural awareness, these practices must be threaded through the campus environment.

Cultural Centers and Cultural Competence

The Intercultural Development Inventory, a premier tool in assessing cultural competence, developed by Mitchell Hammer, defines cultural competence as “the capability to shift cultural perspective and appropriately adapt behavior to cultural difference and commonalities” (Hammer, 2013, p. 26). Patton (2010) asserts the importance of culture centers on the college campus as spaces “where students’ feelings, ideas, cultures, and experiences not only matter but receive validation and support” (p. xvii). Successful cultural competence efforts on campus are more than just the existence of cultural centers; they should foster a sense of belonging by engaging students in comprehensive ways to ensure they graduate. Patton (2010) further highlights the importance of examining the work of cultural centers through audits, such as departmental program reviews.

Patton (2010) asserts that audits should include examination of whether a culture center is providing students the opportunity to build community on campus and promote a sense of “belongingness” (p.196). Thus, a role of cultural centers should be to provide students with the

sense that they belong within the larger university community. They can also contribute to the university's overall success and students' educational goals, in broader ways. For example, in McCoy's (2011) recommendations for improvement for multicultural affairs work at public universities, he highlights the need for cultural centers to play a role in fostering students' global citizenship, contributing to students' retention at the university and providing physical and programmatic space. Jenkins' (2008) cultural programming framework highlights the role of the cultural center in operationalizing an institution's goals for inclusion, but this must incorporate initiatives that foster true learning.

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to better understand the impact of a cultural center on student views and perceptions of their own cultural competency learning and ability to manage their college experience at a large metropolitan university. Metropolitan University (MU) has been recognized as the most diverse institution in the State University System (SUS), which makes work around building cultural competence more relevant. The Multicultural Ambassadors Program (MAP), developed by the MU Cultural Center, involves MAP Ambassadors, a group of undergraduate students who are selected and trained to facilitate workshops, trainings, and discussions in the classroom and elsewhere across campus designed to build cultural competency skills. The goal of this initiative is to educate the MU community in cultural competence, inviting students, faculty, and staff to explore society through a global lens. This qualitative study used an interview-based case study to understand the impact of a cultural center on views and perceptions of MAP participants and non-MAP participants regarding their own cultural competency learning and ability to manage their college experience at a large metropolitan university (Glesne, 2011). There is no institutional expectation or requirement for students at MU to develop cultural competency. This research project was approved by the university IRB Board.

Selection of Sample

For the purposes of this study, ten randomly selected students participated in individual interviews and a focus group. The sample included five students who were past participants in MAP program and five students who were not past participants in MAP program but frequently engaged with the cultural center in order to draw conclusions. The authors used a semi-structured interview approach to compare the perspectives of the program participants and non-program participants on their experiences within the cultural center.

The sample selection criteria for this study were chosen for several reasons. First, the authors wanted to explore which experiences MAP participants and non-MAP participants identified as cultural competency activities. Second, the authors wanted to compare the similarities and

differences between the experiences of both groups. Third, the authors wanted to study this population because there is very little research in this subject area. Fourth, the authors wanted to examine how the cultural center assists students at MU in the development of cultural competency skills.

Data Collection

Data collection included interviews, focus groups, and a questionnaire. The interview questions addressed the central research questions (see Interview Questions). The interviews allowed the authors to examine what the cultural competency experiences were for past MAP participants, how the program helped define those experiences, and how they compared to the experiences of the non-MAP participants. Focus group questions and discussion were developed around an analysis of themes that surfaced during individual interviews (Creswell, 2013). Initial themes discovered in the individual semi-structured interviews informed the focus of the group interviews (see Questions/Prompts for Focus Groups). These themes included: cultural competence, cultural conflict, success through conflict, and cultural competence resources. Open-ended questions were used to initiate the discussion, allowing the participants to explore and clarify their views, build off the responses of other participants, and allow the participants to guide and direct the course of the research study. As part of this study, the authors also collected data to provide a demographic profile and academic achievement analysis for the groups in the study (Table 1). The authors structured our research to explore the impact of a cultural center on the development of students' cultural competency skills at MU.

Table 1. Demographic Information

Demographic Information for Participants	<i>n</i>	Percentage
<u>Pell eligibility</u>		
Eligible	7	70%
Non-eligible	3	30%
<u>First-generation status</u>		
First-generation	7	70%
Non-first-generation	3	30%
<u>Race</u>		
Black or African American	9	90%
White	1	10%
<u>Ethnicity</u>		
Black (non-Hispanic) and Hispanic/Latinx	1	10%
Black (non-Hispanic)	1	10%
Non-Hispanic/Latinx	7	10%
Hispanic/Latinx	1	10%
<u>Gender</u>		
Male	5	50%
Female	5	50%
<u>Academic Major</u>		
Economics	1	10%
Anthropology	1	10%
Political Science	1	10%
Philosophy	2	20%
Exercise Science	1	10%
Pre-managerial sciences	1	10%
Neuroscience	1	10%
Early Childhood Education	1	10%
Spanish	1	10%
<u>Academic Classification</u>		
First Year	2	20%
Junior	3	30%
Senior	5	50%
<u>Total</u>	10	100%

In examining data for the participants in the study, seven of the ten participants had a 3.0 GPA or higher; however, all participants were in good academic standing. The university defines “good standing” as earning a minimum grade point average of 2.0 each semester. The authors found that seven participants were Pell-eligible and seven were first-generation college students. Finally, when analyzing academic classification of participants, the authors found that two were first year students, three were juniors, and five were seniors. The sample had a wide diversity of academic majors, including only two participants with the same major. The participants were a close representation of the overall student population who used the center.

Data Analysis Procedures

The purpose in using a data analysis and representation approach structure (Creswell, 2003) was to provide a methodology to guide the analysis and configuration of data to categorize, reflect, and interpret. The following data analysis approach was applied for each participant in this study: create and organize data; data review; data coding; description of the case; interpretation and validation of findings. The authors coded the data once it was reviewed. Data was sorted into themes that exemplified the same theoretical or descriptive ideas (Glesne, 2011). After data from individual interviews were coded, each participant’s experience was uniquely described. The cases were then combined into two groups of either MAP participants or non-MAP participants. The common themes revealed through individual interviews were used to develop focus group questions to further interrogate the patterns within each group. The authors identified themes in the data to define and demonstrate understanding of the information collected. The coded data was transformed as the authors conducted interviews and focus groups and connected the findings with personal experience (Wolcott, 1994). Relying on Creswell’s (2003) method of triangulation, document comparison, peer debriefing, and member-checking were used to assure trustworthiness.

Within the analysis of interview and focus group data, participants’ personal success is measured as attainment of skills such as a humanitarian approach to cultural conflict, and the ability to navigate and dismantle cultural barriers (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2015). These impacts are defined by participants’ personal reflections on their experiences. The authors are also able to measure participants’ academic success through analysis of the demographic profile (Table 1).

Findings

What is the impact of a cultural center on student views and perceptions of their own cultural competency learning and the ability to manage their college experience at a large metropolitan university? MAP and non-MAP participants were evenly represented in order to provide a complete sample of students who are involved with the cultural center. Upon comparing these

two groups, the authors found that the qualitative differences between MAP and non-MAP responses are not significant, and will not differentiate between the two groups in this analysis.

Identity, Exposure, and Critical Awareness

Participants expressed deep, nuanced understandings of their cultural identities and the ways these identities may conflict with other people on campus. Participants agreed that culture is the traditions and identity that distinguish one group of people from another and that cultural competence is a respectful open-mindedness and comfort level with difference. Rather than focusing on any similarities or differences between themselves and someone else, one participant explained, “I think actual cultural competency is appreciating someone else’s culture in its own right and not having to make comparisons necessarily to your own culture.”

Some participants went on to offer a more complex explanation of what it means to be culturally competent; they described cultural competence as an action and a choice, a willingness to embrace the unfamiliar, an effort to communicate, adapt, and find common ground. “[Try] to share viewpoints and have a revelation through shared experiences,” one participant urged. Participants recognized the impact of arriving at a culturally-diverse campus. As one participant reflected:

When I got to college...I really learned about all the different ways that Blackness can be presented...that for me was my first experience where I was like “Oh my gosh, Blackness isn’t just this monolithic thing that I thought it was when I was younger. It’s all these different types of intersections and experiences that share this common thread.” That was a very revolutionary kind of experience for me.

Another participant commented:

Going to a university like [MU], it’s very diverse, I encounter people from different backgrounds on a day-to-day basis. In terms of cultural difference, I do see a lot of different things in terms of how people interact with one another, different jargon that’s used in conversation among different groups of people[.]

Participants also noted the intersection of race and class that becomes more apparent upon exposure to new people from varying backgrounds. Participants acknowledged their own class positionality and its impact on their relative privilege. Many described the economic ups and downs in their lives as shifts in and out of different class statuses. One participant explained:

I am...middle class or whatever, but for right now I’m poor because I’m in college, you know. But I can tell when I interact with someone that is of a different race or social class, they don’t listen to me as much because they don’t think I’m on their level because they have more money than me[.]

Another participant said:

I grew up, we grew up poor, and as we got older, we kind of moved up to, like, middle class as my parents got better jobs and things like that, so...I've seen the poor side and I've seen the middle-class side[.]

This critical awareness is impactful: in the words of one participant, “Being a minority allows me to understand that I need to go the extra mile in every facet of my life. It motivates me to want to be a better person and do better things.”

Navigating and Negotiating Conflict

Participants extended their cultural awareness to the many dimensions of identity-based conflict and oppression. These dimensions included race, gender identity, sexuality, socioeconomic class, and religion; participants cited conflicts in all of these categories, as well as intersectional conflicts across categories.

Participants experienced racial conflict in a variety of culturally embedded forms ranging from overt to covert. They cited white privilege, disempowerment, hostility, insensitivity, stereotypes, misperceptions, microaggressions, and the emotional labor of having to frequently explain a particular racial identity if it did not match up with a preconceived notion, for example, being multiracial or identifying as Black rather than African American. Participants unpacked racial conflict as a misunderstanding that needs to be unlearned through cultural competency. One participant said:

As a social construct, we are taught that race is really someone's skin tone, who they are, and where they come from. But in reality, race is just a way to categorize people. Those that don't know that race has nothing to do with who people are at times unwilling to think differently and that causes conflict for both them and the people they are placing in that race category.

Another participant commented:

I guess if you're talking about being a Black male, we could talk about the years of how Black men have been stigmatized, and culturally how that works in America, and that kind of informs some of my thought process now.

A third state:

I think the biggest barrier has been race in itself...other groups of people may have little to no exposure to those of my race, and the challenge with that is just understanding how to navigate through those barriers and finding basic commonality and common ground to kind of start a conversation in the first place.

This discussion extended to include intersectional conflicts with gender, sexual, and religious identity. Participants of varying gender identities commented on gender inequality and the added challenges that come with the stereotypes and cultural differences of being a Black woman, or a Muslim woman, or a gender-non-conforming Black Muslim. Participants who identified as straight expressed empathy and a desire to be allies to the LGBTQIA+ community.

Another area of conflict discussed was religion, specifically religions that are minorities in the U.S., including non-theism. Participants cited oppression both against and within religions – that is, insensitivity and judgment towards minority religions by majority ones such as Christianity and Catholicism, and oppressive ideologies bred by religion against intersecting cultural categories, such as anti-abortion and anti-LGBTQIA+ beliefs. One participant pointed out a conflict-ridden intersection between race and non-theism in the black community: “Queer and black and non-theists...is a very small group of people whereas in a lot of white queer communities’ non-belief is an expected thing almost. One participant summed up religion’s cultural relevance: they explained, “Religious oppression is, I think, something that’s not often thought about as having ‘real world’ consequences. We forget that religious oppression is not just restriction on practice; it intersects often with classism, sexism, anti-Blackness and many other things.”

Many respondents mentioned that these experiences made them culturally sensitive, humble, and appreciative of fellow open-minded people. They also consider themselves particularly attune to areas where they experience more or less privilege than people in other social positions, such as being a racial or gender minority, and a member of a majority religious sect or sexual orientation. Many participants find that their minority status(es) made them more adaptable, more empathetic, and more apt to deconstruct stereotypes and look for common ground with others. “Everyone has to ‘unlearn’ things, even about the communities with which they identify,” explained one participant.

Participants with non-minority statuses mentioned that they use their privilege to create occasions to teach others about cultural minority groups; for example, one participant who is a member of a religious organization hosts awareness events on Islam and Hinduism in order to seek common ground. This person stated:

[I]t was one of the best meetings we’ve had this entire semester, we had the biggest turnout of people...and we all just hung out and asked questions...they just talked a lot about what [Islam] means to them...it cleared up a lot of misconceptions. We have meetings like that I think they’re really a success when we can have Muslim students and atheist students and Christian students come together...[it’s] beneficial for all parties.

When asked why common ground is such an important goal, respondents explained that it is the only way to move forward in communication. They articulated that communicating towards

common ground creates comfort, from this comfort comes trust, and from trust comes the opportunity to bridge gaps in cultural understanding and connection.

Participants spoke of using cultural competence as a tool to renegotiate certain parts of their own culture. One participant who is religious convinced their family to transfer to a socially tolerant church and another began using their MAP Ambassador training to transform negative, racialized experiences into opportunities to communicate and deconstruct conflict, rather than walking away in anger.

Many participants had similar views related to the importance of advocating for cultural competence activities so that even the most privileged individuals might become engaged in cultural empathy, adaptation, and the unlearning of oppressive ideologies. One participant stated:

Making yourself aware of your privilege and revealing that to other similarly-privileged people are the first steps to advocacy and allyship. I think it's important to have students, faculty, community members with different privileges rally around people who are disadvantaged in the same way.

Another participant commented, "When you realize your privilege and become culturally aware, then you can effectively make changes to improve issues. It is important to get people who aren't already there to help ignite competence."

Engaging Cultural Resources

Participants noted that it is necessary to have access to resources in order to work towards becoming culturally competent. They also agreed that these cultural competency resources are readily available to them at MU and that simply being on campus at all is a constant cultural experience.

Beyond this exposure to a culturally diverse student body and beyond the cultural center as their primary resource, participants also cited the following as valuable cultural competence resources on campus: language courses, opportunities to study abroad, Model UN, student services offices that cater to particular identities, and university-wide activities offered at student housing and elsewhere on campus. Student clubs, in particular, are cited as an empowering opportunity to lead and create cultural events, such as the religion event mentioned in the previous section.

When asked about off-campus opportunities for cultural competence-building, participants cited the internet and social media as major tools for access to new and different ideas and people, a blurring of cultural lines, and quick way to spread and gain knowledge. They also praised local arts scenes as places to share common ground with different people, cultural activities in the local communities such as film festivals, voluntarism and advocacy groups, and professional mentors and coworkers.

Expanding on the findings of Astin (1993) and Villapondo (2002), our findings demonstrate the myriad positive effects of access to, and participation in, cultural competence activities on campus. Participants shared the creative methods they use to respond to cultural conflicts. One participant mentioned that they enjoyed navigating their multiple racial and ethnic identities during interaction with different friend and family groups; they saw it as an advantage to have this authentic access to so many cultures. With regard to the cultural center in particular, participants reflected on the solidarity built and felt with members of a similar identity; they spoke of the relief of being around fellow minorities as an escape from the emotional labor of being expected to represent an entire race, gender identity, or religion when in other spaces. MAP participants received, as part of their involvement with the center at MU, training and development on cultural competence and related topics. In addition, the center's program offerings focused on identity, culture, and more. Therefore, MAP and non-MAP participants would likely have had opportunity to reflect about their own cultural competence prior to this study's data collection. This is an advantage for this research, as these participants were well positioned to provide keen insight. Many of the participants, MAP and non-MAP alike, were involved in the center's programming and events prior to this research. In future studies, further examination of cultural centers outside of the metropolitan context would yield important comparative results. Additionally, similar data collected at another type of institution, such as a religiously-affiliated institution, or small private institution, is a direction future researchers should consider.

Conclusion and Implications

Our findings suggest that identity, exposure, and critical awareness; navigating and negotiating conflict; and engaging cultural resources are the skills students develop through experiences with a cultural center at a metropolitan university. These experiences correspond with Learning Reconsidered (NASPA & ACPA, 2004) student outcomes of persistence and academic achievement. Participants in the study were able to reflect on their ability to develop skills to manage their college experience by addressing cultural barriers to their ability to manage their college experience.

Barriers such as the emotional labor of being expected to represent an entire race or gender identity were deconstructed and an environment of cultural inclusion was established in the cultural center. Such experiences enabled participants to build humanitarian skills of understanding, appreciating differences, and advocating to dismantle systematic barriers of oppression. Moreover, participants reflected their ability to navigate conflict by working cooperatively with individuals different from themselves and people with different points of view, skills reflecting cognitive development and career preparation (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2015).

The study indicates that cultural centers should serve as safe spaces for students from diverse backgrounds to reflect on the variance in their socially constructed cultural identities. These spaces should also provide students with the opportunities to reflect, embrace, and value how those identities are both similar and dissimilar. Many students, however, will arrive to campus with concerns that their social and cultural identities will not be embraced. This study demonstrates the importance of maintaining cultural center spaces as a student success bastion for a college or university community. This is underscored during a global pandemic where many college students have struggled to maintain connections to their campuses via remote learning environments.

As metropolitan universities and colleges rebound from a global pandemic, resources will be strained throughout the campus. It will be important that university administrators and policy makers continue to invest in the work, growth and expansion of the cultural centers on their campuses. Cultural centers will continue to support expectations that student graduate prepared to enter competitive job markets demonstrating “work-readiness.” This study reveals that college students who connect with cultural centers acquire skills that prepare them to navigate global spaces where cultural awareness will serve as an employment requirement. Although the tenets of student success have often been associated with academic advising and financial solvency, these are only some of the aspects that contribute to successful student retention. Student success initiatives must also include varying aspects of student belonging and fit specific to their institutions. These are extremely important aspect for metropolitan universities and colleges who may not always have traditional campus environments. Cultural centers provide students an opportunity to explore and connect with their gender, sexual, racial and religious identities which help them better maneuver the various academic spaces they will encounter on campus. Moreover, cultural centers can help students navigate densely populated urban environments which are rich in multifaceted cultures and traditions.

This study reflects how learning does not occur in a vacuum nor only manifests in academic classroom settings. Lifelong learning occurs through many different facets including cultural centers, residence halls, Greek life, student conduct, and civic engagement. These out-of-classroom experiences help provide students with a holistic approach to learning that better prepares them to enter grounded workforces. The authors have learned through a global pandemic that students and student success initiatives require the whole campus to embrace innovative approaches to facilitating student retention and matriculation. These initiatives will call for academic affairs, student affairs, and student success units to work in sync to support students in a post-pandemic environment. Lastly, metropolitan colleges and universities are microcosms of larger societies and it will be the responsibility of their cultural centers to foster environments that promote efforts that shape inclusive and culturally aware environments.

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Supplementary Data

Interview Questions

1. How do you define culture?
2. What is your definition of cultural competence?
3. What has your experience been around cultural difference?
4. Describe the cultural competency activities you have participated in at Metropolitan University. These are experiences in which you have the opportunity to shift your cultural perspective and appropriately adapt your behavior to cultural difference and commonalities.
5. What did you experience as challenges, difficulties, and problems in interacting with people from other cultures (e.g. nationality, ethnicity)?
 - a. Discuss the relationship you believe these challenges had to your race.
 - b. Discuss the relationship you believe these challenges had to your gender.
 - c. Discuss the relationship you believe these challenges had to your sexual orientation.
 - d. Discuss the relationship you believe these challenges had to your socioeconomic class.
 - e. Discuss the relationship you believe these challenges had to your religion.
6. What did you experience as successful interactions with people from other cultures (e.g. nationality, ethnicity)?
 - a. Discuss the relationship you believe these successes had to your race.
 - b. Discuss the relationship you believe these successes had to your gender.
 - c. Discuss the relationship you believe these successes had to your sexual orientation.
 - d. Discuss the relationship you believe these successes had to your socioeconomic class.
 - e. Discuss the relationship you believe these successes had to your religion.
7. What are some resources and services at Metropolitan University that you think helped you interact successfully with people from other cultures (e.g. nationality, ethnicity)?
8. What are some resources and services outside of Metropolitan University that you think helped you interact successfully with people from other cultures (e.g. nationality, ethnicity)?
9. What do you feel university administrators and professors should know and do to create experiences that foster cultural competence at Metropolitan University?

Questions/Prompts for Focus Groups

Questions/Prompts for Focus Group 1 (MAP Participants)

1. It seems that the fact that GSU offers a variety of cultural competency activities, with the Office of Multicultural Affairs as the largest example, was a common theme in each of your individual interviews. Talk to me about why you think this is the case.
2. It seems that dealing with your own closed mindedness, the closed-mindedness of others and communication issues between cultures were common themes in each of your individual interviews. Talk to me about why you think this is the case.
3. It seems that conflict based on race and how it is perceived was a common theme in each of your individual interviews. Talk to me about why you think this is the case.
4. It seems that lack of exposure and insensitivity to other classes was a common theme in each of your individual interviews. Talk to me about why you think this is the case.
5. It seems that insensitivity towards religious people and oppression within religions were common themes in each of your individual interviews. Talk to me about why you think this is the case.
6. It seems that effective communication and acceptance and openness between cultures was a common theme in each of your individual interviews. Talk to me about why you think this is the case.
7. It seems that finding common ground and understanding was a common theme in each of your individual interviews. Talk to me about why you think this is the case.
8. How has the Office of Multicultural Affairs helped foster cultural competence for you at Metropolitan University?
9. How can workshops and trainings for professors on open-minded thinking and cultural competency help foster cultural competence for you at Metropolitan University?
10. What roles have the internet, social media, and friendship played in helping you successfully interact with people from other cultures?
11. Talk to me about how your experiences have all been similar...
12. Talk to me about anything that has been shared that seems strikingly different to you...
13. What advice would you give to other students about how they can successfully engage in cultural competency activities at a metropolitan university?

Questions/Prompts for Focus Group 2 (Non-MAP Participants)

1. It seems that the fact that GSU offers a variety of cultural competency activities, with the Office of Multicultural Affairs as the largest example, was a common theme in each of your individual interviews. Talk to me about why you think this is the case.
2. It seems that being sensitive to different people, and wanting others to feel like you can relate to them and respect them were common themes in each of your individual interviews. Talk to me about why you think this is the case.
3. It seems that communicating with people who are unaware of their privilege, and convincing people to see the value in engaging in cultural competence activities and advocacy were common themes in each of your individual interviews. Talk to me about why you think this is the case.
4. It seems that stereotypes and judgments around race, gender, sexuality, faith, or socioeconomic class were common themes in each of your individual interviews. Talk to me about why you think this is the case.
5. It seems that insensitivity towards religious people and oppression within religions were common themes in each of your individual interviews. Talk to me about why you think this is the case.
6. It seems that a common theme in each of your individual interviews was that the experience of being in a racial, gender, sexuality, or faith minority has made you stronger and more motivated. Talk to me about why you think this is the case.
7. It seems that a common theme in each of your individual interviews was that you can see areas and aspects of your identity where you are privileged while also aware of other areas where you are not. Talk to me about why you think this is the case.
8. It seems that a lack of effort by professors to get trained in cultural competence and practice it consistently in the classroom were common themes in each of your individual interviews. Talk to me about why you think this is the case.
9. How has the Office of Multicultural Affairs helped foster cultural competence for you at Metropolitan University?
10. What roles have off-campus jobs, off-campus community participation, and off-campus arts and cultural activities played in helping you successfully interact with people from other cultures?
11. Talk to me about how your experiences have all been similar...
12. Talk to me about anything that has been shared that seems strikingly different to you...
13. What advice would you give to other students about how they can successfully engage in cultural competency activities at a metropolitan university?