



Why Black Collegiate Women Volunteer and How We Can Work with Them to Impact Communities
 Dr. Nashira Williams, Florida International University



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Agenda


- Background of the Study
- Importance
- Participants
- Why Black Collegiate Women Volunteer
- Things of Note
- How We Can Work with Them to Impact Communities
- Q & A




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Background of Study


"Complex ethnic and racial variations in civic engagement subcultures are an important and relatively unexamined area of inquiry"
 (Framer & Piotrkowski, 2009, p. 208).



Simultaneous Increase
Black Women at Universities
&
University Civic Engagement
Outreach




Misalignment with the research of civic engagement
because it excludes the activity of young Black people
&
Counterintuitive to the historical underpinnings of
political and educational transformations in the United
States




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Importance




Volunteering opportunities as retention strategies




Link to persistence, educational & intellectual gains




Human, cultural, & social capital gains



Include the "nontraditional" volunteer voices




Counter Whiteness as a remedy for misfortune pedagogy




Oppose pedagogy norming help to racial minorities

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Participants



11 Black Women
Seniors; 20-27
Florida International University



Required = one *formal* volunteer experience in past year
Most volunteered more than once in the past year & recalled multiple recent experiences
One participant had little formal volunteering in the past year

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Pseudonym	Age	Major	Transfer/International	Race/Ethnicity	Main Campus
Ashley	20	Chemistry	Neither	Jamaican	MMC
Bernice	21	Psychology, pre-nursing classes	Neither	African American	MMC
Jane	27	International Business and Marketing	Transfer	Bahamian and Haitian	MMC
Lourdes	20	Psychology	Neither	Black Hispanic/Dominican	MMC
Maggy	22	Psychology and Women and Gender Studies	Neither	Haitian American	MMC
Marie	21	Psychology	Neither	Haitian	BBC
Marinella	24	Psychology	Transfer & International	Black from Curacao	MMC
Paggy	23	Business Management, Certificate in Entrepreneurship	Transfer	"Jamaican"	Online
Sarah	21	Biology	Neither	Haitian American	MMC
Viola	22	Psychology	Transfer	Haitian	BBC
Yollette	21	Psychology	Neither	Haitian	MMC

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Why Black Collegiate Women Volunteer

Early Engagement in Community Service

Church Was Early Motivator

Overcoming Personal Hardships & Barriers

Helps Build Connections

Connections with Those While Volunteering Foster Meaning

Transformative Impact to Community & Selves

Transformative Impact Fosters Deeper Reflection

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Things of Note

- Personal Hardships and Overcoming Barriers Encouraged Reflection
- The University Has a Disjointed Role in Meaning Making
- Reasons for Criticism of Volunteerism Led to Deeper Reflection
- Politics, Social Movements, and Volunteerism

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Implication for Reflection

- Holistic service reflection
 - Student Journey
 - Over the course of the collegiate career
 - Incorporation of all life aspects (e.g., transitions, spiritual, financial, family)
 - How are you currently engaging Black women volunteers in reflection? Who leads reflections on civic engagement/involvement?
 - Have you intentionally set up opportunities for people to reflect on how their identities help them make meaning of their experiences?

The Experiential Learning Cycle

Experiencing
The activity phase

Sharing
Exchanging reactions and observations

Processing
Discussing patterns and dynamics

Generalizing
Developing real-world principles

Applying
Planning effective use of learning

Now What?

What?

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Implication for Staff & Faculty

- Supportive faculty and administrators needed
 - Large community outreach initiatives v. reality
 - Meaning making and application of service done by individual
 - Comfort level of participants communicating to faculty
 - Ability to have shared community with administrators
 - Who are the staff members that are relegated to talking about service? Are these staff member representative of the community at large?
 - How can faculty encourage conversations about volunteerism without a service-learning component to their class?

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Implication for Course Offerings

- Intentional curricular links
 - Leads to understanding
 - Access to volunteering
 - Service-learning still a barrier
 - Student perspective of curricular links often skewed; nonexistent
 - Resume, personal statements, documentation, & rewards
 - How can our units work to facilitate discussion on how coursework is intertwined with the community work of these women?
 - How do we help them take "superficial" connections to their course and volunteerism and develop the connections further?

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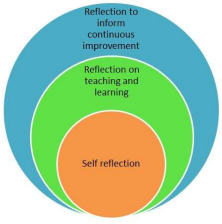
Implication for Community At-Large

- Larger-scale social movements or political underpinnings
 - Historical perspectives of people who have been marginalized
 - Global perspectives of identity
 - No clear link, but motivational understanding
 - Units in the university could assist that connection
 - Perception of peers
 - Entrepreneurial community change and social innovation
 - How connected are you with the history of the communities in which students have chosen to attend university? Where would they get a historical perspective of the town and the local movements that have been catalytic for change?
 - Do some students want to engage in conversation around their leadership image through the service work that they do with the community?

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Implication for Student Experience

- Synergy through reflection
 - University administrators
 - Community entities
 - Mutually informs work
 - Can identify gaps in one's work without asking students to do additional labor
- Valuation of work through connections
 - University administrators
 - Community Members
 - Creates a sense of justice for student; those in the field and those in the tow
 - A larger sense of transparency when community is involved



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Implication for Service Opportunities


- Critical consideration of community service
 - Frameworks used for service learning; course activities v. service opportunities
 - Service projects offered as a one-time engagement
 - Are service projects set up in areas of higher socio-economic status than participants?
 - How experiences are recorded?
 - How experiences are rewarded?
 - What are you asking of students whose identity is embedded in service?
- Provide resources
 - Students' personal needs
 - Students' career aspirations
 - Students' reflection needs
 - Students may be serving communities in which they once lived or currently live

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