Response to Bok: Personal Reflection

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**1. Are you mostly in agreement with Bok or mostly in disagreement with Bok, and in either case, why?**

I agree with Bok’s evaluation of successful outcomes for college because he presents outcomes that align with previously discussed models of identity development including the Model for Multiple Dimensions of Identity (MMDI) which outlines the complexities of an individual’s development. Although Bok is discussing college outcomes rather than identity development, he cautions against assuming “too narrow a view” regarding the purpose of the undergraduate experience by exclusively pursuing academic outcomes. “Instead, colleges should pursue a variety of purposes including a carefully circumscribed effort to foster generally accepted values and behaviors, such as honestly and racial tolerance” (Bok, 2006, p. 974). Contrary to Dr. Fish’s criticism of these immeasurable outcomes, Bok believes that attaining communication skills, critical thinking skills, moral reasoning skills, the skills to self-govern, skills to thrive and accept diversity, skills to engage globally, and the ability to pursue multiple interests are intertwined with the standard college outcome of work preparation.

Increasingly, employers are interested in hiring individuals that can embody all of the previous skills as well as know the academic knowledge necessary to complete a job. Therefore, it is reasonable for higher education institutions to embrace these seemingly immeasurable skills as attainable outcomes because individuals must learn the above skills to fulfill the overarching goal to yield graduates that will contribute to society both in and out of the workplace.

**2. Based on ANY/ALL of the materials in this week’s work, if someone were to ask you the question, “Why is college important?” what would you say and why?**

College is important because it gives an individual the opportunity to both practically learn the knowledge specific to their desired professional field and experience growth academically, socially, and morally. While initially reading the lesson, I completed the sentence “A successful college student is one that…” holistically develops in a way that reveals and propels them to pursue their dreams both professionally and personally (Penn State, n.d.). After reading the supplementary and class materials, I still agree with my initial evaluation of what a successful college student is.

Dr. Kuh claims that student engagement on campus is directly proportional to their overall success at the institution (Kuh, 2009). Although not explicitly stated, I believe that Dr. Kuh considers student success to mean more than persisting to graduation and attaining the academic requirements. Kuh, Bok, Pascarella, Terenzini, Bogue, Aper, and College Board all report outcomes that reflect a student’s holistic development. If individuals are engaged in an environment that exposes them to issues that affect diverse communities, they are more likely to later become involved with finding a solution for these issues. This is the first step in becoming contributing members of society which is ultimately the purpose of attending college.

**References**

Bok, D. (2006). Our underachieving colleges: A candid look at how much students learn and why they should be learning more.  Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Chapter 3.

Kuh, G.D. (2009). What Student Affairs Professionals Need to Know About Student Engagement. *Journal of College Student Development* *50*(6), 683-706. [doi:10.1353/csd.0.0099](http://doi.org/10.1353/csd.0.0099).

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