**Creative Component Plan**

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Pressbooks Link: <https://open.library.okstate.edu/rebeccakrouse/>

**Initial topic of interest:**

Throughout my first year in the Online HESA program and the Hidden Student Populations graduate certificate program, I learned so much about hidden student populations and their specific needs within higher education. Some of my personal areas of interest within higher education and student affairs are student retention, mental health advocacy, and diversity and inclusion. One of the hidden student populations that we studied last spring was students in recovery. I would like to potentially focus on retention and completion rates for students who are pursuing degrees while also recovering from alcohol or substance abuse. I chose to focus on this population because the issue of student alcohol and substance use is much more common than most people would believe. Recovery is quite a challenge, but when one factors in the exposure to drugs and alcohol at school-sanctioned functions like sporting events or even parties off campus, it can be even more difficult to maintain sobriety. I would like to explore how substance abuse recovery affects academic performance.

**Potential Research Questions:**

* Does the stigma surrounding sobriety in a college setting affect recovering students?
* Do they feel ostracized if they do not wish to engage in the use of substances?
* Do they feel pressured by their peers to participate?
* How does the stigma affect their academic goals?

**Initial Peer-Reviewed Sources:**

I have read several articles pertaining to this topic throughout my coursework for my Hidden Student Populations graduate certificate, and I have recently found four recent articles that specifically focus on the daily challenges that recovering students face within higher education due to stress, social stigma, and a lack of support from their families, communities, and institutions. Colleges almost seem to expect students to participate in drinking as a rite of passage, and while it may seem harmless to some, for recovering students it can be difficult to manage.

My initial literature review demonstrated that one of the major elements to success for recovering students is support from family, or a sense of community. Some things that hinder their success are stigma, peer pressure, and fear of judgment. There is still a need for research concerning how community, stigma, and recovering students’ success in higher education all correlate.

**Initial Higher Education Component:**

I would like to potentially look further into the current situation on campus for recovering students. I would like to interview current students who may be in recovery from drugs or alcohol and learn more about their lived experiences within higher education. This information could potentially help others understand their personal struggles within higher education. If more practitioners had a better understanding of recovering students’ unique issues within higher education, then they could reform existing programs or create new programs to aid these students throughout their academic careers. With the additional support, they could potentially see an increase in retention and completion rates as well as overall student satisfaction and participation.

**Initial Assessment Plan:**

I would like to submit an IRB form for a research study that utilizes focus groups and interview processes to learn more about the lived experiences of college students in recovery and how their specific experiences affect their overall success within higher education. Participants would be encouraged to participate with a potential incentive like a gift card, and they would be assured that their responses to the interview questions would not be shared with any identifying information. They would be notified of available resources like student counseling services prior to starting the interviews in case they would be triggered or upset in any way. They would also be informed that they are not required to answer if they do not feel comfortable.

I would love to then utilize my findings within my practicum for my Hidden Student Populations graduate certificate by potentially establishing a Collegiate Recovery Program at Oklahoma State University. There are currently 149 CRPs within the United States, but there are currently none in the state of Oklahoma (Association of Recovery in Higher Education 2022). To get a CRP started, I would ask an on-campus organization if I could partner with them to get a fundraiser going to earn the money to start a CRP.

**Initial Practicum Plan:**

I would like to potentially work with an on-campus organization to establish a registered Collegiate Recovery Program on the Stillwater Campus. A CRP would provide additional support for recovering students and help them with their academic careers by providing a safe space where they can connect with faculty, staff, and fellow students who are also navigating classes while managing a recovery lifestyle. The CRP would allow recovering students to find comfort in knowing that they are not alone in their recovery, and that they have support from faculty, staff, and their peers.

**References**

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