

Doing Service Learning in an International Student Center¹

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Service learning is a critical pedagogy that is currently being utilized in several disciplines within the higher education system including cultural studies, sociology, and social work (Angelique, 2001; Lowe & Reisch, 1998). Service learning differs from other forms of experiential learning and community service in that it combines theory with practice in order to illuminate issues of social inequality that many students do not confront in their everyday lives (Everett, 1998). An active engagement with issues of social inequality is encouraged because it furthers the goals of social justice, critical cultural studies and sociology, and multiculturalism (Harkavy & Benson, 1998; Hironimus-Wendt & Lovell-Troy, 1999; Myers-Lipton, 1998). The concept of multiculturalism is difficult to define because its various advocates have different agendas that are only loosely connected within a broad rubric (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997), but most advocates would agree that multiculturalism is premised on the notion that social life is multi-authored (see Takaki, 2000) and that we as individuals and citizens become more open-minded when exposed to the point of view of the "Other." As an ideal, multiculturalism celebrates cultural diversity and can be viewed as the opposite of assimilationist theories (Marshall, 1996).

It is this sort of concern for and celebration of diversity that brought us to the University of Tennessee's International House (hereafter, "I-House"), a place where multiculturalism is promoted within the bounds of a U.S. university. The I-House serves as a geographic and social space where historically separate communities (Dee & Henkin, 1999; see Zhang & Rentz, 1996) can come together and engage each other for mutual benefit. Or does it?

We critically approached the site by asking: What is the purpose of an I-House? Whom does it serve and whom should it serve? Should an I-House serve as a haven for international students, a place where they can "escape" U.S. culture, or should an I-House be a bridge, a server that links international and U.S. communities together? Should it limit its activities, programs and services to campus, or should it provide for the needs of the larger community? And if the latter, how far would its responsibilities extend? This article provides a description of how a service learning methodology enabled us to search for these answers by approaching the I-House from a social justice perspective.

HISTORY AND ORGANIZATION

Reflective of the broader social movements of the 1960s, including the civil rights movement as well as such intellectual and theoretical developments as feminism and post-colonialism, the University's first I-House was conceptualized and developed in 1968 as the result of a Student Government Association-backed administrative decision to fund such a program and was located in a University-owned house, off campus. It opened in January 1969 with a half-time director and three student assistants but was relatively neglected by the University throughout the 1970s, which reflected a tepid commitment by the University and State towards international education. The House deteriorated under the feet of international students and was legally condemned in 1983. A second, larger I-House materialized later that year and marked the beginning of a more serious commitment to international education at the University.² The third (and current) I-House opened in late 1995 at a cost of \$1.3

million allocated by the Student Government Association from student activity fee collections.

The I-House has a full-time director and four graduate assistantships, three of which are normally filled by international students and one by an American who, according to the I-House director, acts as a "cultural interpreter." Additionally, there are between 10 and 15 undergraduate student assistants who are either work-study students or work for an hourly wage. The number of undergraduate workers depends upon needs and budgeting each semester. These jobs are filled primarily by international students because of the unique needs of the I-House but also include some U.S. student-workers who deal directly with questions from international students. These positions, both graduate and undergraduate, are filled by people who have overseas experience and a desire to work within a multicultural setting.

The I-House does not have its own mission statement. Rather it relies on the mission statement of the Center for International Education (hereafter, CIE), which plans, coordinates, and implements activities that "promote intercultural sensitivity and understanding in both the academic and civic communities" and provides "a full range of effective and supportive services to U.S. and international students, scholars and faculty" (Center for International Education, 1997, p. 7). Operating under the CIE umbrella, the I-House assists international students in adjusting to U.S. culture and fosters interest in other cultures among domestic students. Thus the primary goal is to promote cross-cultural appreciation among multiple groups.

Because the CIE's mission statement includes the goal of promoting interest in cross-cultural interaction and understanding, the I-House's work is of particular importance. The I-House offers a multitude of programs, services, and activities that cater primarily to the needs of students, and to a much lesser extent the local community. The majority of programs (e.g., cooking demonstrations, dance nights, coffee and tea anytime, and the international friendship and partner programs) are offered to anyone and everyone so as to facilitate interaction between internationals and Americans. Some programs and services, of course, cater specifically to international students; these include visa and immigration newsletters and workshops, English (ESL) classes, and in general a place where students can relax between classes. U.S. students can also benefit from this, as well as from weekly language tables, where international students offer Americans (or anyone else) the chance to practice a foreign language, and culture

nights, where Americans can learn about foreign cultures. A minority of programs caters to groups outside of the student body, such as English classes for the spouses of international students, and an "international wives" support group.

SERVICE LEARNING APPROACH TO THE I-HOUSE

Our view on the role of an international center has been shaped by cultural studies and education theory (Benson & Harkavy, 1997; Simon, 1995) and by service learning methodologies (Fisher, 1997; Gregg, 1998; Harkavy & Benson, 1998). Our inquiry was guided by particular questions concerning what forms of discrimination based on social difference existed as well as how social justice was realized in everyday discourse. Thus, our evaluation of the I-House is focused through a prism that highlights social, cultural, and political differences.

We approached the I-House through service learning, a "learning by doing" methodology that must be differentiated from other forms of academic activity in the community. Unlike passive forms of learning or internships that are divorced from theoretical references (Parilla & Hesser, 1998), our service learning explicitly engages social justice (Carson, 2001; see also Mooney & Edwards, 2001). We were not working at the I-House as specialists who knew what was best, nor were we students who worked just to receive course credit. Instead we brought our knowledge of cultural studies theory to bear in our work while simultaneously learning from our experiences working with international and domestic students and staff. We advanced with a critical educational perspective set within an interactionist framework—a framework that realizes that humans are active participants in constructing social reality—and worked with a strong belief that the I-House, as a part of the University, has certain responsibilities for the well-being of both international students and the broader, local community (Myers-Lipton, 1998).

Because one of us is a female international student and the other is a male U.S. student, we believe that our biographies complemented one another's positively and enabled us as a team to critically evaluate the I-House as an organization that serves a minority population. Our cultural and gender differences oftentimes resulted in different interpretations of the same event, as each of us saw things from a subjective perspective grounded in different cultural worlds. By critically engaging one another on interpretive cleavages, we were able to create a more vivid, multi-dimensional picture of the processes that went on within our service-learning project (for a

broader discussion of collaborative, action-based research see Zygouris-Coe, Pace, Malecki, & Weade, 2001). Beyond bringing our knowledge of cultural studies to bear in our work, we operationalized the philosophy that supported our service-learning project in four additional ways. First, we worked to provide person-power to the I-House by working in existing programs. Second, we helped develop future programs that might increase the positive experience of students and the larger community by embedding issues of cultural awareness and social equity in their contexts. Third, we helped the I-House better attend to its constituency and to meet its goals. Fourth, we developed as multiculturalists and individuals through critical reflection upon our work (González, 2001).

We relied on a multi-methodological approach to collect relevant and useful data for our project. Specifically, data were collected via participant observation, interviews, and surveys.³ Our project involved praxis, which brings theory and practice together in a reflective, dialectically woven process (see Wright, 1996). While Wulff & Fiske (1987, p. 1) connote praxis to “the use of knowledge, rather than solely the production of knowledge,” we go further and claim that praxis is a process through which, after knowledge is brought to bear, the actor reflects upon the results of her/his action and learns from that, thus establishing a cycle of learning, acting, reflecting, and learning—over again in an endless cycle of negotiation and change.

We each worked at the I-House in various capacities throughout our semester-long investigation. One of us helped develop the “Coffee and Tea Night” and assisted in English conversation roundtables; the other helped develop the “International Friendship Program” and worked as an orientation leader at the University’s orientation for international students. We worked with the I-House director to develop an evaluation tool to collect critical feedback from people who use the I-House’s programs and services and we assisted the director in developing strategies for getting more U.S. students actively involved in I-House programs. We also interviewed a stratified convenient sample of I-House staff members during the semester.⁴ The purpose of these interviews was to retrieve subjective interpretations of how the I-House operated day-to-day, the programs and services that were offered, and the strengths and shortcomings of the current state of affairs. Interviews were structured to be approximately 20 minutes in length. Interviews were audio recorded with the interviewee’s prior consent and confidentiality was guaranteed to all participants. Interviews were then transcribed and the

content analyzed according to emergent themes that we developed over the course of the project (see Charmaz, 2000).

As participant observers, we gleaned numerous, revealing insights into the organizational culture of the I-House. We gathered information while working or relaxing in the I-House and while chatting with international students or I-House staff over the course of the semester. By making ourselves known around the I-House, we became engaged in regular conversations with I-House staff and international students. In addition, we were able to observe many of the interactions that took place between and among staff and international and U.S. students. We individually summarized our experiences in fieldnotes during or directly after leaving the I-House, as well as during our visits together. We then compared our conceptualizations of how and for whom the I-House functions and used those conceptualizations to direct the focus of our research (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

We now provide a brief description of several of the programs on which we worked during the semester to better illuminate our service learning roles. First, the “International Friendship Program” is a relatively new program that was developed to bring incoming international students into regular, sustained contact with U.S. students. International and U.S. students were paired first by classification (i.e., undergraduate or graduate), then by major, then by common cultural experience and/or language. This program had a monthly meeting for all participants, and friendship pairs were encouraged to maintain regular contact through informal bi-weekly meetings. Second, the “Graduate Friends Support Group” is a program designed to meet the needs of female graduate students only. Every semester eight female applicants, each from a different country, were accepted from a pool of applicants into what becomes a tight-knit support group. The group met weekly over the course of the semester, after which the program began again with a new cohort. The explicit goal of the program was to create meaningful, long-lasting friendships between members. Last, “Culture Night” is a program that was probably the best known on campus. Students from a particular country or culture presented a program of their choosing at the I-House, which happened usually four times per semester and occurred usually on Wednesdays (at which time other programming is cancelled). The program typically involved traditional ethnic food, music, and presentations of students’ home countries or universities. These three programs exemplify the diversity of approaches that graduate assistants take to promote

cross-cultural awareness and to enhance multicultural learning.

IDEAL CONCEPTIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

The I-House was overwhelmingly perceived as an organization dedicated to catering to the *entire* university student body. Early on, we asked students and staff what they thought the goal of the I-House should be and then used their answers to construct an ideal type (Weber, 1949) against which to measure the I-House's success. When asked, "What do you think the goal of I-House should be," most staff members, both graduate and undergraduate, gave similar answers. According to a student assistant, the goal of the I-House is, "to provide students an outlet to come and visit the world. It's the perfect place for people to come and meet people." As another student assistant articulated,

It should be to bring Americans and international students together to give international students the opportunity to take the first steps into American life.... It should be "a place where people can just come in and begin to make a connection.... It's a good place for internationals to get acquainted with life here and make social contacts. And it's also a good place for Americans to come and get some exposure to foreign cultures without having to travel abroad.

These idealistic views notwithstanding, staff members were divided about whether the I-House was meeting these goals. Generally graduate assistants were more realistic than undergraduates in their opinions of whether the I-House was meeting its goals, likely because they had more experience working in a bureaucratic organization than undergraduate assistants. Similarly, graduate students were better able to articulate both the reasons for the I-House's shortcomings and possible solution to those problems. Below we summarize both the problems and some possible solutions to three broad areas: getting the word out; getting Americans involved; and defining the community.

GETTING THE WORD OUT

While the goals of the I-House seemed clear to administrators and staff members, realization of those goals was limited in several ways. Two shortcomings we noticed involved complaints by the staff concerning the amount of responsibility placed on part-time graduate assistants and the questionable financial support offered by the University and the State. Graduate assistants had a lot of responsibility in that they led teams of undergraduate workers and were

charged with developing programs for the local (primarily student) community. These demands were not lost on the graduate assistants themselves, as one noted: "It's difficult when you have graduate assistants running a House because we're full-time students, so we have a lot on our plate already, so running the House is hard." And while graduate assistants held a certain amount of power to provide multicultural programs, that power was often hamstrung by budget limitations. As one graduate assistant mentioned, "A big problem is money—and the University is apparently struggling financially, so [the I-House is] not considered an important, vital program." These problems suggested to us ways in which the I-House was limited in its ability to provide sufficient programming to the international community.

But simply assessing the quality and quantity of programs at the I-House was not sufficient unless the diversity of programs (and participation in them) was assessed as well. How students used certain I-House programs seemed to result from access to information gained by their association with staff members. One graduate assistant noted, "A lot of times [involvement at the I-House] starts revolving around a staff member." The number of international students with similar cultural backgrounds who became involved in any particular program was often highly correlated with the nationality of the staff member(s) running the program. Not only were programs developed by graduate assistants, but the information was disseminated largely to those that were willing to come look for it as well as those whom the staff member felt would most likely benefit from it. As one staff member pointed out, the I-House has "some problems with programming and getting things done that could get to all of the students in comparison to only the select few who know about it." Advertisements in the University Center, for example, were typically out of date.

Similarly, international students who were not staff members were not able to develop programs that might benefit them or other students (domestic or international) and there appeared to be no explicit (i.e., formal) ways for students or other non-staff to request specific programming. We talked to several students, both international and domestic, who wanted to use the I-House's resources to provide (multi)cultural programming but felt that their ideas were not taken seriously. The power to "do good" was limited to those who worked at the I-House because of the lack of open channels for volunteers to come forward and offer additional programming. At the same time, staff members were able to provide programming according to their personal interests. For

example, because one female staff member felt that female graduate students were in need of support, a program was developed and initiated for women without evaluating the needs of male or undergraduate students.

This last comment is indicative of our finding that the I-House's programs were asymmetrical in regards to gender representation. During our research, female graduate assistants had a strong presence in the House (they outnumbered males 2:1) and this had seemingly resulted in some programs that catered explicitly and exclusively to women. Gender was perhaps the most salient phenomenon we noted during our investigation, though it typically involved negotiating gender and cultural boundaries simultaneously. Weekly, we found that the intersections of culture and gender were encountered by domestic and international student alike. Situations ranged from innocuous to unpleasant to hostile. One female U.S. student assistant typified the phenomenon when she commented, "[I had what] might be a cultural [problem] with one of the Arabs that works here...and he's a great guy, but I was perceiving things as I was being ordered around and he wasn't being very polite." Interactions that were considered problematic regularly crossed gender as well as cultural borders.

Issues of asymmetrical gender relations regularly came into play in situations in which programs or services were developed by women, some of which did not take into account the needs and desires of men. These "innocent" everyday discourses exclude certain segments of the community and remained unrecognized, even by their practitioners (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997). For example, the International Wives Program implicitly carried the idea that only men are students or scholars. This point was missed by one graduate assistant who noted, "One thing that was forgotten was the wives. We forgot that international students come with family." The irony is that this program was intended to offer ESL classes for *wives* of international students and scholars; however, the language used (i.e., "wives," not "spouses") excluded men entirely. As one staff member intuitively noted, "Those programs are really good, but I also think that they could extend to other students than just the wives and be good programs." There were no "bad" programs, but we believe they needed to be supplemented by programs that provide for other segments of the population. Whether for lack of expertise, financial limitations, or cultural or gender-based practices, getting the word out to the larger community was problematic.

GETTING AMERICANS INVOLVED

According to an administrator, one of the I-House's assumed responsibilities was to teach international students how to "survive" in the U.S. by representing "tips" about U.S. culture as useful and relevant, which (it was suggested) would limit intercultural conflict by bringing various outsiders under a single cultural umbrella. Simultaneously the I-House was to be "a House where international student can feel they have a home away from home." Messages of the necessity of becoming "culturally fluent" in the U.S. were sent regularly to international students through programming such as cultural orientations and mentoring programs with American partners (Meyer, 2001; Shigaki & Smith, 1997). One problem with such arrangements was the assumption that first, U.S. culture could be quickly learned; and second, that it should be learned in preference to students' native cultural systems.

This assumption was realized in calls to domestic students for increased participation. As a student assistant explained, most of the staff was on an explicit mission "to drag more Americans through the door." Moreover, international students who use the I-House told us that they desired an increase in opportunities to interact with U.S. students. The expectation was that U.S. students were more of an authority than other international students on U.S. culture, signifying to us a hegemonic process of enculturation. The push to bring more Americans into the I-House could be seen as a dominant/submissive relationship with the international student placed in the role of "student" and the U.S. student as "teacher." The result was that many international students spent most of their time learning about U.S. culture while doing relatively little in the way of teaching Americans about their cultural traditions. Likewise, U.S. "mentors" and visitors alike reported being interested in the cultures of international students but putting little effort into learning anything significant about them.

The majority of graduate assistants and student assistants at the I-House placed a great deal of importance on attracting U.S. students to the I-House. But at the same time, some international students and staff felt that the I-House should be a private social space reserved just for them, perhaps as a site of resistance to U.S. cultural hegemony and assimilation, which we recognized as a legitimate concern. This was apparent to one author during his first visit to the I-House. Having just arrived at the University after a year abroad, he was eager to involve himself in international work at the University. But when he

entered the I-House and asked for information about its purpose and function, a staff member told him that the I-House was “really just for international students.”⁵ It was only when the author met another international student that worked at the I-House that he returned and began interacting with other staff members and international students regularly. This was not an isolated incident, as another American who was an undergraduate assistant during our project reported a similar experience: “The first time I came in a girl was kind of rude to me [because I was American]. But that didn’t mean I wasn’t going to come back.” We heard similar stories from other students, which led us to conclude that such experiences were not exceptional.

This could be a clue to a potentially larger issue. The I-House administration can never know who may come to feel unwelcome and thereby not take advantage of the I-House’s programs and services. One graduate assistant clarified the point at which some international students and the administration may draw the line: “When too many Americans get on staff, people get uncomfortable.... But then in staff meetings they say, “We’d like to get more Americans involved in the International House. So it’s one thing to have them visiting; it’s another to have them on staff. “ From an alternate perspective, this could be viewed as a form of resistance by international staff against U.S. cultural encroachment.

In the end we shared concerns regarding the consequences of bringing more U.S. students into the I-House. During an interview with one student assistant, the question as to why more Americans did not use the I-House was pondered: “I don’t know if it’s ignorance—if they just don’t know that we have the place here or if they’re embarrassed to come in or if they’re afraid. But I wish there was more American student involvement.” This statement made us think about what it would mean for U.S. students to become comfortable at the I-House. If this were to happen, would that suggest that U.S. culture had come to dominate the I-House? It is our opinion as sojourners that people normally feel uncomfortable when first stepping outside their “safety zone” (Welch, 2000). And just as international students feel uncomfortable about almost everything when they arrive in the U.S. (Williams, 2001), U.S. students should feel that they are crossing into a new, truly multicultural “zone,” one in which no culture has dominance over another.

WHO ARE THE CLIENTS?

The I-House is an organization that works towards social justice on two fronts. First, it provides

services and programs to a minority population in Knoxville and on the University campus. Second, it provides a social space in which multicultural education (in the broader sense) can take place. According to the director of the I-House, all students at the University are potential clients. More broadly, the “Statement of Function” for the I-House (Center for International Education, 1997) indicates that their outreach goal is to serve all the following groups:

- International community affiliated with the campus (domestic students, international students, student organizations, foreign national students as permanent residents, visiting international scholars, international spouses and families, and visiting dignitaries);
- Community of Knoxville (schools, civic clubs, private organizations, media, governmental and private groups seeking assistance with international activities, private individuals interested in cultural information, volunteer host families, and church groups interested in cross-cultural awareness programs);
- Campus affiliates interested in cross-cultural awareness programs;
- International community of Knoxville (permanent residents not affiliated with the University or Knoxville, foreign nationals, and visitors from other countries);
- Other universities and individuals involved in international programming. (pp. 12-13)

Yet, while the CIE has a mission statement that guides its broad and diverse activities, the I-House lacks such a guiding statement. As one worker commented, “If you don’t have a mission statement, how can you know what you are supposed to be doing?” Also, we noticed that some segments of the larger international community were rarely seen at the I-House (e.g., Chinese students, Islamic women, and international faculty members). This problem was already recognized by at least some of the staff, as we were told:

The I-House could strive to reach out a little bit more to the international community, but specifically to the Chinese students... This house could really serve well as a resource for international students to social services that they may need, because there are people who fall between the cracks... We pretty much only support the students and I think we could extend that to students and their families.

There were other organizations on campus, however, that competed in this role, such as the Muslim Student Association and various national student organizations. Thus, the I-House administration may have felt that other organizations were successfully catering to these needs. Whatever the reasons, the I-House was

not catering to all the groups listed above during our service learning project. We argue that such a strategy is based on a false stereotype that students are young adults and usually without family. One graduate assistant acknowledged this when she said, "one of the kids [of an international student] came and said, *'You only do things for big people, what about us?'*" As a result, a program was implemented... in which eighteen children participated." From what we experienced, however, this was an isolated reaction to a larger problem. Evidently, the I-House lacked either the coordination or the person-power to implement such community outreach on a regular basis.

We wondered why programming did not attend to the needs of the larger, non-student population. Because students spend a large majority of their time engaged in academic activities, it would not be extreme to think that they would have relatively little interest in developing programs or services that cater to non-student segments of the community's international population. On the contrary, students who had contact with outside organizations enjoyed such work. One graduate assistant explained how occasionally "the I-House is contacted by someone who really needs...translation—it could be someone from the Law School working on a case—then we contact the [appropriate] student association." Another student expressed her keen interest in helping the larger community. "I like it if I get a call for a language tutor and I can actually find one. We get calls from [staff] in hospitals where they just need someone to tell them what's wrong [with a foreign patient]. It's really nice if you can do that." Student workers seemed dedicated to and excited about their work with local international communities. They recognized that their work was an important part of meeting the needs and wishes of a minority population in their community.

While the expressed outreach goals of the I-House are commendable, the perceived inability to successfully provide programs and services to such diverse groups was apparent for three interrelated reasons. First, the I-House's daily programs and services were created, developed, and maintained primarily by graduate students, which limited the abilities of the organization to serve so many diverse groups.⁶ Second, it could be said that the student assistants who provided the majority of the I-House's work force had neither the time nor the professional training necessary to cater to such diversity. One graduate assistant said, "I found myself working on my own—no direction, no orientation." As service learning participants we also felt that programming was at times thrown together with little critical feed-

back from the administration and there appeared to be a gap between student workers, graduate assistants, and the administration in the CIE. As it was put to us by a staff member, "We are throwing programs for the sake of throwing programs, to be busy." This was starting to change during our project, however, as another staff member described:

I came to the point [where I] asked, "Are we a team or what?" Now we are working towards being a team. It's hard because people are not used to that. It seems like many years ago they worked by teams, but then the concept disappeared. Right now there is a good spirit and we have just started [again] with the teams.

A third and final problem of which we became aware was that programming was often not retained after the staff member who developed it left. As a result, workers were constantly reinventing old programs every couple of years. The I-House could and should collect and retain written records of programs that are implemented, including positive and negative results, changes made, and reasons for their cancellation when appropriate. Perhaps there was a good reason that a team approach was abandoned that could guide the process now. In the end, we found that the organizational structure of the I-House made some of its outreach goals untenable.

CONCLUSION

International student centers such as the I-House can seem heaven-sent for international students who feel "lost" in the United States, for U.S. students who want to take the initial step towards learning about other cultures, and for the larger local community who may need to draw on the diversity such a center can offer. But such centers should work diligently to facilitate cross-cultural and cross-community interaction. Here we offer five suggestions for international student centers.

First, such a center should consider offering at least one multi-cultural workshop each semester that is either opened to as broad a range of participants as possible or focuses on reaching specific groups each semester. Because there are oftentimes faculty members who specialize in international interaction and education, an international student center could easily establish a network of interested parties to help coordinate such a program.

Second, such a center needs to be aggressive in its advertising and outreach campaigns and in disseminating information about itself. Spreading the word regularly is necessary on a college campus because of the transient nature of its population. An

international student center could also work to co-sponsor international visitors and speakers on campus. This is a two-way street, however. Academic departments must develop an interest in using such a center to help facilitate international guests, which leads quickly back to the center's need to advertise itself and its capabilities. One staff member in our study put it succinctly: "For the university to know what is really here, the faculty needs to know, and if the faculty doesn't know, then they don't tell the students."

Third, such a center must establish links with the local community if it is to utilize the academic knowledge that students are gaining in school. For example, students who are being trained in multiculturalism or social work could be helpful in identifying needs on campus and in the surrounding communities and ameliorating them through a center's programs and services, but these students must be given opportunities to bring their knowledge to bear in praxis.

Fourth, we suggest that such a center invest time into training a graduate assistant or staff member to search for and apply for grant monies that would help fund its growth and involvement both on and off campus. There is regularly grant money available for international programming, but the center itself would be most likely responsible for tracking down those funding opportunities and acting.

Lastly, such a center should write a formal mission statement that separates its goals from its affiliated parts within the University. This assumes two things: that the goals of an international student center are unique; and that a specific mission statement would give staff members explicit goals to work toward.

An international student center is a wonderful place for students, both international and domestic, to share equally valid cultures and histories with "Others"; future work should focus on how Americans should fit into this frame. Through service learning we have been able to highlight some of the problems associated with international programming. And while we hesitate to generalize our findings to other international student centers, we believe our project fits another piece within the puzzle of international education. Critical pedagogies like cultural studies and service learning have the ability to shake the existing foundations of education systems as they exist today and to contribute to the development of more informed and involved individuals and groups. As Harkavy (1997) rightly notes, "The university...can serve as an anchor, catalyst, and partner for local change and

improvement in the quality of life in our cities and communities. Indeed, there may be no other institutions that can play so central a role" (p. 20). We believe that the I-House can and will develop a central role in bringing multicultural education not only to the University but also to the larger community in which it exists.

NOTES

1. An earlier version of this article was presented at the annual meeting of the Southeastern Association for Educational Studies, March 2001, in Knoxville, TN.

2. Between 1980 and 1983, the University became a member of the Southeast Consortium for International Education (SECID) and developed reciprocal student exchange programs. The faculty senate established the International Education Committee, and the University established the Center for International Education.

3. The survey findings are not analyzed in this article.

4. The sample was convenient inasmuch as we interviewed staff members who were willing to participate. The sample was stratified inasmuch as we ensured that both males and females, international and domestic students, and undergraduates and graduates were included. In addition to student staff, the first author conducted a one-hour interview with the director.

5. Although the words are not verbatim, they nonetheless purvey the meaning as the author interpreted them at that time.

6. This is not to suggest that only students control the I-House. Rather, the director indicated that graduate assistants are given a large degree of autonomy in developing programs.

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