



Book Review

Review of *Fostering Student Success: Academic, Social, and Financial Initiatives*

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ABSTRACT

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The uniqueness of student realities and lived experiences will always be a consistent factor in education. In *Fostering Student Success: Academic, Social and Financial Initiatives*, Sigrid Kelsey creates a platform to explore the subjective nature of the challenges facing students in higher education. The book develops a narrative that engages the reader through the initiatives and collaborations of libraries from a variety of institutions. The stories focus on varied topics including accessibility, information literacy, research and learning services, technology, inclusion, and financial support. Regardless of our roles in education, it is critical that we reflect on the experiences of our students both in and out of the classroom. In that vein, Kelsey (2022) emphasizes the importance of “how libraries are adapting to change in colleges’ educational structures, student bodies, course content, and financial resources” (p. xi).

Education continually offers moments for administrations and faculty to make student-centered decisions that are rooted in theory and reflection. This method of praxis offers critical opportunities to reframe our perspectives on the roles of education, teaching, and learning. In doing so, the realities and lived experiences of the student can be brought to back into focus. However, for this to be achieved, educators must ask the right questions to better understand who our students are and what can be done to best serve their individual needs. In part one, Kelsey presents multiple narratives that look at how learning environments have changed, and the responses institutions have taken to address these changes.

Garczynski (2022) begins by asking the question “How could the library create a makerspace that would benefit the campus” (p.4) and exploring specific strategies to create data-focused makerspaces that align with the goal to prepare graduates with data literacy education for twenty-first-century careers (p.5). Focus then shifts to Pickard and Desilet’s (2022) approach to targeting and reaching out to specific STEM faculty at their institution to increase information literacy instruction to “support vulnerable student populations during periods of rapid change” (p. 22). Continuing in the vein of helping underrepresented student populations, Vandyne and Koszalka (2022) suggest ways that libraries can address inequities

when serving the needs of rural college students, specifically addressing issues of accessibility related to support services, scholarly resources, and the internet.

Part one continues to investigate the spectrum of challenges that face underrepresented students through Simms, Haskins, and McDonald's (2022) chapter describing approaches that librarians can take to support the increasing number of students coming from high schools with inequitable teaching, technology, and support services (p. 46). Fielder-Giscombe and Toth (2022) add to the conversation by directing services at a predominantly black institution to students newly engaged with online learning and can contribute to an increase of degree completion despite these challenges (p.58). Lastly, Matthews and Gaspar (2022) work to bridge the gaps between faculty and existing library resources to better support students struggling with online learning (p. 67).

Part two transitions away from the experiences of students within their coursework and examines student lives outside of class. For new students, perhaps especially first-generation students, finding your way around campus and "settling in" can be challenging. Part two suggests theoretical frameworks that might be less familiar to library staff. Smith (2022) frames the role of the library through a critical pedagogical framework, suggesting critical roles of empathy, support, and access to develop inclusive academic library programming (p.101). In that vein, part two provides examples of programming positioned through critical pedagogy. Clement (2022) begins part two by describing a Librarian-in-Residence program that provided an in-house librarian in student housing, providing resource service, research supports, and help with course assignments dependent on information literacy skills.

Keltscher and Tirrell (2022) created community growth by offering opportunities for students to share their voice and hear perspectives of others through virtual poetry and art exhibitions. In another example, Reale (2022) focuses on the library's ability to be a place that provides proper training for assignments within courses where there is not adequate instruction. Fostering a sense of belonging founded in a high tolerance for mistakes is what makes the

library a place for students to thrive and enjoy freedom from various kinds of oppression, build resilience, connections, and competencies necessary for the future (Reale, 2022, p. 121).

Coleman, Pankl, and Lo (2022) expand on students' ability to thrive by focusing on multiple dimensions of wellness including: emotional, intellectual, social, occupational, physical, and spiritual (p.104). The varying perspectives of the role of the library described in part two offer institutions a chance to see multipronged approaches to creatively supporting the wide range of student needs outside of the classroom.

Part three focuses on financial challenges students experience and the responses libraries have developed to mitigate those challenges. For many reasons, the classroom dynamic created by faculty may require unnecessary challenges for students, creating barriers for students to experience academic success. Often, the tools necessary to be successful in the classroom are out of reach for students. Part three includes examples of library services that make necessary resources accessible. These examples include Wilson's (2022) description of providing laptop and hotspot lending programs and personal librarian contacts, and Dew, Mitchell, and Mythen's (2022) approach to laptop lending through partnerships with the local public library. Additionally, Wilkinson (2022) discusses textbook costs through a student activist group's recommendation to a university president to create a textbook affordability initiative (p.137). Finally, Smith (2022) and Stoothoff (2022) discuss possible library summer internships for first-generation and low-income students and underrepresented student groups.

Kelsey's (2022) *Fostering Student Success: Academic, Social, and Financial Initiatives* provides the reader with multiple perspectives to re-examine the lived experiences of students and opportunities to provide support. This text also highlights research methodologies and methods to carrying out qualitative and quantitative approaches to better understanding the challenges and success of program implementation and assessment. However, the most important theme within this collection of narratives is how students are placed in the forefront of their own education. Yes, we all experience challenges within the institutions we work in.

However, *Fostering Student Success* makes certain that we as administrators, faculty, and staff remember that ultimately, we are in this profession to walk alongside students, hear their voices, and respond with initiatives that bring these narratives into focus.