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“FAILING TO FIT: STUDENT DEVELOPMENT THEORIES AND STUDENTS OF COLOR”

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“FAILING TO FIT: STUDENT DEVELOPMENT THEORIES AND STUDENTS OF COLOR”

Terrell L. Strayhorn

Researcher, Council of Graduate Schools
Washington, DC

Theories proposed by Chickering, Astin, Helms, Gilligan, and Perry serve as a framework for understanding and explaining the development of college students.

This presentation will look at the college student development theories that higher education has relied on, to various degrees, traditionally. These theories proposed by Chickering, Astin, Helms, Gilligan, and Perry serve as a framework for understanding and explaining the development of college students.

For years, scholars have disagreed on the relevance of such majority-generated theories to minority groups of college students. While certain conclusions and assumptions are no less salient to the development of minority college students, there are a number of conclusions that are at best, marginally relevant.

In this session, we will briefly chart the conclusions and arguments of several of these theorists (including, Cross' Racial Identity Theory). We will be sure to illuminate the value of such frameworks to the field of student affairs and higher education-at-large. However, we will discuss how such generalizations fail to adequately address the particularities of students of color.

Finally, we will, by group participation, discuss the development of students of color, and use this discussion to guide our formulation of a working development theory for these students.