

"A student development plan: The time is upon us."

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The time is upon us.
Develop a system designed to encompass
The concerns and needs of the whole student.
From academic skills sets
To social and cultural commitments,
Each deserves our full investment
Of time and energy.
And between you and me,
We need more than a student development plan.
Demand a pragmatic vision.
Foresight steeped in theory and informed action.
Simple acts are how we'll proceed:
Dare to engage thoughtfully.
Be we positioned as diversity or minority,
Priority one:
Purposefully mentor students to become scholars
Committed to contribute to community.
Involvement is key.
Such journeys begin and continue in earnest today.
Specifically, we'll critically explore the connection
Between you and me.
That's personally, professionally, and programmatically.
These complex conversations will require genuine trust.
I say again,
The time is upon us.

Synopsis/introduction:

I spoke this piece/peace into existence at a staff retreat for eighty-plus coworkers/colleagues from across our division, including our executive staff. My charge was to lead a discussion about how we could collectively generate a student development plan -- a means for us to do our work more consistently, seamlessly. My poem served as our framework for our pending inter/actions, which were to be centered on my proposed conceptual model of our multifaceted work. My poem was met with absolute silence. This (initial) reaction both humbled and confused me.

BIO:

S. Purcell Woodard, Ph.D., is the associate director for both the McNair Program and Early Identification Program at the University of Washington. Both programs serve undergraduates who are low income, underrepresented, and/or first-generation college; both programs prepare these students to pursue and excel in post-baccalaureate education. Steve's poetry has also appeared earlier in this and other journals (e.g., "Taboo: The journal of culture and education"), as well as in the book, *Becoming multicultural educators: Personal journey toward professional agency*. (E-mail: swoodard@u.washington.edu)

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