

An Investigation into Student Support Development Services and Higher Education Leadership: A Case Study of a Community College in the Caribbean

Author: Dr. Beverly John-Morgan
Turks and Caicos Islands Community College

The purpose of this study is to determine how student affairs issues are addressed at a community college in a British Overseas Territory and to identify what issues associated with higher education leadership influence the implementation of student support and development services. The problem at this British Overseas Territory (BOT) community college is that there is little evidence that student support and development services exist to address student affairs so this investigation was conducted to determine why this is so and the issues surrounding higher education leadership in the establishment of student support and development services at the college. A constructivist worldview was applied to this case to discover the understanding of leaders and students regarding student support and development services. A qualitative approach was used and a single case study design was adopted since this allowed the participants (leaders and students) at the study site to share their views and opinions on the issue at the institution. Data was collected through elite interviews, focus groups and document reviews. This process was guided by four research questions: What are students' experiences with student support and development services at the study site? How do leaders address student affairs concerns at the institution? Who do leaders collaborate with to address issues of development regarding student support and development services at the college? What happens when no institutional arrangements exist to facilitate student support and development services?

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data and this generated six themes related to answering the research questions. These themes revealed issues linked to leadership and the absence of resources for support services implementation at the study site. An exploration of the six themes is presented, as well as recommendations and implications of the study and discussion and conclusion of the research findings.