

Andres, L., & Finlay, F. (Eds.). (2004). *Student Affairs: Experiencing Higher Education*. Vancouver: UBC Press. Pages: 256. Price: \$29.95 (paper).

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As co-editors of *Student Affairs*, Andres, faculty member in Higher Education at The University of British Columbia, and Finlay, associate director of the British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer, offer an insightful set of research studies exploring the academic experiences of students in high school, community college, and university environments. The book is placed within the context of the changing student experience and begins with a short introduction about the rapid expansion of the higher education field with particular reference to the post-secondary system in the Province of British Columbia.

While students 18–24 years continue to enroll full-time in post-secondary education for educational credentialing, Andres notes that there is increasing pressure to respond to the needs and desires of non-traditional students. For example, she indicates that more learners are opting for part-time attendance, mostly in response to higher tuition levels; single and married adult learners are enrolled in programs, while having added family responsibilities; women are re-entering education; and students with disabilities require ongoing institutional accommodations. Furthermore, alternative post-secondary delivery models are needed and opportunities for academic study are sought in tandem with workplace learning opportunities. How are institutions responding to these complex needs and pressures?

This book provides examples of the way in which British Columbia is supporting non-traditional post-secondary students through analysis and innovative programming. Its chapters include selected research studies on a re-entry program, support services in combination with academic programs, a co-operative education program, and a graduate program that links First Nations students with higher education.

The book is organized into five themes. The first focuses on the senior high school year with a study of equity in access and outcomes for science students. Adamuti-Trache finds out that “keeping all options open” (p. 36) may actually limit women’s access to science, engineering, and medicine career pathways in the university years. She offers advice to young women, parents, high school and post-secondary counselors based on this research.

The second theme reports on a pair of community college research studies. Liversidge, a faculty member at a college campus, explores the issue of time with student-mothers enrolled in a two-year nursing program. Analysis of personal interviews and a focus group session indicates that balance between academic duties and family life must be manageable for re-entering women with children. Similarly, McGee Thompson, coordinator of learning skills programs, examines issues pertaining to mothers completing a developmental studies program. Results of semi-structured interviews raise the issues about daycare policies for mothers with children, career counselling, and low-income support services for adults returning to school as full-time learners.

The third theme involves three undergraduate programs at The University of British Columbia. Warick, advisor at the disability resource centre, presents a moving description of students with hard-of-hearing disabilities. Reports revealed that many perceive themselves as visitors to class as they try to adjust to different classroom environments, people, communication patterns, and styles of teaching and learning. In a second study, Hawkey, a graduate of the UBC higher education doctoral program, reports on a study focusing on learners’ perceptions on what it means to belong and be a member of a community within an academic program. The section concludes with a study on co-operative education presented by Grosjean, senior research fellow and coordinator of the doctoral program in leadership and policy program at UBC. Using questionnaire and interview methods, he illustrates how students perceive and assign meaning to their co-operative education experiences and details the benefits and limitations of the program.

In the fourth theme, Marker, director of a First Nations program, describes how storytelling is used effectively with native students enrolled in a graduate program. The chapter outlines the changes that have enabled ways of appropriately responding to the diverse native culture within an urban-academic-program setting. In the following chapter, Lyakhovetska, a former English instructor, recounts the experiences of international graduate students seeking to complete a term of study within a faculty department. Findings suggest that learners, faculty, departments, associations, and administrators respond to graduate student needs in both positive and negative ways.

Finally, Philay, a student recruiter-advisor, reports on a study in which students were asked to recount from a decade ago their high school guidance counselors' advice given to them as they prepared to leave their high school. Regrettably, many students indicated that little information was offered as they journeyed from high school to pursue post-high school life.

The heart and soul of student experiences in post-secondary institutions lies in the voices of learners. The opportunity to learn about the lives of non-traditional students, so richly presented in this volume, is central to the strength of this collection. The co-editors and authors alike have captured and communicated student voices through stories recounted in various studies. For example, Warwick's chapter explains why one hard-of-hearing student considered leaving the program after a devastating experience. The resolution of this issue was transformational for this student and both the process and the outcome should be illuminating for other students who may be considering enrollment in an undergraduate education program in the future. Similarly, Grosjean's chapter on co-operative education contains many useful insights for future students, while at the same time conveying how deeply this experience had impacted on students involved in the study.

Co-editor Finlay argues that the time has come for moving from research studies to social actions. She notes, for example, that inclusion or the act of including, rather than excluding others can have an impact on policies and on ways to reward excellence and can influence changes

within or across educational institutions. Further, she asserts that engagement of others leads to problem-solving, participation, and collaboration, thus creating new avenues for students, faculty, and programs. Finally, access remains an ongoing issue in post-secondary education. Part-time educational pursuits are only a partial solution. Commitment and tenacity are needed to develop the analysis of accessible and responsible opportunities for non-traditional students.

While student experiences need to be told, the book might have been strengthened with a framework from the analysis of students' experiences. This framework could have guided the reader by linking each thematic area while the book progressed. Further analysis in the conclusion would have strengthened theory and practice and, hence, enhanced the contribution of the book to current literature on Canadian students' experiences.

The book, however, has merit. Its distribution should go beyond the boundaries of the university and teach students, adult learners, parents, guidance counselors, teachers, and other decision-makers. Copies of this text should be displayed in public and school libraries, high school guidance departments, and university community resources to ensure it reaches beyond the halls of academe and is placed into the hands of those exploring the post-secondary world with their student voice.

