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Developing and Implementing a Participatory Action Research Assistantship Program at the Community College

Mia Ocean

Palm Beach State College (former); West Chester University (current), mocean@wcupa.edu

Kelli Tigertail

Palm Beach State College

James Keller

Palm Beach State College

Kathleen Woods

Palm Beach State College

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Abstract

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Keywords

Community College, Participatory Action Research; Research Assistantship

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Developing and Implementing a Participatory Action Research Assistantship Program at the Community College

Mia Ocean

West Chester University, West Chester, Pennsylvania, USA

Kellie Tigertail, James Keller, and Kathleen Woods

Palm Beach State College, Lake Worth, Florida, USA

Despite serving almost half of the U.S. undergraduate students, community colleges and their constituents are consistently marginalized in the research favoring external university experts to conduct research about them and on them. To counteract these top down, disempowering research practices, we piloted a Participatory Action Research Assistantship Program (PARAP). A PARAP is a modified version of a research assistantship program that is grounded in an anti-oppressive, participatory action research practice, creating change on many levels. The purpose of this article is to provide an overview of practical and methodological steps to implement a PARAP at a community college including forming a team, minimizing the power differential, building on strengths, learning new skills, and focusing the research on the perceptions and experiences of constituents. We include our own experience as an example of how to implement a successful PARAP, in addition to, exploring the limitations of the developing method. Lastly, we advocate for others to implement their own PARAP, build on our work, and publicize their research to encourage a shift in the culture and research practices with community colleges. Keywords: Community College, Participatory Action Research; Research Assistantship

Introduction

Community colleges serve a vital role for students inside and outside of the U.S. by offering higher educational opportunities to individuals who would otherwise not have access (Mellow & Heelan, 2008). While universities are often compared to ivory towers, only enabling the select few to enter and exit with academic credentials, community colleges work to serve a “mission impossible,” assisting anyone with an interest in higher education to attempt to earn an educational credential, while simultaneously upholding academic standards (Roueche & Roueche, 1993, p. 1). Despite the diversity of the community college mission, they remain an educational institution and fall prey to the dominant definition of school success as defined through a White, male, middle class, and individualistic lens (Stanton-Salazar, 1997). This can pose a real challenge for community colleges that allow anyone with a high school diploma or equivalency, regardless of actual skill level, to enter through their classroom doors (Dougherty, 2002; Polinsky, 2003).

Community colleges do not fit neatly into the dominant perception of higher education. Because nearly half of all undergraduate students are attending a community college, we need to create a more representative and holistic picture of the reality of higher education (Knapp, Kelly-Reid, & Ginder, 2012), rather than sidelining these *less prestigious* institutions. Therefore, it is important for the unique voices and perspectives of community college stakeholders to be included in the policy, assessment, and funding conversations that are happening about them and all around them. One way to do that is to conduct their own research.

Additionally, rather than solely accepting advice from experts, who may have never stepped foot onto a community college campus, community colleges need to be champions of their own evaluations. This includes internal audits of their programs and services on an institutional level. The evaluations can take many forms, but we advocate they should take a unique form, similar to community colleges themselves. We also believe the evaluations should model an anti-oppressive research practice leaving the history of authoritarian research where it belongs, in the past (Potts & Brown, 2005). Therefore, we piloted a participatory action research assistantship program (PARAP) to do things differently, adhere to a rigorous evaluation of the community college, and provide distinct learning opportunities for community college students.

The purpose of this article is to provide an overview of practical and methodological steps to implement a PARAP at a community college. Our intended audience is not limited to individuals at community colleges including faculty, administrators, Institutional Review Board (IRB) members, and students; instead we also direct our writing to university scholars, who focus their research on community college populations. Our goals are to provide guidance on how to develop a successful collaborative research experience at the community college and to encourage others to create PARAPs on community college campuses to improve institutional conditions and add new expert voices at the institutional, state, and national levels.

Literature Review

To contextualize and introduce the PARAP model, we will begin by providing an overview of the relevant literature. First, we present a brief overview of oppressive research practices and the commonly *top-down* approach employed in community college research. Next, we succinctly explain anti-oppressive research practices, like participatory research and action research, before moving into the PARAP model.

Oppressive Research

Throughout the years, research practice has, at times, been a better example of *what not to do*, rather than of *what to do*. Smith (2012) notes how the very word research is associated with a powerful history littered with mistrust and misuse and unethical and immoral actions towards many groups of people. Some of the most heinous actions, (e.g., the Nazi experiments and the Tuskegee Syphilis Study), have led to the creation of legislation and ethical guidelines to protect participants (Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1979; National Public Radio, 2002). Other studies have left participants physically intact, but perhaps feeling emotionally robbed through deceptive or disempowering practices (e.g., the work of Stanley Milgram; Romm, 2015). These actions are easily condemned by today's standards, but what current practices may be condemned at a future date?

Those who conduct research maintain power in many ways. Currently, the university has a monopoly on knowledge (Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991; Hall, 1998). University professors and funders of research commonly decide the important topics worthy of query. These individuals may be ignorant to aspects of the realities of those they study (or inflict study upon). Consequently, they may ask limited questions given their personal and professional frames. When oppressed groups are studied, the ethical requirements may be checked off a list; however, the research may still be, what Tuck (2009) termed "damaged-centered research" (p. 409). This type of research is focused on community deficits and omits historical, structural, and racial contexts that make sense of the present circumstances, given the broader influences.

In addition to these oppressive research practices, ignoring a population is also a form of oppressive research. Low-income populations are often put in the ironic position of being

both over-surveilled (by researchers, educational administrators, and police) and yet made invisible. They are victims or perpetrators, singularly defined as one dimensional caricatures of whatever narrative has been pre-selected for them (Tuck, 2009). Similarly, indigenous knowledge is commonly devalued, destroyed, and replaced with information that serves the dominant people through oppressive research (Battiste, 2008). While the level of colonization that has been inflicted on indigenous people and community college stakeholders is not comparable, there is a similar devaluation of the knowledge of community college experts, who attend and work at these institutions. This is easily traced back to the positivist perspective which claims the outsider is an “objective” observer. In order to regain power and subvert the dominant culture, marginalized groups need the opportunity to be active researchers producing findings that determine their frame, narrative, and ultimately, fate (Kovach, 2005).

Community College Marginalization

Community colleges are engulfed in covert forms of oppression. For example, university professors conduct the majority of the research on community colleges, which limits the publicized perspectives of the community college and places the power and control in the hands of outsiders (Kelly-Kleese, 2004). Additionally, the professional middle class ideals continue to dominate our views of education and our culture generally, to the point where it is challenging to shift one’s perception beyond the professional middle class ideology (Ehrenreich, 1989). This potentially faulty, dominant paradigm can lead to inaccurate evaluation methods and unrealistic performance standards, hindering both practice and policy at community colleges.

This can easily be illustrated through commonly employed student success models, despite the fact that full-time study with “linear matriculation” is no longer the norm (Borden, 2004; Crosta, 2013). For many adult learners stopping out is not viewed as a failure and returning to college is not a single act (Kinser & Deitchman, 2008). Not all students are able to attend consistently or even in a consistent pattern with many students switching back and forth from full-time to part-time (Crosta, 2013). Therefore, research methods focused on what has been considered the traditional path will not typically yield comprehensive or accurate results. It would be considered unethical to apply a model developed solely on middle class, white males to poor, women of color; yet to date, the lens to evaluate community colleges has fairly consistently been one laden with dominant, university values.

Therefore, it is advantageous for community college faculty, administrators, and staff to play an active role in the community college research in order to create a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of these institutions and their diverse stakeholders (Ocean & Hirschi, 2015). Students can also play an active and salient role in the research process adding their expertise and enhancing their own research skills in the process.

Research Assistantship Programs at Community Colleges

While research assistantship programs are still fairly rare at community colleges, the majority of community college research assistantship programs that do exist, appear to be located in the *hard* sciences. This could be due to funding streams. The National Science Foundation (NSF; n.d.) funds the Community College Undergraduate Research Initiative (n.d.), in addition to, collaborating with the American Association of Community Colleges (2012), to fund the Community College Innovation Challenge program. Additionally, from 2010-2012, NSF funded The Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR) and the National Council of Institutional Administrators’ efforts to create research assistantship programs at community colleges (CUR, 2016). Outside of these funded, natural science programs, there

appears to be either little research activity or very little published on social and behavioral science research opportunities for students at community colleges. Within this article we hope to begin to change that.

Anti-Oppressive Research Practices

One way to counter the top-down, traditional approach to research generally and specifically to the community college is through participatory research. Participatory research, when conducted with authentic collaboration, ultimately benefits all parties (Bergold & Thomas, 2012). It includes otherwise oppressed groups as experts, in their own right, and focuses on improving conditions for said populations (Hall, 1981). In order for research to include genuine participation, there must be an authentic collaboration in determining the focus of the research, gathering and analyzing the data, and deciding how the findings will be used (Tandon, 1988). Of course, this can be challenging since research tends to begin with researchers rather than community members who become co-researchers; therefore, researchers need to be open to reclassifying or “un-naming” their participatory research as they conduct it in addition to spending additional time and energy focused on collaborative relationships, minimizing power hierarchies, and consensus building (Koo & Lester, 2014, p. 1).

Unfortunately, some researchers use terms like participatory research or anti-oppressive research without following their salient tenets, including relationship building and power redistribution (Koo & Lester, 2014; Potts & Brown, 2005). Multiple perspectives must be valued simultaneously to understand comprehensively the individual experience, historical context, structural realities, and cultural positioning (Moosa-Mitha, 2005). Additionally, anti-oppressive researchers work towards social and political change (Potts & Brown, 2005). Despite the additional time and efforts required of the researchers and institutions for this practice, the benefits of participatory research are worth the additional investment (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995).

Anti-oppressive research shifts a researcher into both a participatory and action-oriented stance. Kurt Lewin is most commonly cited as the developer of action research (Adelman, 1993; McTaggart, 1997), and since the 1940s, action research has been a unique orientation of investigation, focusing on both contributing to generalizable knowledge and developing practical solutions to ongoing problems (Elden & Chisholm, 1993). Action research is often carried out in a cyclical fashion fluctuating among planning to solve a problem, implementing solutions, and evaluating change (Khanlou & Peter, 2005). While much is agreed upon about action research, the requirement of incorporating collaboration in action research has been debated; rather than designating active participants as a mandate, most would agree collaborative action and reflection will, at a minimum, enhance the research findings (Elden & Chisholm, 1993; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005).

Greenwood, Whyte, and Harkavy (1993) argue that research models could be viewed on a continuum, ranging from primarily determined by the researcher to a collaborative process between the researcher and constituents of the institution being studied. Perhaps to avoid such a conceptual debate and make the collaborative methodology clear, some have begun using the more inclusive term, participatory action research. Participatory action research is meant to be empowering at the very least on a micro level; however, at its best, it also creates change on a mezzo, community, or organizational level, and a macro, structural level, in addition to its micro impact (Kemmis & Wilkinson, 1998). Community-based participatory research similarly combines the two forms, with community members and researchers collaborating to solve problems that exist within a given community (Barnes et al., 2009). Regardless of title,

these practices can assist us in engaging in an anti-oppressive and empowering research practice that benefits all involved.

Because of the historical marginalization of community colleges as institutions and by default (or design) their constituents, it is strongly recommended that research conducted involving these institutions follow a model like a PARAP. There have been calls for collaborative partnerships to replace *university as expert* dominating research practices, finding the former more effective throughout the research process and in enacting change (Shearon & Brownlee, 1991). Others have advocated for action research (Losak & Morris, 1985), participatory action research (Quick, Lehmann, & Deniston, 2003), or employing critical theoretical frameworks in conjunction with multiple methods to challenge the image of deficiency commonly assigned to community colleges and their students (Davies, Safarik, & Banning, 2003). Despite these calls, minimal works appear to have been completed and published using action or strengths-based research methods (David, Sivadon, Wood, & Stecher, 2015; Reille & Kezar, 2010; Yoder, 2004). We agree that the prevalent top-down research, following the dominant university paradigm, is limited, and therefore stunts the view of these institutions and consequently hinders the progress of their students. In order to expand the frame for community colleges, we need new information that can be gathered drawing on a bottom up approach (or from a fresh angle). One of our goals in this article is to provide concrete, detailed steps on how to turn these philosophical calls into substantive action.

Participatory Action Research Assistantship Program

A Participatory Action Research Assistantship Program (PARAP) is a modified version of a research assistantship program that is grounded in an anti-oppressive, participatory action research practice. It is not our goal to create a new acronym for the sake of creating *our own* acronym. It is our goal to take the best of many worlds to create an empowering program to conduct and learn about research while simultaneously creating change to improve conditions from the institutional to national levels. It is a partnership between researchers and constituents, in our case community college students and employees. The goals of a PARAP are to change the organization, broader landscape, and those directly involved in the research. More specifically, PARAP can create change at the institutional level, for instance streamlining student registration based on student voiced barriers to the existing process. Consequently, these findings and updated practices can be presented and published to share innovative practices with the other community colleges to enhance their services. However, there should also be a more immediate and local impact to those who have served in the PARAP. The students should complete their work with a new understanding of applied research practices in addition to organizational change, and the employees should similarly enhance their research skills and gain new insights into the research topic selected to enhance their practice.

In order to create a PARAP, a team needs to be formed. The team needs to consist of at least one researcher and one consumer who are both interested in research and working towards change. For the sake of clarity, we will discuss the implementation of a PARAP specific to community colleges within this article; however, we do believe it could be implemented with other organizations. If the team is comprised solely of community college stakeholders, it should include at least one employee (e.g., faculty, staff, or administrator) who possesses research skills and an interest in change. Additionally, at least one student needs to be identified to serve as a team member. Ideally, the team will be a balanced ratio or an imbalanced ratio favoring students to minimize the innate power disparity between students and employees.

Alternatively, if an outsider wants to create a PARAP at a community college, the team could consist of a university faculty member and community college students. In the latter scenario, the outsiders would likely need to focus on relationship building in a more concerted

effort, opposed to insider community college employees. However, power would need to be minimized for all circumstances. All team members are created equal, so to speak, and need to be valued and respected as such.

Additionally, it should not be assumed that students do not possess any knowledge of research. There needs to be a conversation to gather information on students' understanding, experiences, and interest in research. We have included our semi-structured guide to help facilitate the conversation and personalized goal setting (see Appendix A).

Furthermore, it is imperative that a PARAP does not follow the traditional research assistantship model. Within a traditional research assistantship program, typically a student assists a faculty member in the faculty member's research study. The student, in the worst-case scenario is treated as a lackey, and perhaps in the best-case scenario, a mentee. Conversely, in a PARAP, similar to participatory research, students are viewed as co-researchers who bring their own capabilities and advantages to the project; these assets need to be explicitly acknowledged and valued (Tandon, 1988).

This is not to say that co-researchers should not be offered opportunities to learn and be mentored through a PARAP. One of the goals of a PARAP is for the students to leave the project with additional skills in research. However, there also needs to be room for students as co-researchers to challenge the traditionally valued concepts of research and offer innovative ideas to engage the population at the heart of the study. This can offer an opportunity for learning and change for the employees as well. It is important to always remain cognizant of the multiple realities and multiple forms of knowledge. Through the exchange between team members, all parties ideally leave the research project with new skills, techniques, and understandings.

Once the team has been formed, they need to complete research ethics training, so the team possesses at least a baseline knowledge of ethical research. However, we would advocate that the team develop additional ethical practices appropriate to their community based on their insight as insiders to provide additional protections (Tuck, 2009).

After the team has been solidified and completed basic ethical training, they need to decide on a research project. It is important that the focus be determined in a democratic fashion with all ideas voiced being given consideration. As the team narrows its focus for the study, it is important that they also determine concrete responsibilities and expectations of team members. It is important to consider individuals' existing strengths (both traditional and non-traditional) in addition to the skills they may be interested in learning, practicing, and developing.

As the research questions and initial research plan are selected, it is important for the team to gain access to the necessary resources to carry out the research. While one might initially believe this task should fall on the employee(s), the power the students possess should not be overlooked. For instance, if there is a contentious relationship between faculty and administration, a faculty member might be unable to secure access to additional resources. However, if the administration views students' institutional connections as primary to student retention, they may be willing to provide funding for food, supplies, and travel to complete the study. Moreover, if the research project is something that the administration is interested in, they may be willing to provide resources that they otherwise would have spent on outside contractors to conduct the research. In all of these scenarios, it is important to be strategic and creative as a team to procure resources for the research.

This focus on institutional investment in the research fits in with the action research aspect of the program. Consequently, the research needs to focus on improving conditions at the community college. Therefore, when planning a study, PARAP teams should consider the question, "What can research really do to improve this situation?" (Tuck, 2009, p. 423), and teams need to thoughtfully plan the study to provide actionable findings.

While the team needs to respect the members' perspectives, it is also essential that they focus on the participants' experiences and perceptions. In an effort to ensure trustworthiness of the results, the team should ask themselves questions like, "Can participants see themselves in the study? Does the analysis 'ring true' to participants? ... did this research matter? Did it leave participants better off?" (Potts & Brown, 2005, p. 270).

Additionally, the PARAP model should be evaluated. We included an exit interview form to help us reflect on the effectiveness of the program at an individual level and to consider modifications for improvement when implementing the program in the future (see Appendix B). All of these findings should be shared to try to improve local conditions. This includes both enhancing institutional policies and practices as well as assisting students who served as co-researchers in their efforts to transfer to universities, graduate schools, and into competitive employment positions. Moreover, the community college employees or outside researchers can use the new knowledge gained to improve future PARAP projects in addition to their own practices and future research.

Beyond sharing the results internally to enhance the conditions at the institution, we believe the results should also be shared on a more global level. One of the anti-oppressive facets of a PARAP is to change the broader field. Rather than a researcher "giving voice" to constituents [which can be construed as paternalistic retaining the power and dominance by the researchers (Potts & Brown, 2005)], a PARAP creates a platform for constituents to make their voices heard. Publicizing and presenting findings is an important outcome of a PARAP project.

Our Experience

In an effort to illustrate the steps of a PARAP, we will briefly describe our experience with the model in this section. Our implementation of the model follows the steps we have outlined in the previous section including forming a team, minimizing the power differential, building on the teams' strengths and challenging the team to stretch their skills and abilities, and focusing our research on the perceptions and experiences of constituents. At the time we conducted our research, our team consisted of a current community college faculty member (Mia) and three current students (Kelli, James, and Kathy). The students were reflective of the larger community college student population in many ways. They were avidly pursuing Certificates and Associate degrees while managing complex responsibilities including completing probation and house arrest requirements, raising a grandchild via kinship care, re-acclimating to civilian life, living a life substance-free, and perhaps most challenging of all, raising teenage daughters. While it was certainly difficult for the students to remain dedicated to the research project, they persisted in the work throughout the Fall 2015 semester.

The three students were recruited from a Group Dynamics course, in which they learned a practiced group leadership skills and techniques. Because of this group specific preparation, the co-researchers possessed, we chose to conduct focus groups with students, student employees, and employees focusing on the community college's strengths and areas for improvement from participants' perspectives. The co-researchers began running groups with students. After the initial groups, the co-researchers provided feedback to one another and Mia offered tips and techniques for future work to gather rich data. Later, Mia also modeled how to conduct focus groups. An environment was created that permitted questions and feedback from the co-researchers to Mia on her techniques. In retrospect, the co-researchers believe it would have been helpful for Mia to begin with modeling how to facilitate a focus group. Mia was hesitant to stay in a formal professor role within the project, fearful it would reinforce the power differential. However, upon reflection and discussion, we would recommend modeling the techniques to begin the research and enhance the training opportunities available to the co-researchers. Additionally, ideally previous audio, video, or transcripts could also serve as

models to increase learning and enhance researchers' skills. Since this was our first attempt at a research program, we did not have access to past data to share, but moving forward this is something we plan to include in our orientation to future projects.

It is important to note that all of the co-researchers brought strengths and knowledge to the project both from the classroom and from their personal and professional experiences. As we piloted this practice, we both drew on one another's strengths and equitably shared the more tedious responsibilities. Ultimately, each of the team members took turns in each of the roles – focus group facilitator, live focus group note-taker, and post-group documenter. We believe that by rotating these tasks, it helped to keep the power balanced (i.e., no one fell into a strict role of secretary for the project), but it also challenged all of us to practice new skills in addition to gathering unique data. The team also met weekly to discuss the research progress, challenges, and analysis. The co-researchers found structure, deadlines, and routines to be helpful.

After we had conducted a majority of the groups, we also began official analysis sessions. We met for 1- to 5-hour blocks of time to read through data and discuss themes. We drew on both formal methods that Mia was familiar with and informal methods as the co-researchers shared concepts they learned in their coursework to assist in the analysis. For example, Kelli and Kathy were learning about genograms. With their leadership, we created an institutional genogram to analyze the relationships, dynamics, and disconnects on campus.

In an effort to increase the trustworthiness of our research, we verified preliminary findings with focus group participants to confirm a direct link between participants' experiences and our results (Kruger, 2015). We also had courageous conversations with one another when we believed a team member's own view was overshadowing the views voiced by the participants. This balance of perspectives, balance between researchers and those being researched, and balance of knowledge sharing in order to spur action is key to participatory action research (Lather, 2007). To this end, ultimately, we created a report that was shared with the participants and the higher level community college administrators who had power to enact real change in college policies and processes.

Specifically, the President of the College took our report seriously. She shared our findings at her semi-annual college address and used them as a spring board for goals and change for the following year. Ideally, after the proposed changes have been enacted, we will begin our process again to evaluate the impact of the improvements in addressing the original concerns and investigate any new challenges that have arisen. However, in addition to this local focus, through this article and other works, we are also seeking a change on a macro level. We found this method useful to gather rich and relevant data, and we hope others will consider utilizing it in their research practices as well.

Limitations of a PARAP

While we believe a PARAP is a quality method to be used in research at community colleges (and potentially at similar organizations), it is not without limitations. The same limitations present in participatory action research can manifest in a PARAP. For instance, because of the, at times, tumultuous life circumstances of community college students, it could be challenging to retain researchers for an extended period of time. Similarly, bias in any research is always something to work to minimize so one perspective does not dominate others, skewing the findings.

As with any research, the end result cannot be predicted. Unfortunately, if change is unsuccessful, this process could leave the team members feeling *less* empowered than they did beginning the research. Conversely, for some, the method may also still be too conventional. It does not offer grand, radical changes, perhaps at all, and certainly not overnight. A PARAP

allows for researchers to work within the system and its structural barriers, while still investigating their limitations, which could garner support from higher level administrators.

The method can and likely will need to continue to be developed and refined over time as it is implemented. This was our first experience with it and we would take a different approach in some areas, as we noted. Moreover, a PARAP will likely need to take unique shape depending on the team and the community colleges, in order to accurately fit and reflect the immediate and local communities. This necessary reflection of the community can result in a lack of standardization which some will likely view as a methodological limitation. It is important to be aware and plan for these limitations but not to let them hinder from employing this practice.

Conclusion

Conducting anti-oppressive research with community colleges is long overdue. We need community college constituents actively engaged in all phases of research in order to further our knowledge in this area. A PARAP is one way to accomplish this. This method minimizes the power differential between constituents and returns the agency to the community college. It incorporates many checkpoints, from beginning to end, to secure the experiences and perceptions of those most directly impacted by the investigation. If researchers continue to repeat the mistakes of the past, they will continue to find inaccurate answers that may stroke their egos but do little to improve the lives of community college students and conditions for community colleges.

Furthermore, this method offers utility. It provides an opportunity for community college students to learn about research and build their credentials in a way that will be viewed positively by universities and employers. It also offers community college employees a way to refine and develop their research skills and to invest in their institution's success. A PARAP provides an inexpensive research alternative, compared to outsourcing, for a community college and likely produces more accurate results. Moreover, the findings from a PARAP project can be shared with other community colleges to refine existing processes, and they can be shared with a larger audience through the literature to ensure the community college voice is included in the community college practice and policy conversation. Perhaps most important of all, a PARAP moves research from an oppressive disempowering practice that happens to community colleges and into a participatory process focusing on meaningful change on the community college campus with experts in the drivers' seats.

We hope others will implement similar programs, improve our procedures outlined here, and publicize their work so we can continue to refine the process and experience. It is important to draw on the untapped experts of the community college to improve the conditions on a local and institutional level. However, these types of research projects can also enhance what is known about community colleges in the research literature, empowering stakeholders along the way.

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Appendix A: Co-researcher Initial Interview Form

Name: _____ Date: _____

What has prompted your interest in PARAP?

What experiences have you had with research (e.g. as a participant, researcher, student of)?

What do you hope to gain from this experience?

What are your short-term and long-term educational goals?

What strengths will you bring to PARAP?

What are skills you want to work on during your time in PARAP?

What would be helpful for your colleagues to know about you?

Explain helpful and positive experiences that you have had with colleagues previously.

The constituent and employee need to collaboratively create three goals for the constituent during their participation in PARAP below.

Appendix B: Co-Researcher Exit Interview Form

Name: _____ Date: _____

What have you gained from this experience?

What was your favorite part about PARAP?

What do you think PARAP could do to improve?

What did you not get out of the program that you wished you had?

If you were to do the program all over again, what would you do differently?

What goals did you achieve?

What other feedback do you have?

Author Note

Mia Ocean is an Assistant Professor of Graduate Social Work at West Chester University with campuses in both West Chester and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She conducts qualitative, anti-oppressive research with community college students, employees, and stakeholders. Correspondence regarding this article can be addressed directly to: mocean@wcupa.edu.

Kellie Tigertail has studied at the University of Miami and Palm Beach State College. She has also worked as an advocate in many capacities with a focus on social justice and challenging dominant, oppressive paradigms.

James Keller is an alumnus from Palm Beach State College where he earned a Certificate in Human Services, a Certificate in Addiction Studies, an Associate in Science Degree in Human Services, and an Associate in Arts Degree. Recently, he completed his Bachelor's Degree in Social Work at Florida Atlantic University.

Kathleen "Kathy" Woods has earned a number of certificates and degrees at Palm Beach State College, including a Certificate in Human Services, a Certificate in Addiction Studies, and an Associate in Science Degree in Human Services. She is currently in her last semester of her Associate in Arts degree in Pre-Social Work and she plans to transfer to a local university to continue her education. In addition to her studies, her work at the college's counseling center, and her motorcycle riding, she also cares for her two grandchildren.

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