

Caregiver Students' Mental Health: An Annotated Bibliography

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Introduction

The topic of this annotated bibliography is about the mental health and the need for institutional resources for nontraditional students who also care for someone with a disability or chronic illness. The contents of this bibliography are from articles of psychological journals. The annotations are mainly informative.

Compton, J., Cox, E., & Laanan, F. S. (2006). Adult learners in transition. *New Directions for Student Services*, 2006(114), 73–80. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ss.208>

This article discusses the characteristics, challenges, and transitional roles of nontraditional students and how student service professionals should adjust to better recognize and serve this understudied student population. As of 2006, this identity is loosely defined as a student delaying postsecondary enrollment one year or more after high school graduation, enrolled part-time, employed full time, financially independent of their parents, having dependents other than a spouse, single parents, or do not have a high school diploma. Statistics show that this would make the nontraditional undergraduate student population, the majority (+73%) and increasing. As such, the authors argue the need for institutions and student service professionals to take a proactive approach to uncover the needs of nontraditional students, rather than waiting for students' initiation. For example, they assert that courses should be offered in different formats for these dual-role students to have the opportunity to graduate on time. Another important and repeated suggestion is the need for institutions to have comprehensive counseling centers that focus on stress management. This article is distinctive in defining the definition of

nontraditional students, the student ratio in comparison to “traditional students,” and the recognition that institutions need to be proactive in advocating for these nontraditional students (instead of student-initiated efforts).

Helfgot, S. R. (2005). Core values and major issues in student affairs practice: What really matters? *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 2005(131), 5–18.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/cc.202>

This article suggests common definitions for student affairs professionals, delineates the core values, and identifies major issues within this department in community colleges.

Student affairs focuses on things related to students and their lives in college but outside the classroom. The author describes the core values of student affairs as the recognition and appreciation of student diversity, the belief in the power and richness of the

out-of-class environment, commitment to the “whole student,” facilitating student development, providing access, opportunity, and quality services to meet student needs.

The major issue lies in the lack of stability in funding because student affairs is viewed as a drain of institutional resources that add little or no value to the enterprise. This article is distinctive in clarifying common confusion about student affair titles, vocabulary, lexicon, definitions and for recognizing the lack of priority higher learning institutions place on this department.

Hoyt, J., Howell, S., Touchet, J., Wygant, S., & Young, S. (2010). Enhancing nontraditional student learning outcomes in higher education. *PAACE Journal of Lifelong Learning*, 19(1), 23–37. <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/facpub/5740>

This study aimed at contributing to the limited literature about nontraditional students’ learning outcomes by measuring student success (by GPA) and learning about the student

perceptions of learning (college experience satisfaction, broadening intellectual interest, critical thinking skills, enhancing study skills, career development, and student involvement). The study concluded that there are no significant differences in satisfaction, academic success, and perceptions of learning between nontraditional and traditional students. The authors do emphasize that even though adult learners do not participate in campus involvement as much, they compensate by engaging more with course materials and by utilizing real-life experience to achieve higher GPAs. Therefore, the authors assert the crucial need to have a wide variety of programs that offer flexibility for nontraditional students to be able to independently complete courses and to involve themselves on campuses more. This study is distinctive in demonstrating the benefits of investing in programs, resources, and knowledge of the needs of nontraditional students because they are highly motivated to succeed in higher education.

Mahoney, M. (Ed.). (2021, June 10). Roundtable report the challenges of student caregivers. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved August 21, 2022, from <https://connect.chronicle.com/rs/931-EKA-218/images/ChallengesofStudentCaregivers.pdf>

This report from *The Chronicle of Higher Education* identifies the unique issues that student caregivers face in four-year universities due to the fact that there has not been a structure/system for capturing the identity of caregivers of adults. The definition of student caregiver has evolved rapidly and ranges in age range, who they care for (grandparents, parents, younger siblings), and responsibilities (translating, paramedical services, etc.). There is also a problem of students not recognizing or identifying themselves as caregivers, but rather they are just doing their duty for family. Taking care

of adults and elders is not common in the US and caregivers are doing so silently, especially in higher education. Thus, by implanting student advocates in courses to be able to reach student caregivers and raise awareness. Once identified, schools can connect students with community partnerships, such as food stamps (EBT), local food banks and shelters, and family resource centers. Next is to involve human resources (HR) to train staff (faculty, financial aid office, student affairs) on how to best serve students as well as providing mental services to staff who are supporting students on the front lines. It is also important to include a way to capture these students during the enrollment process (admissions) as well as during the financial aid application (FAFSA). This report is distinctive in how to identify student caregivers' identities and to propose where and how there need to be changes made across campus in order to support student caregivers.

Knopf, L., Wazinski, K., Wanka, A., & Hess, M. (2022). Caregiving students: A systematic literature review of an under-researched group. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 46(6), 822–835. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2021.2008332>

This study describes the who, what, how, and why of the caregiver student identity in higher education should be added to nontraditional students' identities. The authors assert that there is no denying that the student demographics are progressively aging and that because the general population's lifespan is prolonged, the inevitable of older students having to care for their elder family members. The hardships that caregiver students face are financial hardship, feelings of guilt between having to choose their studies, care tasks, university staff and care recipients, and their social circle. The lack of time and flexibility forces conflicts with their assignment deadlines, and punctuality—which could result in students underperforming in their studies or dropping out. The study concludes with

several suggestions for institutions to provide in combating some of these hardships caregiver students face, such as providing on-campus respite care for adults, professionally trained staff to support in caregiving issues, professional mentors to help students build their individual network (family, friends, nurses), implant student advocates in classes to raise awareness, and in training faculty to offer more flexible teaching and learning in class, for them to give advance notice in syllabus schedule for students' better planning, and remote learning. This study is distinctive in that it updates and further develops the nontraditional student identity by formally suggesting a new term to be normalized in higher learning institutions and providing up-to-date solutions on how institutions can better support caregiver students.

Long, D. (2012). The foundations of student affairs: A guide to the profession. In L.J. Hinchcliffe & M. A. Eong (Eds.), *Environments for student growth and development: Librarians and student affairs in collaboration* (pp. 1-39). Chicago: Association of College & Research Libraries.

This edited book chapter analyzes higher education's student affair department—its history, overview of different departments, and its responsibilities. During the colonial era, this department's doctrine was “loco parentis” which literally means “in place of the parent.” Their job was to manage emotionally immature students that required strict adult supervision. This notion stopped in 1961 when *Dixon v. Alabama State Board of Education* defined a person over age 18 as a legal adult. Over the years, the departments' duties greatly expanded to involve community building, advising, and career development. The role of student affairs in higher education is complex. Today, student affairs professionals work in a variety of functional areas throughout colleges and

universities, ranging from admissions to academic advising to housing and residential life. Institutions have shifted away from acting in loco parentis. The purpose of student affairs changed from a disciplinary role to an educational role. The core purpose of student affairs today is to understand how students develop intellectually, psychosocially, and emotionally and to create meaningful experiences that stimulate student development. This article is distinctive in its section about the importance of diversity and its relevance for student affairs professionals seeking collaborations with faculty and administrators to resolve tensions that stem from diversity, remedy grievances, and advocate for stronger academic and social support for students who are underrepresented at the campus—such as caregiver students.

Silverman, D., Underhile, R., & Keeling, R. (2008). Student health reconsidered: A radical proposal for thinking differently about health-related programs and services for students. *Student Health Spectrum*, 4-11.

https://www.academia.edu/7170594/Student_Health_Reconsidered

This article analyzes the relationship between student health and learning. Student success refers to the ability of students in college to achieve certain desired outcomes as a result of their complete engagement with higher education. Student success is linked to the idea of institutional effectiveness: Institutions are effective to the extent that their intentionally designed and implemented learning experiences support students in achieving those desired outcomes. Health creates capacity; students whose health status is positive and flourishing have greater ability and readiness to learn and engage fully in all meaningful educational experiences inside and outside the classroom (e.g., residential life, athletics, community service learning opportunities, civic engagement, etc.).

Creating conditions that will advance student health and sustain healthy learning environments requires colleges and universities to create plans for student health in a large, cross-institutional framework that is comprehensive, coordinated, and linked to the learning mission of the institution. Those plans will of course include not only health promotion programs but also contextually appropriate early intervention and clinical services—which means that each institution will define what patterns of clinical services are necessary for its student population given its location, student demographics, and the availability and accessibility of local clinical services. This article is distinctive in that it explains the importance of institutional initiatives to provide comprehensive services that promote optimal health for all students in higher education which results in better student learning outcomes.

Soria, K. M, McAndrew, M., Horgos, B., Chirikov, I., & Jones-White, D. (2020). Undergraduate student caregivers' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic: Financial hardships, food and housing insecurity, mental health, and academic obstacles. *UC Berkeley: Center for Studies in Higher Education*. Retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7h06q880>

This study analyzed the hardships caregiver students faced during the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey sampled 30,593 undergraduate students at large, nine U.S. public research universities and was administered from May 18 to July 20, 2020. The authors found that students who were caregivers were also more likely to experience food insecurity and housing insecurity compared to their peers who were not caregivers. Additionally, students who were caregivers were also more likely to screen positive for generalized anxiety disorder and major depressive disorder than their peers who were not

caregivers. Finally, students who were caregivers were also more likely to lack access to an appropriate study environment and were less likely to be able to attend scheduled online classes during the transition to remote learning. The study concluded with three recommendations: Eliminate Financial Barriers, Food Insecurity, and Housing Insecurity, expand mental health services, and train staff to offer more flexibility and access for students to learn. This study is distinctive in illustrating a more comprehensive snapshot of who the undergraduate caregiver student bodies are to help provide services that counter their hardships.

Tett, L. (2004). Mature working-class students in an “elite” university: Discourses of risk, choice and exclusion. *Studies in the Education of Adults*, 36(2), 252–264.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/02660830.2004.11661500>

This study analyzes the role of educational institutions in creating and perpetuating inequalities, particularly with regard to issues raised when older working-class students form a small minority in an elite institution rather than being included in the majority of the student body. The author argues that students entering elite universities were twice as likely to come from middle or upper-class families. Those universities that have included students with fewer traditional qualifications, who are typically older and from a low SES, take a more risky strategy but the result of this approach is much higher dropout rates. The author argues that elite universities do not provide enough consideration for older students with dual responsibilities such as caring for family members. In the end, the author concludes that the problem is that in many instances faculty wants to offer help to these students, however, their job relies on spending most of their time on research and not on teaching. Tett still thinks that it is the institution’s responsibility to initiate change

and not rely on students to fend for themselves. This article is distinctive in explaining that because caregiver students are typically from low SES backgrounds and historically have not had much say in elite universities, it is crucial to recognize the disparity in equal access for these underserved students.

Trolan, T. L., Jach, E. A., Hanson, J. M., & Pascarella, E. T. (2016). Influencing academic motivation: The effects of student–faculty interaction. *Journal of College Student Development*, 57(7), 810–826. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2016.0080>