

**The Path Where I Came From; A Reflection on my Cultural Journey**

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As I reflect back on my journey through this course and explore where I have come from, I am able to see the growth that I have experienced in this class. Some highlights that I experienced in this class are the discussions where we shared our own backgrounds and experiences and were able to grow on what we think we know, but also the circle group presentation work groups where we had opportunities to share and learn new ideas that help us become more well-rounded.

One artifact that had a great deal of exploration and learning from was one of the first few we had in the class, where we had to create a cultural journey poster. This assignment took a lot of time to process and figure where to start. I looked at what my most-salient identities are, then reached inwards into why I resonated with those, then explored how each got me to where I was at the start of this semester. Each aspect I included stemmed from significant areas of who I am. This specific artifact allowed me the opportunity to reflect on my journey and where my leadership skills grew from and was able to become self-aware of my leading styles in how I aid in the development of college students (PLO 2). This is a constant area of growth and will constantly become more aware and refined. This assignment also provided an opportunity for me to think on my growth and be able to share areas of my life that are usually kept more private (PLO 7). The ability to share and engage beyond this is a true experience that I am even more in tune with.

Through the processing of this artifact, and the learning I engaged with during ARP 622, I was able to work on some goals I set for myself as I entered this graduate program. One personal goal I set for myself that was applicable to this artifact is “to use consistent reflections to get a better understanding of who I am as a student affairs professional in fine-tuning my leadership strengths and weaknesses through this program.” This goal was accomplished by consistently reflecting on my cultural journey and how each area of my life has brought me to where I am today. With this course,

as well, I am able to expand upon a couple professional goals I set for myself at the start of this program. One professional goal I set for me was “to build upon my network by adding at least one professional at SDSU, UCSD, and CSUSM, with people in all functional areas of the field.” I know that Dra. Garcia-Navarrete doesn’t work at any of these institutions, but rather Southwestern Community College, which opened up my perspective to explore work in a community college.

In this course, I was as actively engaged in the discussions and assignments as much as I possibly could be. One of our assignments in this course had us grouped into small groups to share on specific topics, but to also practice specific areas of communication. These Circle Group discussions were eye opening to learn about what is going on around us. The group I was in focused on International Students and looked at how SDSU is supporting our International Students compared to higher education as a whole surrounding COVID-19. Another assignment that we did in this class was a weekly assessment of the instructor’s work. Now, this isn’t necessarily an assignment, but it takes great strength to consistently receive feedback. This was also a fun opportunity to share how the course could be improved and expanded upon.

It is because of these aspects and experiences, that I have reflected upon, that leads me to see where my journey continues off to. Looking at how I interact and support international students, or how I can implement Restorative Justice Circles into my healing practice with my students. There were so many topics explored in this course for me to take and use in my practice, and I have more to learn and expand upon.

### **References**

Master's of Arts in Postsecondary Educational Leadership with a Specialization in Student Affairs.

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