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Innovations in Research and Scholarship Feature

Home-Going as a Strategy for Success Among Haudenosaunee College and University Students

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Native American students find sources of strength in their families, communities, and culture. This article reviews the experiences of 26 Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) college graduates who lived in residence halls while enrolled in college. These students obtained college educations while remaining culturally centered by going home often, some said “every single weekend,” until they could transfer to an institution close to home and commute. The importance of place is discussed in relation to home-going behavior.

Recent research on Native American college students has focused on their success in attaining college degrees (Brayboy, 1999; Oosahwe, 2008; Waterman, 2004). Native American students

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find sources of strength in their families, communities, and culture (Deyhle, 1995; J. Guillory, 2008; HeavyRunner & Marshall, 2003). With families and spirituality being so important to Native students, they must balance family and community needs with those of the post-secondary institution.

Fifty-four Haudenosaunee (Iroquois, predominantly in New York State) college graduates were interviewed regarding their educational experiences. Findings from this study support those of Rendón, Jalomo, and Nora (2000), Davis (2004), Guiffreda (2006), and others who have contended that students of color find strength in their families and communities. Yet, it is widely accepted that for students to succeed in college, they must become involved in the college campus (Astin, 1984; Tinto, 1987, 1993). Student affairs professionals encourage students to be active in campus life and work to keep them on campus. The participants in this study went home on weekends or transferred to institutions closer to home so they could commute. In this study I explored the home-going behavior of Haudenosaunee college graduates. Home-going behavior is defined as returning home frequently while attending a residential post-secondary institution. The conceptual framework of this study is introduced with a discussion of Indigenous epistemologies (Garrouette, 2003; Grande, 2004; L. T. Smith, 1999) and followed by a review of literature. The methods employed in this study are followed by a brief description of the context for the findings and a discussion of the home-going behavior.

Conceptual Framework

Native Americans are raced and politicized (Brayboy, 2006), and efforts to treat them as another "ethnic" group fail to recognize their legal status that includes sovereignty and treaty rights (Deloria & Lytle, 1984; Gonzales, 2003). Because Native American college students have unique knowledge of being Native and students, they are the experts about their college experiences (Collins, 2000; Waterman, 2007). As agents of their college experiences, Native students maintain their cultural integrity and resist assimilation by not integrating into the college social scene (Jorgensen, 1993), by practicing their spirituality (Garrett, 1995), and through connection and participation with family and community (Belgarde & LoRé, 2003–2004; Deyhle, 1995, HeavyRunner & DeCelles, 2002). Resisting assimilation in this sense means maintaining an Indigenous identity. Other than tribal colleges, institutions of higher education (IHE) are non-Native institutions based on non-Native values, practices, and curricula.

Indigenous epistemologies, such as red pedagogy (Grande, 2004) and Radical Indigenism (Garrouette, 2003), insist that researchers use an Indigenous lens to interpret data. Indigenous peoples have their "original instructions from our Creator" through which research (Garrouette, 2003, p. 115) must comply; not only must research have a practical application that benefits the people, the researcher must recognize the spiritual dimensions of inquiry. This includes respecting Native communities, oral traditions, and elders. As a researcher, one goes where one is invited, one respects that one will not always be invited, and when information is shared, that information carries a

responsibility (Hermes, 1999). Stories are not merely “myth” or “folklore” (Alfred, 1999, p. 11); they are theory (Brayboy, 2006; Mohawk, 1992).

The Native experience is directly connected to a history. Where African American history is tied to slavery (Banks, 2009), Native American history is tied to near genocide and attempts at assimilation. These tactics were utilized by the federal government through the residential school era (Adams, 1988; Carney, 1999) and resulted in significant mistrust (LaCounte, 1987). Both Native Americans and African Americans share a history of oppression at the hands of Whites, and both were subject to deficit ideologies in schools (Deyhle & Swisher, 1997). For a time it was believed that Native people “lacked innate intelligence” (p. 118). In the case of Native peoples, it is important to acknowledge that the colonization of American land was connected to profit. Native people possessed land the colonizers desired, and the colonizers engaged in any means possible to obtain it (Mohawk, 2000), including education (Carney, 1999). Knowing this history is instrumental in understanding Native responses to non-Native institutions, culture, and values.

Literature Review

Home-going as a success strategy has not yet been explored in the literature. Friendsickness covers a range of distress related to separation from family and precollege friends (Paul & Brier, 2001) with regard to mainstream non-Native college students. Homesickness (G. J. Smith, 2007) is generally considered an individual adjustment. Although participants in this study referred to missing family and friends, they often referred to their discomfort in relation to culture. Home, where spirituality is practiced, traditional food is shared, where Indigenous language is heard, and elders live, was deeply missed. Participants missed family and friends, but it was much more complex than that—a cultural context was missing.

Although Native American identity development is not the focus of this study, a brief discussion is warranted. Generally, Native students identify in complex ways according to their “upbringing,” acceptance by their community (Guardia & Evans, 2008), and whether or not they have official government recognition (Garrouette, 2003). Mainstream identity development theories place an emphasis on individual autonomy (see Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Native American identity is complex because of the sheer diversity of the population: There are 562 federally recognized tribes with similar, yet distinct, cultural traits. Native identity is also complex because it is directly connected to community or place (Alfred, 1999). “Being is who you are, and a sense of who you are is arrived at through your relationships with other people—your people. So who we are is tied with what we are: a nation” (Simpson, as cited in Alfred, 1999, p. 66). This depth of connection is largely absent on a college campus that can be a site of individual competition, individual goals, and Western-based curriculum (Burk, 2007; Tierney, 1999). These values conflict with many non-Native students’ cultural understandings. For example, Native students report family and community, not individual gain, as reasons for attending college (R. M. Guillory & Wolverton, 2008; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; Lindley, 2009).

Because Astin's (1984) involvement theory and Tinto's (1987, 1993) integration theory have dominated the student affairs landscape (Tierney, 1999), the perception is that to be successful in college, students must be engaged *on* campus. Although Astin and Tinto contended that this engagement has levels of intensity and is experienced in different ways, practitioners encourage on-campus social involvement.

As early as 1986, researchers reported that Native college students go home often (Benjamin, Chambers, & Reiterman 1993; Falk & Aitken, 1984; Ness, 2002; Scott, 1986). Ness (2002) found that Native students in Northern Minnesota went home almost every weekend, a practice that increased their feeling of isolation on campus. Jorgensen (1993) reported that this level of home-going behavior baffled college administrators and faculty. The confusion shows a lack of understanding of Native students' responsibilities at home that include ceremony. The importance that home connections hold for Native students is similarly misunderstood. Because of the importance of family and spirituality, it should come as no surprise that Native students are drawn home (Falk & Aitken, 1984; Waterman, 2004). Yet, home-going remains widely misunderstood among campus faculty and policymakers.

Importance of Place

Family, community, and spirituality are important for Native American college students (Benjamin et al., 1993; R. M. Guillory & Wolverton, 2008; HeavyRunner & Marshall, 2003; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991). Research shows that Native American college students consider family as their greatest support (Falk & Aitken, 1984; Lindley, 2009; Waterman, 2004).

A people is a group of human beings united together by a history, language, culture, or some combination therein—a community joined in union for a common purpose: the survival and flourishing of the people itself. It has always been from an understanding of themselves as a people that Indian groups have constructed themselves as a nation. (Lyons, 2000, p. 454)

Because Native Americans usually make up less than 1% (often 0.1% or less) of an IHE's population (DeVoe, Darling-Churchill, & Snyder, 2008), these students are an extreme minority on campus. Home for Native Americans has a special meaning connected to "place." Indigenous, after all, means "'to be of a place'" (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001, p. 31). This connection to place is based on relationships beyond a community of people and traditions; the responsibility includes the land, animals, and natural forces. The connection is so deep, it permeates every aspect of the culture. Ceremonies are "symbolic representations" of the interdependent relationships with nature (Cajete, 1999, p. 195).

As a consciously "nation-people" (Lyons, 2000, p. 455), the Haudenosaunee feel strongly connected to "home," a place where they can be Indigenous, and escape the "gaze" of non-Natives (Deyhle, 2009, p. x). The Haudenosaunee way of being is rooted to a place and to the sovereign community of people who live in that place. Lyons (2000) asserted: "The sovereignty of individuals and

the privileging of procedure are less important in the logic of a nation-people, which takes as its supreme charge the sovereignty of the group through a privileging of its traditions and culture and continuity" (p. 455).

For many non-White populations, IHEs are contested places. Many questions persist for Native people about American higher education. For example, educating the Indigenous male population was included in the charters of many colonial IHEs (Carney, 1999), yet Native students lag behind in degree attainment. Every IHE in the United States sits on land that was formerly Native land; a constant reminder of colonization. Researchers have come into Indigenous communities, conducted research through a Eurocentric, Christian lens, and obtained doctorates while failing to engage community members in meaningful and beneficial ways (Garrouette, 2003; L. T. Smith, 1999). The residential school era was not that long ago (Braemer & Douglas, 2009). These concerns, some conscious—others not—are part of Haudenosaunee history as a nation-people. Given the role IHEs played in past assimilation efforts, "home" has become the site of traditionalism, language revitalization, and stubborn adherence to culture.

The Haudenosaunee and many other Indigenous people of the Americas consider the impact a decision will have on the next seven generations, or more accurately, those yet unborn (Alfred, 1999; Mohawk, 1992). This consideration, well beyond the recent sustainability efforts of IHEs, speaks to a sense of stewardship (Kawagley & Barnhardt, 1999).

Continuity and Spirituality

Native students cite family and community support that is also spiritual in nature. Two phrases the participants in this study used were "culture as a reality check" and "recharging spiritual batteries." The call home is spiritual.

Our roots are deep in the lands where we live. We have a great love for our country, for our birthplace is there. The soil is rich from the bones of thousands of our generations. Each of us was created in those lands, and it is our duty to take great care of them, because from these lands will spring the future generations of the Onkwehón:we [Real People]. We walk about with great respect, for the Earth is a very sacred place. (Mohawk, 2005, p. 86)

The physical and connective power of a place is a relationship with all of creation. Cajete (1999) wrote, "This is not only a physical place with sun, wind, rain, water, lakes, rivers, and streams, but a spiritual place, a place of being and understanding" (p. 193). IHEs are not places of relationship in the same sense. The academy can be a place of objectivity with an emphasis on quantitative data, but it can also be a system that privileges European colonial epistemologies where education exerts the power to "other" and marginalize groups (Foucault, 1995). IHEs consist of disciplines that value particular areas of expertise (Dill, 1984). Because IHEs in the United States are based on traditionally European ideas, IHEs are inherently disconnected from place. It could

be argued that IHE curricula themselves are disconnected from place (Mihesuah & Wilson, 2004), especially viewed through an Indigenous lens.

Methods

This article is based on qualitative interview data from 54 self-identified Haudenosaunee college graduates (12 from a 2004 study plus 42 from the 2005–2006 study). This phenomenological study focused on college degree completion; therefore, the sample was purposeful. Those who identified as Haudenosaunee and had completed a college degree were sought for the study. All participants grew up on or near one of the Haudenosaunee territories in New York State and Canada and attended community colleges, private and public 4-year institutions (including Ivy League schools), and institutions outside New York. The participants and their institutions were assigned pseudonyms in this study. There is no single institution that provides a postsecondary education for the Haudenosaunee, and there are no tribal colleges in New York State. New York State has 164 private and state postsecondary institutions. Haudenosaunee territories are not as remote as reservations in the western part of the United States, so it is possible for Haudenosaunee students living on a reservation to commute to a postsecondary institution.

As an indigenous scholar at a research university, I am an insider to the Native community and the academic community. As such I am responsible to my community to conduct respectful research following tribal protocol (Hermes, 1999) as well as protocols of the academy (Brayboy, 1999). Initial codes and findings were shared with non-Native colleagues as an “outsider’s check” (Waterman, 2007) along with peer debriefing of codes with my research assistants.

Open-ended, hour-long interviews were conducted concerning the participants’ educational experience. Themes were coded and pattern level analysis conducted (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). Participant observation was not possible for this study because all had graduated and left college. As the Haudneosaunee are a close-knit community, the participants mentioned each other in their interviews. This crosschecking and author recall of their attendance at college or community events mentioned during the interviews enhances trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Administrators identified by the participants were also interviewed in the larger study, which provided another level of triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Thirty-five participants lived on campus in residential settings, and it was possible for 26 of them to go home on the weekend. This article is based on 19 of the 26 who went home often (every weekend or every month).

To contextualize the findings, a brief description of the Haudenosaunee follows. The Haudenosaunee consist of the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora nations. Before the imposition of New York State and international boundaries, traditional lands spanned New York and Canada. Now, due to removal efforts and encroachment, lands have been reduced to scattered territories in the state and Canada. For example, the Onondaga Nation is in Central

New York, several Seneca nations are south of Buffalo, New York; and a Mohawk nation straddles the New York State and Canadian border north of Massena, New York.

When introducing oneself in a traditional way in a Haudenosaunee language, nation and clan come before an individual's name. The Haudenosaunee cycle of ceremonies and system of leadership pre-dates the United States (Barreiro, 1992) and has continued this way for hundreds of years. This is so despite repeated outside, federal, and state efforts to disrupt this way of life. Traditionally matrilineal, Haudenosaunee culture is very active and involved, yet it occurs outside the consciousness of surrounding non-Native community.

Findings

A typical college-going pattern of the 19 participants who lived at a residential institution was as follows: The student attended an institution 1 hour or more from home and traveled home often (12 of the 19 said "every weekend") for up to 1 year. After returning home on weekends, they often transferred either to a local community college or 4-year institution so they could commute from home. Only 1 participant transferred from one 4-year private university to another 4-year private university. The remaining participants transferred to state institutions including one of the state's flagship institutions. Participants maintained a social network that centered on home.

Except for the participants who attended an IHE out of state, travel home on the weekends was common, despite often requiring an hour or more of drive time. For some, such as Melanie and Janine, both Mohawk, drive time home was slightly over 4 hours one way. Participants went home on weekends to be with family and to attend traditional ceremonies. Some participants indicated that traveling back and forth negatively affected their studies. Benjamin et al. (1993) reported that Native students were aware that frequent trips home impacted their grades. The following sections—participant home-going, feelings of responsibility, and parental consent—are the major themes found in the analysis.

Participant Home-Going

Janine, a Mohawk, is one example of the many participants who reported, "I was home every weekend." She said, "I couldn't stay [at school] by myself," despite the fact that she had a friend from home at her university. When asked about going home, Candi, an Oneida said, "I would come home probably almost every weekend at some points, just to come home, to get away from there. [To] get away from the college [laughs]; to see new sights."

Another Mohawk participant, Leona, went home every weekend with friends and sometimes went with other Haudenosaunee friends to a nearby reservation. Although it was not Leona's home, the culture and character were familiar. Karin, an Oneida, said her dorm room was "just a place to stay during the week," and she went home often "because it was so close." Chantell, a Seneca, lived close enough to her IHE that she watched her little sister in the morning before school. She said her family knew most of her roommates and college friends.

Returning home once a month was reported by two of the participants. Karen, a Seneca who attended a university only a half hour from home and was an officer of her institution's dynamic Native American student group said, "I went home maybe once or twice a month, not too much." Nina, a Mohawk, reported that "once a month I'd go home." She said she "enjoyed it up there" at her IHE, and that she knew she had "to learn to be a student." While still going home once a month, she said the school had "a nice gym," new people to meet, and, "It was new and exciting to me, and I wanted to be there. I didn't want to be home."

New-found freedom appears to play a part in going home, although one would think freedom means the ability to go anywhere. Candi said that "we'd take different routes" on their way home. Although having the freedom to go anywhere, they still went home.

Feelings of Responsibility

Because they felt a responsibility to home, students felt that it was important to be home. Although Melanie and Donna, both Mohawks, were not the only participants who said they felt a "need" to be home, they expressed this need at a more practical and spiritual level. Melanie said that she had "obligations" outside of school. "Sometimes you gotta take care of things," she said. "If somebody passes away, you got to take care of it. You can't do it later." Donna did not attend her institution's summer bridge program because her aunt died. She said, "I had to stay and be with the family at that point . . . we were really close to her . . . [I had to be there to help] take care of all that business." Funerals among the Haudenosaunee are not 3-day affairs; the funerals require the attention of family for 10 days. With close-knit communities and large extended families in which the term "distant relative" more often refers to geography rather than degree of separation, a death in the community affects almost every member. Clan members (families) not related to the deceased have a responsibility to assist the grieving family. Haudenosaunee funerals are well attended; people from across Haudenosaunee territory travel to express their condolences. These practices are not "polite" behaviors but reflect the importance of ceremony and connectedness in Native culture.

Continuity is a critical concept for Native people; the nation cannot endure without its people. For the Haudenosaunee and other Native American students to pass on their culture through traditions and language, they feel compelled to go home out of a sense of responsibility to their people. Only one participant was asked to come home by her family. Randi, an Onondaga woman, who was the only member in her family without children, was asked to come home because her mother was terminally ill.

Parental Consent

A final observation relates to parental consent of home-going behavior. Sophie, an Oneida, drove home every weekend with the help of family and friends. She said her parents "didn't mind" her coming home and even bought her a laptop computer so she could do her homework on the

weekend. Family supported trips home by providing money for the bus or gas and through help buying vehicles. No participants reported parents making unfavorable remarks about their home-going behavior.

Discussion

Native students often “go home” to the place where they perceive their greatest support to be. Through the lens of the participants in this study, home-going represents the important role communities and families play in the lives of Haudenosaunee students. Home and community validate the participants’ indigeneity by serving as a bridge between Native and non-Native cultures. This behavior influenced their time and trajectory to graduation. They may not have completed degrees at their first institutions or finished within four years, but participants did graduate while remaining contributing members of their communities.

These students, living and learning in a non-Native context, were often acutely aware of the difference of other students. Hannah, a Mohawk, expressed the differences she perceived about her non-Native classmates: “Like people at [Private IHE] were upper class, they’ve all had money, they’ve all had the same type of . . . prep school. Most of them had everything just handed to them, you know?”

Sharing and generosity are highly valued in Native cultures (Huffman, 2008). Sharon, also Mohawk, said of her former roommates, “I don’t know where you come from, where we come from, you share everything. [My roommates] had names on everything. Even on salt and pepper shakers. Yeah! I was just blown away, I couldn’t get it. . . . They don’t share.”

Debbie, a Seneca, said, “I met some really nice people and some of them were just kind of really out there. . . . It was very, very strange, and I really felt kinda lonesome, kinda outnumbered.” This centering of the Native self is apparent in how Melanie explained her experience in a summer bridge program: “It was all Blacks and Hispanics from New York City, and you know, they have their own music, and their own culture, and I just felt like I stuck out.” The participants did not discuss how *they* were different, but noted differences with their non-Native classmates.

Participants tended to socialize on their campuses with other Native American students and with people who were like them (e.g., “guys from the North Country,” a rural area much like a reservation). Their friends, however, were not only Native Americans. Although several participants said they “had enough friends” and felt no need to make new ones at their institution, the majority made new friends at college.

Seven of the 26 participants did not go home even though it was possible. Three participants were involved in a competitive sport that required them to be on campus. Jim, a Mohawk who was a 4-hour drive from home, said if it had not been for his sport, he would not have stayed at his institution. Two others were involved with their IHE’s Native student group. The student group brought in speakers and culture experts to address Haudenosaunee history and language;

they participated in social activities such as social dancing. These two participants also had Haudenosaunee friends on their campus and access to Haudenosaunee faculty. One Mohawk student, Lance, rarely went home, saying he enjoyed the campus environment, until he was a senior and began to party and return home often. Two participants completed their degrees out of state at distances too great to return home often. Both were active members of the Native American student group on their campus and expressed a deep appreciation for the group's existence and support.

The students in this study were academically engaged, though some faced academic challenges. All attained degrees and many discussed how they loved learning and learning new ways of thinking. Native American college students who insist on going home contest involvement and integration theory. Although it may be academically easier for Native students to remain on campus, it is hard to argue against the continuation of a people when formal educational policy has historically been aimed at assimilation.

Implications

Do we support Native students' home-going behavior or do we discourage these students from going home and urge them to integrate into the campus? The data indicate that, despite frequent trips home, these participants completed college degrees in a way that was congruent with their cultural integrity. As concluded by Waterman (2004), college was an external demand in their lives as opposed to family and community obligations being external demands to college.

Although the argument was made in this article that the Haudenosaunee feel spiritually and strongly connected to their homeland, the same can be said for other Native people in the Americas (see for example, Cajete, 1999; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001). Native students consider their culture as their "personal anchor" from which they draw strength (Huffman, 2008, p. 187). Because home is so highly valued, the concept of home needs to be redefined and the language of "going home" framed positively rather than negatively.

How might student affairs professionals recognize and affirm the importance of Native American students' ties to home? Families can be included in campus events; including families in several events throughout the year may help parents and family understand the college experience. Only five participants in this study had a parent with a college education, and mothers of two participants finished their degrees as adults (one graduated on the same day as her daughter). By including family, students can play host and introduce the institution to family. Family is often where traditions are located, and the institution should not overlook this cultural resource. However, Native family can mean a multitude of relatives (e.g., parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and very close friends), and the institution should be prepared for a broader concept of "family" (Heilman, 2008) than is typically considered. As Native American students look to family and community for support, institutions need to be creative in including them on the campus (J. Guillory, 2008; HeavyRunner & Marshall, 2003; Lindley, 2009; Shotton, 2008).

IHEs can bring in Native leadership to educate the campus faculty and staff. The University of Arizona and University of Idaho created and support special advisory positions that work with institutional leadership and surrounding Native American leaders. A goal of the special advisor at the University of Arizona is to “increase awareness and promote an understanding of tribal governance, enterprises, culture and customs among university administrators, faculty and staff” (Francis-Begay, 2009, slide 3). Although most Native American faculty and administrators work to educate their campus communities, the presence of formal special advisory positions at these institutions represents a solid institutional commitment. Knowledge and working relationships with the surrounding communities increase an IHE’s climate of inclusion. Most cities have Native American centers that can be tapped as a resource and a site of collaboration. Collaborative education benefits the entire community, as Indigenous and U.S. history are intimately connected (Lyons, 2000).

Indigenous peoples and their lands, the very land upon which IHEs sit, need to be recognized. The Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving address in the Onondaga language was given by Tado-daho Sidney Hill at Nancy Cantor’s 2004 inauguration as Syracuse University’s 11th chancellor. The 2008 National Association for Student Personnel Administrators’ Annual Conference in Seattle, Washington, was blessed in language and song by George Adams and Sxeyilem (Herald Belmont, Jr.), two members of the Suquamish/Nooksack nation. These examples of recognition require a relationship with the Indigenous population to engage respectfully with cultural traditions.

Another more difficult and transformative step would be the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge systems in the academy. Indigenous systems of knowledge are based on relationships that include all of creation (Brayboy & Maughan, 2009). “While Western science and education tend to emphasize compartmentalized knowledge which is often decontextualized and taught in the detached setting of a classroom or laboratory, Native people have traditionally acquired their knowledge through direct experience in the natural environment” (Kawagley & Barnhardt, 1999, p. 118). For the sciences in IHEs, especially where disciplines may not communicate with one another (Cajete, 1999) and nature is not considered in research implications, such relationships are ignored. Because Indigenous knowledge systems are systems of relationships—with humans a part of nature, not separate from it—knowledge is considered spiritual (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Shahjahan, Wagner & Wane, 2009). Shahjahan et al. (2009) argued that a reintroduction of spirituality into the academy is an act of decolonization. Colonization imposed not only European systems of knowledge, but a spirituality that was located in a church. This action was an attempt to replace Indigenous spirituality with Christianity. “Home” represents a place of connection in contrast to an IHE with independent and disconnected disciplines. Home offers a place of comfort, a place to simply be. Home-going is an indication that IHEs are still sites of hegemony. Home-going entails leaving the hegemonic educational environment to maintain cultural integrity and cultural survival, and for participants in this study, it was a form of forward movement in the completion of their degrees.

Conclusion

Indigenous epistemologies recognize that students experience college through an Indigenous lens (Pillow, 2003). While at college or university, their view was filtered through this Indigenous lens in ways that reinforced their traditional worldview. Participants in this study did not “disassociate themselves” from their home or former community (Tinto, 1993, p. 95); they continued to value and maintain their traditional worldview. This continuing connection relates to the findings by J. Guillory (2008) and Lee (2009) that Native Americans give back to their communities. By returning home often while attending college, students continue community participation and sustain their cultural integrity.

This article discussed the experiences of Haudenosaunee college graduates who completed college educations while remaining culturally centered by going home often, almost every weekend. Home has a special meaning for the Haudenosaunee as well as other Native Americans, as the United States is their homeland. Participants reported family and community as an important source of support and expressed a need and obligation to be home to participate in the community. Home-going contributed to the success of the participants in this study, as they were able to maintain their cultural integrity within a non-Native, culturally oppressive environment. Home-going was presented as behavior in direct opposition to past policies of assimilation and removal. Home-going was one strategy participants employed as they completed their college degrees.

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