

Title: An Anthropological Look Beyond the Redwood Curtain: Issues of Student Safety in Rural Campuses and Communities

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The needs and circumstances that affect minority students at rural universities are continually elided in the face of rising violence at these institutions, violence that is at once personal and structural. This presentation aims to provide a functionalist interpretation of such strife at universities, drawing on my own experience as a student. Student integration into university culture and structure can be made analogous to, and have indeed been part of, other assimilationist projects locally and nationally. Especially in rural, more homogeneous communities, this process can involve culture shock for minority students, urban students, and other “others.” Student integration is thereby perceived differently, playing a role in experiences of safety and danger on campus and life in the surrounding community. Rural colleges may be inhibited by self-imposed barriers to inclusion with reforms that do not rigorously evaluate the limitations and liabilities that prove to be taxing on underrepresented minority students. With each attack, slur, and student death, the lack of consistent institutional efforts on this front have compromised the standards of the state, tarnished institutional confidence, and actively undermine the function of university spaces.

References

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