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Student information

Student name (First, Middle, Last): Patrick M. Miller

Graduate Program: Doctor of Ministry in Leadership and Spiritual Formation

Dissertation information

Title of dissertation: FOSTERING EQUANIMITY THROUGH SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES TO INCREASE UNDERGRADUATE RETENTIO

Advisor: Dr. Guy Chmielecki and Dr. Anderson Campbell

Graduate program: Doctor of Ministry in Leadership and Spiritual Formation

Date of Dissertation Approval by Graduate Program: February 16, 2018

Copy and paste your 300-word Dissertation Abstract below:

This dissertation responds to the problem of unstable freshman-to-sophomore retention rates at Greenville University between 2005 and 2015. Greenville University retention rates have oscillated between a high of 75.5% in 2009 and a low of 62.5% in 2011. This differs from the performance of the other members of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities over the same time period. For CCCU schools, retention has remained between 72.7% and 74%. While both CCCU schools and Greenville University invested significant time and resources into retention programs, Greenville's efforts did not produce stable retention rates. Section one details the fluctuating retention rates at Greenville University and its programmatic attempts to respond to this problem. Section two reviews the contemporary ways American colleges and universities seek to foster student retention. Section three articulates a solution to this problem built on both Astin, Astin, and Lindholm's concept of equanimity and Smith and Pearce's study of emerging adult spirituality. The proposed solution is a three-credit general education course targeting students in their critical second semester of college. This course will foster equanimity in these students through engagement of spiritual disciplines. Sections four and five describe the course and how it incorporates both contemporary data about emerging adults and best practices for ministering to them. Section six identifies potential topics for future study concerning equanimity and emerging adulthood.

(Continued Next Page)

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Spiritual Formation, Retention, Higher Education, Equanimity, Astin, Spiritual Disciplines

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