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Colorado State University
Journal of Student Affairs

Mission Statement

The mission of the Colorado State University *Journal of Student Affairs* is to develop and produce a scholarly publication which reflects current national and international education issues and the professional interests of student affairs practitioners.

Goals

- The *Journal* will promote scholarly work and perspectives from graduate students and student affairs professionals, reflecting the importance of professional and academic research and writing in higher education.

- The Editorial Board of the *Journal* will offer opportunities for students to develop editorial skills, critical thinking, and writing skills while producing a professional publication.

State of the Program

Dafina-Lazarus Stewart, Ph.D.
Jennifer Johnson, Ph.D.
Pamela Graglia, Ph.D.

This marks the 51st year of the Student Affairs in Higher Education (SAHE) program at Colorado State University. The SAHE program continues to respond to the demands of our changing profession while centering the learning and development of our students. We extend our appreciation to faculty, staff, advisors, assistantship supervisors, and alumni who all contribute to providing a high-quality experience for our students.

We are especially happy to announce that Dr. Pamela Graglia joined the SAHE program in a new role as assistant program coordinator this summer as a non-tenure track, full-time faculty member for SAHE and the Higher Education Leadership (HEL) Ph.D. program at CSU. Pamela is no stranger to SAHE and has been co-teaching the research class that prepares students to complete their portfolio, providing leadership related to curriculum changes, and advising students for years. We are grateful that her new role will allow Pamela to contribute in new and different ways to SAHE. This addition means the program is now supported by two full-time faculty members in addition to our dedicated scholar-practitioner faculty from across campus.

The SAHE program maintains a strong relationship with both the Division of Student Affairs and the School of Education at Colorado State University. The Division of Student Affairs contributes roughly $240,000 in funding for graduate assistantships that support SAHE residential students. Through support for SAHE's full-time faculty and contributions to residential faculty pay, the School of Education also makes a significant financial investment in SAHE. Also, the School of Education welcomed a new Director, Dr. Susan Faircloth, last summer. Dr. Faircloth has provided strong support for the SAHE program so far. Her research interests (Indigenous education, the education of culturally and linguistically diverse students with special educational needs, the moral/ethical dimensions of school leadership) strongly align with SAHE values.

Chaired by Dr. Kathy Sisneros and Dr. Pamela Graglia during 2016-2017 and taken up by D-L upon their arrival in Fall 2017, the SAHE curriculum committee finalized their vision for the future of SAHE coursework, pedagogy, and philosophy in the fall of 2018. The new curriculum gives students more options to explore their interest areas through elective courses, greater access to research opportunities, and better preparation for working with the unique needs of today's college students. The new curriculum has been entered into the Curriculum Information Management system (CIM) and now must receive approval at many levels of the institution. Assuming all goes well, the new curriculum will be launched for both residential and online SAHE students during the 2019-2020 academic year.

SAHE leadership continues to have conversations with HEL leadership to brainstorm ways that the two programs can collaborate for the mutual benefit of both programs. With D-L and Pamela already teaching in HEL, other opportunities for cross-over of faculty, advising, and resources could lead to better experiences for both Master's and Doctoral level students. Collaboration could also create a pipeline of students between the Master's and Ph.D.

We welcomed new instructors this year to the SAHE faculty including Adam-Jon Aparicio who is co-teaching the residential Human Relations in Education course and Jerel Benton who

is co-teaching the online Access and Success course focused on postsecondary opportunities in program practice. Although transitioning to retirement, we are excited that Kris Birnard and Oscar Felix will continue teaching for SAHE. Finally, we'd like to thank Karla Perez-Velez for her work teaching the Introduction to Research and Program Evaluation courses. We wish her well as she will be stepping away from teaching this year in order to focus on the completion of her dissertation, while continuing with her excellent service as co-advisor to the Journal of Student Affairs board.

This January, Dr. Jody Donovan, and Lance Wright, '01 SAHE Grad, and two SAHE students serving in the capacity of International Field Experience Coordinators (Dani Andrews and Lucy Delgado) led a group of 15 students on a trip to Spain in conjunction with their eight-week Global Perspectives in Higher Education course. The highlights of their visit included Barcelona, Madrid, and Salamanca. In each city, a university was visited as well as seeing important cultural attractions.

We continue to have a strong program graduating students who are prepared to enter the field as practitioner-scholars. Our continued 100% placement rate within three months of graduation attests to this. SAHE continues to be the most diverse graduate program in the School of Education and across the university.

Our ability to recruit and yield minoritized students from multiple social groups – including People of Color, queer and trans students, and international students – illustrates our demonstrated commitment to diversity and inclusion, as well as equity and justice. It is also an indicator that these values are shared across our alumni, faculty, and assistantship supervisors. We remain committed to furthering our work in this area so that principles of equity and justice further permeate our curricular content and instructional pedagogy as fundamental components of professional practice in student affairs.

Producing a high quality SAHE journal year after year is no easy task. It requires the work of many including content and style readers, *Journal* editorial board members, and dedicated advisors (Karla Perez-Velez and Teresa Metzger). We'd like to express our thanks and appreciation for all who contributed to making this 28th edition of the SAHE *Journal* a success. Happy reading!

Colorado State University
Journal of Student Affairs

Volume XXVIII, 2018-2019

Managing Editors' Perspective

Stephanie Cuevas, Managing Editor – Technical
Génesis Góngora Balam, Managing Editor – Marketing and Outreach
Patrick Ramirez, Managing Editor – Training and Development
Isabel Villalobos-Galeana, Managing Editor – Coordination

The *Journal of Student Affairs* is proud to present its 28th edition for publication. For 27 years, Colorado State University (CSU) graduate students have worked diligently to produce this annual scholarly journal. This has proven to be a valuable experience for them as it enhanced their own critical thinking and writing skills. As a result, every edition has met the *Journal's* mission of promoting national and global work in higher education. This year's edition has authors from a variety of backgrounds who contributed both literature reviews and original research. It is our hope that for many more editions to come, the *Journal of Student Affairs* continues to evolve alongside the field of student affairs and higher education.

To further encourage more authors and a variety of perspectives, we collectively agreed to re-shift our publication timeline. This allowed for an efficient process in which we saw an increased number of submissions and now more published articles compared to the recent past editions. As we began the publishing process, we noticed an incongruence in our emphasized value of social justice and inclusion and our usage of the term 'blind-process.' In order to disrupt the ableist nature of the phrase, the editorial board agreed, and saw it as our responsibility, to reframe the language to 'masked-process.' Thus, we made the change to our websites, corrected each other through the transition, and now, have the hope that more scholars, editors, and journals in the academics would recognize the power language can have in dismantling forms of -ism's. Lastly, we submitted our first presentation proposal for NASPA and although we were not selected, we gained valuable experience throughout that process. We are proud of these changes and are eager to see what else is in store for the *Journal* in the years to come.

Furthermore, we are honored to present this year's invited article from Dr. Dafina-Lazarus (D-L) Stewart, who is a full-time faculty member for the Student Affairs and Higher Education (SAHE) program at Colorado State University. We are honored to have Dr. Stewart as our guest author this year. Not only is he giving so much to our program, but he is also providing much scholarship to the field of higher education. His contribution to the *Journal* is even more so special to us because Dr. Stewart begun working for the SAHE program at the same time we begun studying in SAHE during the fall of 2017.

The managing editors would like to give our utmost appreciation and gratitude to our advisors, Karla Perez-Velez and Teresa Metzger, for their hard work and continued dedication to the *Journal*. They have guided us through countless hours of reviewing articles and challenged us in our way of thinking around student affairs research. Without them we would not have grown as a journal and as an editorial board.

In addition, we would like to express our gratitude to Dr. Blanche Hughes, the Division of Student Affairs, and the Leadership Team of the SAHE Program, Dr. Dafina-Lazarus (D-L) Stewart, Dr. Jen Johnson, and Dr. Pamela Graglia for their permanent support to the *Journal of Student Affairs*. Their work along with the School of Education and the Leadership Team of the Higher Education Leadership doctoral program provided us with the opportunity to attend the 43rd ASHE Conference. During our participation in the annual conference,

we connected with researchers and learned from their work. It helped us to understand the process between research and publication. The conference, along with our newest board members, challenged us to think deeper on the voices who get published and the voices who are still missing in academia.

We want to extend our gratitude to the authors of this year's edition. Their dedication, inspiration, creativity, and time were fundamental. We have been fortunate enough to have the opportunity to read their works and to further understand national and international trends. Also, this edition could not have been published without the hours put in by our reviewers. They provided both positive and critical feedback to the authors, which further enhanced their work.

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude and deep appreciation to the Associate Editors: Maria, Sonia, Amber, and Tanisha for bringing in their enthusiasm, knowledge, critical lenses, and a fresh perspective to the board. As Managing Editors, we were challenged to rethink how we served in the board and how to best contribute to the current knowledge base of trends in student affairs. The Associate Editors allowed us the opportunity to leave behind a stronger legacy at CSU, the SAHE program, and the field of higher education. We are confident that as they transition into their roles as Managing Editors, they will continue excelling in their positions. As for us, we are excited for our future endeavors and will always reflect fondly upon the experiences and skills gained through the *Journal of Student Affairs*.

Advisors' Perspective 2018-2019

The 2018-2019 Colorado State University (CSU) Student Affairs in Higher Education (SAHE) Editorial Board for the *Journal of Student Affairs* has brought forward an engaging *Journal* for student affairs practitioners and scholars. We believe you will enjoy reading this year's *Journal of Student Affairs* and appreciate the learning and development the *Journal* provides this year for our profession.

We would like to thank the SAHE Leadership Team, Dr. D-L Stewart, Dr. Pamela Graglia, Dr. Jen Johnson, as well as the School of Education for their unwavering support of the *Journal* and Editorial Board. Additionally, we would like to extend our gratitude to the SAHE supervisors, advisors, and faculty for without their support of the students and staff participating in the Editorial and Review Boards the work of the *Journal* could not be accomplished. To Colleen Rodriguez and her publishing team, we thank you for your assistance in producing the CSU SAHE *Journal of Student Affairs*.

We would also like to thank the leadership of CSU Housing and Dining Services – Christie Mathews, Director of University Housing Projects and Outreach; Laura Giles, Associate Executive Director; and Mari Strombom, Executive Director for the on-going support of us as the advisors of the SAHE *Journal* Board.

In 2018, we continued our development of scholarship in attending the 43rd Annual Conference for the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) held in Tampa, FL with a conference focus of *1968 to 2018 Envisioning the Woke Academy: Past, Present, and Future*. Our second-year students were able to connect with scholars, practitioners, and fellow graduate students while attending ASHE in addition to having the chance to interact with current CSU doctorate students, alumni, and faculty in the Higher Education and Leadership (HEL) program at the second annual CSU social hosted at the conference. It was a great time to connect and network with a large community of CSU scholars.

For our invited article, Dr. D-L Stewart engages us and the field with a thoughtful piece entitled *Ideologies of Absence: Anti-Blackness and Inclusion Rhetoric in Student Affairs Practice*. Dr. Stewart states,

> Despite inclusion rhetoric in student affairs, anti-Blackness shapes the experiences of Black graduate and full-time professionals, who are both hypervisible and invisible in student affairs. Using four scenarios reflecting composite narratives, the author [Dr. Stewart] discusses how inclusion hides the pervasiveness of anti-Blackness in student affairs practice. Offering a new framework, the author discusses four ideologies of absence: (un)belonging, (un)safety, (in)validation, and (un)reward. These ideologies of absence are contrasted with four ideologies of Black presence.

The abstract above speaks to the ongoing narratives that black students and student affairs professionals experience on campus despite focused efforts on inclusion and social justice in higher education. The article goes on to discuss the impact of anti-blackness and white supremacy on college campuses. We are grateful for Dr. Stewart's scholarship and for publishing this scholarly piece within the *Journal of Student Affairs*.

We continue to be honored in serving as the advisors to the CSU SAHE *Journal* Board, a group of dedicated graduate students working towards the advancement of scholarship in SAHE through the production of a scholarly journal. We are proud of the eight students we work with and their dedication in the production of the 28th *Journal of Student Affairs*.

Lastly, to the 2018-2019 SAHE *Journal* Board, you have strengthened the foundation of the *Journal* through your thoughtful conversations and we thank you for your time and critical reflection. Each of you makes the advisor role a gratifying and educational experience.

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Teresa Metzger   Karla Perez-Velez

SAHE *Journal* Board Advisor   SAHE *Journal* Board Advisor

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Acknowledgements

Past Leadership

As we produce the 28th edition of the Colorado State University *Journal of Student Affairs,* we acknowledge those who have laid the foundation for our success.

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2014-2019	Teresa Metzger, Assistant Director for University Housing. Karla Perez-Velez, Assistant Director for University Housing, Student Affairs in Higher Education, School of Education, College of Health and Human Sciences, Colorado State University.
2007-2013	Oscar Felix, Associate Vice President for Enrollment and Access/Diversity; Assistant Professor Faculty, Student Affairs in Higher Education, School of Education, College of Health and Human Sciences, Colorado State University Andrea Takemoto Reeve, former Director Academic Advancement Center; former Professor, Student Affairs in Higher Education, School of Education, College of Health and Human Sciences, Colorado State University
2004-2007	Jennifer Williams Molock, former Director of Black Student Services, Colorado State University
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1991-1998	Keith M. Miser, former Vice President for Student Affairs, Colorado State University

Ideologies of Absence: Anti-Blackness and Inclusion Rhetoric in Student Affairs Practice

D-L Stewart
Colorado State University

Abstract

Despite inclusion rhetoric in student affairs, anti-Blackness shapes the experiences of Black graduate and full-time professionals, who are both hypervisible and invisible in student affairs. Using four scenarios reflecting composite narratives, the author discusses how inclusion hides the pervasiveness of anti-Blackness in student affairs practice. Offering a new framework, the author discusses four ideologies of absence: (un)belonging, (un)safety, (in)validation, and (un)reward. These ideologies of absence are contrasted with four ideologies of Black presence.

Keywords: Afro-futurism, Afro-pessimism, anti-Blackness, student affairs

Author's Note

IDEOLOGIES OF ABSENCE: ANTI-BLACKNESS AND INCLUSION RHETORIC IN STUDENT AFFAIRS PRACTICE

Scene 1: Black student approaches Black graduate faculty member about assistantship climate

Black Student: I keep hearing from my supervisor that they're getting feedback from other people that I look mean and unapproachable. I don't know what they mean by that. My supervisor told me to try smiling more.

Black Faculty Member: [Immediately thinking how familiar this sounds and how much they have been given this same message.] Hmmm. How does that make you feel?

Black Student: It makes me feel like there's something wrong with me. Like, I just be sitting there at my desk doing my work or whatever. I'm minding my business you know and so that means I'm unapproachable?! It's like they want me to constantly be having some stupid smile on my face all the time. I do smile when it's warranted. I just don't smile all the time.

Black Faculty Member: [nodding] Of course.

Black Student: I'm not going to shuck and jive just to be seen as professional. Is that what it takes to be in this field? If so, maybe I made the wrong choice.

Black Faculty Member: Yea, I'm thinking of Stepin Fetchit and the idea that in order to be palatable and seen as not aggressive, Black people are expected to perform for the benefit of white people.

Black Student: Yea, exactly. That's not how I'm set up.

******

Scene 2: Aftermath of 2016 presidential election; heightened racial animus on campus and in residence halls. Black student comes to Black faculty member to debrief how they are feeling.

>*Black Faculty Member:* So, how's it been going in your residence hall?
>
>*Black Student:* Doc it's been rough. I've got residents [Students of Color, Queer, and/or Trans*] in distress. My RAs [resident assistants] are stressed out. I don't know what to do. I'm dealing with my own responses to all this and it's like I don't have anywhere to go to process that stuff, you know?
>
>*Black Faculty Member:* Yes, I understand what you mean. Have you talked with your supervisor about this?
>
>*Black Student:* You mean my cis hetero white man supervisor? [sighs] Yes, I did.
>
>*Black Faculty Member:* So…? How did he respond?
>
>*Black Student:* The way they always respond in this department when we – those of us who are People of Color and/or are Trans* – bring up stuff like this. We're told that we have a job to do and that we can't stop just because we're having a hard time. I KNOW I still have to do my job. I AM still doing my job. I just want to have the fact that I'm struggling too – not just my residents and staff – to be recognized and supported.
>
>*Black Faculty Member:* [audible sigh] That sounds perfectly reasonable to me.
>
>*Black Student:* Well, I was told that wasn't his job and I should go to the counseling center.
>
>*Black Faculty Member:* … [at a loss for words] … I'm sorry that you got that kind of response.
>
>*Black Student:* Yea, me too. This field does a great job of talking about social justice, but they suck at actually practicing it. It's bullshit. I mean, I'm sorry to curse, but I can't be fake about it. This field is bullshit sometimes.

*****

Scene 3: Impromptu conversation between Black woman professional and Black faculty member.

>*Black Faculty Member:* I just had a Black graduate student ask me if she should straighten her hair before going to her first professional conference. I asked her why she would even be thinking about that. She told me that she just hadn't seen many Black women in the field wear their hair naturally and was concerned she wouldn't be taken seriously.
>
>*Black Woman Professional:* Oh, I know exactly why she is concerned! I have been told that I should consider straightening my hair before going on job interviews to look more professional.
>
>*Black Faculty Member:* [sighs] When are we going to ever get past that nonsense? What did you do?
>
>*Black Woman Professional:* Oh, trust and believe that I wore my hair natural, the way it grew out of my head! If I didn't get a call back or an offer because of my hair, that's not a place I want to work anyway.
>
>*Black Faculty Member:* That's exactly what I told this student.

*****

Scene 4: Black professional is out for coffee with a Black faculty member on campus.

>*Black Professional:* Doc, you would not believe what I just had to shut down in this search committee meeting!
>
>*Black Faculty Member:* What do you mean? What happened?

Black Professional: So, you know we brought three candidates to campus, a white man, a white woman, and a Black woman who was the last candidate. In our last search committee meeting, someone had the audacity to say that they didn't think the Black candidate would be perceived as "professional." I asked them why not. They said that it was because she answered questions "too directly" and she might be too harsh. Don't you know other people agreed with her!

Black Faculty Member: Wait, they said what now?

Black Professional: That the Black woman was too direct and harsh! Now the white woman answered questions just as directly, but they were excited that she would "fit" well with the rest of the office.

Black Faculty Member: You're joking with me. You've got to be. I can't believe that no one else in that room recognized how blatantly racist that was. It's such a stereotype that Black women's forthrightness is seen as aggressive and hostile.

Black Professional: Doc. I wish I was joking. I was sitting there and could hardly believe this was happening.

Black Faculty Member: So, I know you said something.

Black Professional: Of course I did, Doc! Not on my watch! All they said was, "Oh."

Black Faculty Member: That's the best they could come up with? "Oh?" Ridiculous. I'm so glad you were there. Imagine what would happen if you hadn't been there to disrupt that.

Black Professional: I know, Doc, I know. I can't be everywhere though.

Introduction

The four scenarios above represent actual conversations I have had with multiple Black graduate students and full-time professionals in student affairs. These composite narratives (Patton & Catching, 2009) are indicative of the nature of interactions Black students commonly have with white, and sometimes other racially minoritized, student affairs professionals. As a Black faculty member, I have become accustomed to being the repository of such stories that come with the implied request for support and affirmation (Guiffrida, 2005; Patton & Catching, 2009), as well as for justification of why Black people should continue in this field.

In this essay, I will explore the anti-Blackness of such interactions targeting both Black graduate students as well as Black full-time professionals in student affairs. After addressing Patel's (2016) three questions of answerability (Why this? Why now? Why me?), I will reference the use of cultural intuition (Delgado Bernal, 1998) and stumble data (Brinkmann, 2014) to inform this analysis and how language is (not) used. The review of the literature further explores the racial and ethnic demographics of student affairs professionals, the resultant hypervisibility and invisibility of Black student affairs professionals, the framing of inclusion in student affairs, and racialized tropes – also known as *controlling images* (Collins, 1999).

The following portions of the essay focus on *ideologies of absence*, a framework to explain how anti-Blackness not only shows up, but also affects the experiences of Black people in student affairs. I also enunciate a *theory of change* (Patel, 2015), Black futurities in student affairs drawing on Afro-futurism, a vision of how to move forward out of anti-Blackness and white supremacy.

Why This?

As Patel (2015) discussed, it is important to consider from where our ideas for educational research and praxis come. Too often, she asserted, colonial frameworks rooted in deficit assumptions inform educational research and praxis. Such frameworks locate the problems

and solutions in minoritized individuals instead of in the structural systems that create and sustain conditions that result in the opportunity gaps realized by minoritized communities (Patel, 2015). I have chosen to frame the exclusionary and isolating interactions experienced by Black student affairs graduate and full-time professionals as reflective of perpetual systems of anti-Blackness operating unnamed and unchecked in the field of student affairs. This is not an issue located in the mentalities and personalities of Black people that, if those mentalities and personalities changed, would result in different and more positive experiences. The general climate in the field is characterized by white supremacy and anti-Blackness and this posture is sustained and mutually reinforced within individual student affairs divisions and offices. This is evidenced by the (un)belongingness, (un)safety, (in)validity, and (un)rewardedness prevalent in the climate of student affairs targeting Black graduate and full-time professionals.

Some may wonder why I am focusing on anti-Blackness instead of racism more generally. First, alongside settler colonialism (Tuck & Yang, 2012), as Ibram Kendi (2016) and Craig Steven Wilder (2013) have discussed, the ideology of anti-Blackness represents the foundation of the structures of anti-Black ideologies, enactments, and dispositions in the United States. Second, anti-Blackness has been and still is part of the socialization of new immigrants to this country, reinforcing a racial caste system that works to maintain the structurally degraded position of Black people relative to all others (Patel, 2015b). Third, anti-Blackness persists even in higher education despite espoused values of diversity and inclusion (Dancy, Edwards, & Davis, 2018) and regardless of the presence of Black leadership (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). Anti-Blackness is more than prejudice or bias; it is a multifaceted paradigm of thought in action that works against the survival and life chances of Black people, ideas, and ways of being in the world through structures of white supremacist domination (Dancy et al., 2018; Sexton, 2012). Anti-Blackness hides within the rhetoric of inclusion, unexamined and unchecked, excluding and targeting Black people through ideologies of absence.

By centering anti-Blackness, I acknowledge that I am drawing on an academic lineage of Afro-pessimism led by such scholars as Frank B. Wilderson III and Jared Sexton (Wilderson, Hartman, Martinot, Sexton, & Spillers, 2017; Sexton, 2012, 2016) but which has proliferated in diverse directions. Despite this ideological proliferation, Afro-pessimism can be said to generally deal with "questions of how and whether Black people can be constructed as members of humanity, when mainstream frameworks have primarily relied on white supremacy to create definitions of 'humanity'" (Prescod-Weinstein, 2017, para. 2). Applied to student affairs and this discussion, these questions are of how and whether Black people can be constructed as wholly members of the student affairs profession, when mainstream frameworks of professionalism and fit in student affairs have primarily relied on white supremacy to create definitions of the ideal student affairs professional.

By adopting an anti-Blackness framework, it is important that I acknowledge my framing of anti-Blackness runs counter to three contentions that Olaloku-Teriba (2018) has raised with regard to the perceived limitations of Afro-pessimism to support change and transformation. First, I am not arguing for the exceptionality of anti-Black oppression over and above all other iterations of settler colonialism and white supremacy. Rather, as indicated above, I am asserting the historical rootedness and present intransigence of anti-Black oppression within the U.S. context. Second, Olaloku-Teriba (2018) references the Puerto Rican Young Lords Party as an example of non-Black People of Color who were able to learn from and use the tools of the Black Panther Party. I believe that what the Young Lords understood was that they could not fully analyze or counter ideologies and practices of racialism broadly without examining the origins of race and its particular manifestations in Black death. Third, I position anti-Blackness as consistent with a broader critique of settler colonialism in that anti-Blackness is

made possible by and necessary to settler projects of colonialism, imperialism, and militarism. Anti-Blackness is one iteration of a broad ethic of domination enforced in settler colonial and White supremacist societies. Despite Olaloku-Teriba's contention otherwise, to be anti-colonial and anti-racist are not oppositional but diunital.

Why Now?

Discussion and exploration of anti-Blackness and white supremacy in the practice of student affairs is not only timely, but also necessary, given the national sociopolitical climate that has exposed the pervasiveness of these oppressive systems in particular. Anti-Blackness and white supremacy have continued unchecked despite declarations that the Obama presidency (January 2009-January 2017) had introduced a new era of post-racialism in the United States (Bonilla-Silva, 2015) that was disrupted by the campaign, election, and presidency of Donald J. Trump beginning in January 2017.

Discussion of racial justice and decolonization in the field also necessitates deeper exploration of the ways in which anti-Blackness and white supremacy show up in the professional experiences of Black student affairs graduate and full-time professionals. ACPA-College Student Educators International (ACPA) launched their Strategic Imperative for Racial Justice and Decolonization under the leadership of Dr. Stephen John Quaye in 2016 (ACPA, n.d.). NASPA-Student Affairs Professionals in Higher Education (NASPA) has identified equity and diversity among its 10 focus issues (NASPA, n.d.). These general conversations about equity and diversity, as well as the seemingly more specific and actionable focus on racial justice and decolonization, implore the field to take seriously the particularity of (in)equity, (in)justice, (non-)diversity, and (anti-)colonialism as they affect and reflect the perpetuation of anti-Blackness and white supremacy.

Finally, to date the empirical and scholarly discussion of white supremacy and whiteness in the field of student affairs has been limited to theoretical frameworks of higher education (Patton, 2015; Patton, McEwen, Rendón, & Howard-Hamilton, 2007), the field's scholarship (Cabrera, Franklin, & Watson, 2016; Harper, 2012; Patton, Harper, & Harris, 2015), and its enactments in student affairs graduate preparation (Bondi, 2012; Hubain, Allen, Harris, & Linder, 2016; Linder, Harris, Allen, & Hubain, 2015; Linder & Simmons, 2015; Robbins, 2016). Although Black graduate students have led this discussion through conference presentations and papers (Brown, Thompson, Spears, Hillard, & Butler, 2018; Stewart, 2018), theses and dissertations (Grimes, 2018; Johnson, 2019; Lacy, 2017; McLaren Turner, 2016), as well as chapters (Stewart, Collier, & Lacy, in press) and journals outside student affairs (Turner & Grauerholz, 2017), anti-Blackness in/as student affairs practice has not received broad attention in the published scholarship of the field. This has resulted in graduate student scholarship – that has been largely qualitative – to be seen as isolated and not representative of general patterns in student affairs practice. Additionally, the integration of popular culture may be seen as comical or trendy but not "real" (J. Coates, personal communication, January 18, 2019). Itself an enactment of anti-Blackness (exorcising the legitimacy and validity of Black people's experiences), this knowledge erasure also reflects ongoing epistemic bias against qualitative methodology and the elitist positioning of only certain kinds of knowledge as scholarly. All of these reasons provide compelling impetus for the current discussion.

Why Me?

Black feminist scholarship (Collins, 1999) has affirmed subjectivity as a valid standpoint from which to engage theory and empirical analysis. In so doing, these scholars referenced above have acknowledged that those targeted by structural oppression are often better equipped to perceive and analyze their conditions and the systems that produce them. Over the course

of the last 24 years, I have been in conversation with other Black graduate and full-time professionals and I couple that with my own experiences as a Black full-time professional, Black graduate student, and now a Black faculty member who has taught in four graduate preparation programs. These interactions and experiences have made me intimately familiar with the anti-Blackness that attends the experiences of Black people in student affairs work. This lens, a *cultural intuition* (Delgado Bernal, 1998) enables me to perceive and collect the *stumble data* (Brinkmann, 2014) of everyday life that evidences anti-Blackness in student affairs practice.

Further, at this point in my career in the field, I feel compelled to speak out and against the practices that serve to exorcise and erect barriers to the inclusion of Black graduate and full-time professionals in student affairs. I refuse to allow narratives of exceptionalism and deservingness to rationalize the presence and success of some (including me) in order to invisibilize structures of anti-Blackness that yet function to prevent and suppress the participation and contributions of Black people in student affairs generally. In the spirit of my Black forebears (Baldwin, n.d.; Davis; 2016; hooks, 2000), I am motivated by my love for this field to take a stand.

Language

A final point about the language used throughout this essay. Writing is an exercise of power (Stewart, Croom, Lange, & Linder, 2017). I contest and challenge those enactments of power in two ways in this essay. First, among those enactments of power is the function and use of capitalization, which works to (de)elevate certain groups (Pérez-Huber, 2010; Stewart et al., 2017). Though inconsistent with formatting guidelines recommended by the American Psychological Association (2009), I have chosen to follow Pérez-Huber (2010) and not capitalize *white* while capitalizing *Black* and its related forms, including Blackness. This capitalization practice helps to center and elevate the systemic conditions and perspectives of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), while decentering white people and whiteness.

Second, I use the term *graduate and full-time professionals* throughout this essay instead of demarcating full-time staff from graduate students as the only ones deserving of professional status. By using graduate and full-time professionals, I distinguish the status difference as one of percentage of effort not one of the nature of the work. Refusing to say *graduate students and professionals* recognizes that graduate students in student affairs are expected to show up as professionals from day one in their assistantships. In the absence of supporting graduate preparation programs, the very same responsibilities of the graduate assistantship (or two or three combined) would comprise those of an entry-level full-time professional. As a result, it is an artifice of patriarchy and paternalism to deprofessionalize the graduate student employee's contributions to the professional function of a student affairs unit.

Literature Review

In this section, I discuss what is known of the demographic presence of Black student affairs professionals and how inclusion is framed and has been contested within the field. I conclude with enunciation of the racialized tropes and controlling images (Collins, 1999) that confront Black people in the United States.

Racial/Ethnic Demographics of Student Affairs Professionals

Data regarding the demographics of student affairs professionals are hard to capture. The two general student affairs associations, ACPA and NASPA, record demographic data on their memberships, but do not publicize such data. It is commonly understood that most full-

time Professionals of Color are concentrated in multicultural/ethnic student services roles (Stewart, 2016). This ghettoizing of BIPOC professionals serves to isolate and exclude these professionals from broader inclusion and engagement with student affairs practice.

Moreover, this demographic composition results in the hypervisibility and invisibility of Black student affairs professionals across the field and also within institutional divisions specifically. Hypervisibility is the condition of being subject to heightened scrutiny, observation, and policing due to one's limited representation and affects Black graduate and full-time professionals in student affairs (Krusemark, 2012; Stewart, Collier, & Lacy, in press). Invisibility, on the other hand, speaks to the corollary experience of being ignored, dismissed, and invalidated also due to one's limited representation (Krusemark, 2012). In student affairs, the limited presence of Black graduate students and full-time professionals is characterized by both conditions. The actions, demeanors, and decisions of Black professionals are hypervisible, subject to enhanced critique/criticism to write narratives of either exceptionalism or in support of narratives of Black professionals' – to borrow from Gutiérrez y Muhs, Flores Niemann, González, and Harris (2012) – presumed incompetence.

Professional Competencies

Existing alongside this hyper/in-visibility, student affairs has asserted a set of competencies enunciating expectations for student affairs practice (ACPA & NASPA, 2015). There are 10 competencies that include social justice and inclusion. ACPA and NASPA (2015)'s summary of this competency area stated,

This competency involves student affairs educators who have a sense of their own agency and social responsibility that includes others, their community, and the larger global context. Student affairs educators may incorporate social justice and inclusion competencies into their practice through seeking to meet the needs of all groups, equitably distributing resources, raising social consciousness, and repairing past and current harms on campus communities. (p. 14)

Within the document, further enunciation of the social justice and inclusion competency is portrayed as having foundational, intermediate, and advanced levels. The progression from foundational to advanced competency reflects movement from basic awareness and understanding to increasing enactments of advocacy, action, and leadership in social justice and inclusion initiatives in one's own work and institutional context (ACPA & NASPA, 2015).

Rhetoric of Inclusion

> I don't want equal rights with the white man; if I did, I'd be a thief and a murderer. What I really feel is necessary is that the [B]lack people, in this country will have to upset the applecart. We can no longer ignore the fact that America [*sic*] is NOT the "... land of the free and the home of the brave." (Hamer, 1967, p. 15)

In the legacy of Black Civil Rights activist, Fannie Lou Hamer, both popular figures and academic scholars have heavily critiqued inclusion as a goal and as failing to produce sustained transformative change in, and disruption of, institutional systems of power (see Ahmed, 2012; Kondabulu, 2019; Stewart, 2017a). Particularly, Stewart (2017a) has noted that the rhetoric of inclusion (and diversity) has proven to be a "language of appeasement" for institutional leaders to avoid the more challenging and disruptive discussion of equity and justice. Contrasting diversity and inclusion with equity and justice, I pointed out that inclusion rhetoric extols four goals as ultimately desirable within higher education communities. First, the multiplicity and plurality of ideas is encouraged with the assumption that the best solutions come from

the proliferation of ideas and discussion. Second, inclusion rhetoric asserts the need for all members of the community to feel safe. Safety is understood as feeling comfortable and being comforted in whatever ideological positions one holds. Third, the unequivocal validity of all opinions and perspectives to be expressed and supported is heralded. Biased language and hate speech cannot be punitively dealt with in the interests of free speech and cultivation of respectful and civil dialogue. Fourth, inclusion rhetoric seeks to reward changes and improvements that reflect demographic shifts toward greater diversity, but not cultural or organizational shifts toward greater equity. Ultimately, inclusion rhetoric seeks more voices at the table representing diverse communities without inviting the critique, challenge, and (de) construction of existing systems of power and privilege (Stewart, 2017).

Racialized Tropes and Controlling Images

In the midst of diversity and inclusion rhetoric that sometimes extends to discussions of social justice, anti-Blackness can exist through racialized tropes and what Collins (1999) coined as "controlling images." As Collins (1999) and Kendi (2016) have both reviewed, portrayals of Black people as lazy, hyper/de-sexualized, domineering, criminal, and dysfunctional have pervaded the U.S. consciousness informing national and state policy, from public welfare to education to policing. These racialized tropes and controlling images, rooted in white supremacist colonial ideologies, also inform approaches to the so-called achievement gap among students by race and ethnicity in education from primary to tertiary levels (Fine, 2018; Patel, 2015a). It would be disingenuous to presume that these tropes and images have not affected the way Black graduate and full-time professionals are understood, and consequently treated, in student affairs practice.

Ideologies of Absence

These racialized tropes and controlling images inform the ideologies of absence reflected in the opening scenarios presented in this article. An old, familiar approach to children's presence in the company of adults is that they should be "seen but not heard." Ideologies of absence position Black graduate and full-time professionals in student affairs akin to children who should be present (included) but not heard (disrupting the status quo). Following, I will identify four ideologies of absence that are corollaries to the four goals of inclusion enunciated earlier.

Absence as (Un)Belonging

Although inclusion rhetoric seeks to make everyone feel like members together of one civil community, this first form of absence works to render some to belong, but not others. As a counterpoint to the theoretical framework sense of belonging developed by Strayhorn (2012), belongingness is a condition produced by institutional systems and structures that include some, while excluding others. People are subject to belongingness narratives; it is not a frame of mind or attitudinal disposition alterable by psychological conditioning. In fact, being made to belong, "citizenship," is a privilege bestowed upon those who have assimilated to ways of being and doing that have been normalized, optimized, and centered within institutional systems based on whiteness. At the same time, others are made not to belong for failing to display appropriate ways of being and doing.

Each of the scenarios that introduced this essay portray forms of absence as (un)belonging. The first scenario involves a Black graduate student who has been made the subject of conversations about his disposition and fit for student affairs work. This student is being made not to belong for failing to portray the normalized student affairs demeanor of perpetual cheerfulness. This is evidenced by the proposed solution that the student simply smile more. Belongingness also

comes up in the second scenario through the supervisor's injunction to his Black graduate student to focus on doing the work and not to the ways they are personally struggling to make sense of the national sociopolitical climate. The crux of the message is that the right way to belong in student affairs is to prioritize work and service to others over one's need for a caring community. The third and fourth scenarios illustrate the specific ways that anti-Blackness couples with misogynoir (Bailey, 2010; Trudy, 2014) to target Black women in the field. Black women's choices around hairstyle and appearance generally, as well as communication styles render Black women uniquely subject to unbelonging in student affairs.

Absence as (Un)Safety

The second goal of inclusion is safety, feeling safe and being safe from too much challenge. This is contrary to what Arao and Clemens (2013) have coined as *brave spaces*. Brave spaces encourage risk taking and distinguish the discomfort of being challenged from being exposed to psychological, emotional, or physical harm. This refutation of "safe spaces" that center and prioritize the needs of those who are privileged denounces the idea that comfort is requisite for safety to exist. Like belonging, dominant narratives extend safety to some while withholding it from others. Similarly then, one can be made (un)safe as an outcome of one's assimilation or fit with the dominant culture. As both subject and object, Black professionals both are made unsafe and are made to be unsafe for others within dominant student affairs culture.

A return to the opening scenarios will make this clearer. The injunction to smile more and make oneself less intimidating has historical import for Black people, and particularly for Black women. The display of a flat affect – a resting face – is interpreted as hostile, aggressive, intimidating, and mean (Clifton, 2015). These assumptions are made in the absence of any other provocative behavior. Others perceive themselves to be unsafe in the presence of a Black person who is not actively and consistently playing the role of the happy Negro (Stewart, 2015), one who is not "shucking and jiving." Alternately, the enforcement of Black smiles and softness works to render Black professionals unsafe in their work environments, not free to express themselves, or not, as they see fit.

Absence as (In)Validation

The dominant rhetoric of inclusion sees all ideas as equally worthy of expression and discussion. This unequivocal validation places fascist rhetoric alongside enunciations of #BlackLivesMatter as both sides of an issue that must be given equal platforms on campus. In so doing, fascist ideas are validated as appropriate expressions in the public sphere (Stewart, 2017b) while antiracist ideas are validated only if expressed in the presence of its opposite. Again, validity and validation are best understood as an enacted force instead of as the inherent quality of an idea.

The second scenario provides a useful illustration. Recall that in this exchange, the Black student/professional-in-training is told that their own feelings of (un)safety on campus and in the local community has no relevance for the performance of their professional duties. They are told that they still have to do the job and to take their needs for validation and support outside the workplace to the counseling center. Moreover, in another iteration of this conversation, a Black professional is told unironically in the aftermath of the 2016 presidential election that "conservative students need to feel safe too." The assertion of the need to preserve the safety of conservative students is made in the total absence of any evidence, historically or currently, of systematic suppression and silencing of conservative ideologies through law, custom, physical violence. However, Black student affairs staff, who are witnessing the real-time violent suppression and silencing of anti-racist activism through multiple forms of state violence, are told that their needs for safety, affirmation, and support are invalid. Moreover,

the haunting specter and ongoing reality of the systemic proliferation of Black death are invalidated.

In another way, each of the other scenarios also engages forms of invalidation. Relaxed dispositions, forthright engagement, and just showing up as one was born are each rendered invalid and contrary to expectations of professionalism. Professional validity is found in being deemed approachable, palatable, and consistent with how everyone else (i.e., white people) shows up in the work space. The problem here lies not with these Black students and professionals. The solution to these scenarios is not for them to smile more, straighten their hair, repress their emotions, or work on being more indirect and passive in their approach to others. Quite the contrary, both the problem and the solution lie in the unqualified adoption of anti-Black, white supremacist ethics of practice. Being made valid and being validated is a privilege once again reserved for those are already protected by systems of power.

Absence as (Un)Rewarded

Stewart (2017a, 2018) also noted that inclusion efforts seek to reward effort and incremental changes in compositional diversity in an organization. This reward system does not lead to institutional transformation nor does it disrupt systems of power that are in operation. Such rewards focus attention on cosmetic, superficial changes easily measured through quantifiable data. The mere presence of Black people (as well as other People of Color) in student affairs relative to their historical absence is seen as laudatory. The proliferation of "firsts" to achieve this or that position, award, and/or leadership role is considered indicative of progress. Moderate increases in the proportion of Black applicants to a graduate program or inclusion of Black finalists for a position outside of multicultural affairs and ethnic student services are celebrated. Institutional stakeholders credit themselves with providing support and impetus for these signs of progress.

As a result, Black professionals are made into rewards and symbols of progress in a power structure that remains unaltered. Though not specifically enunciated in the opening scenarios, the tokenism to which Black graduate and full-time professionals are subjected is yet apparent. The tax for presence, for professional entry, is assimilation. Once allowed into the field through graduate preparation and full-time employment, the Black professional is expected to show up in the field in ways consistent with dominant norms.

Moreover, the Black professional themself is unrewarded for their presence. Presumed to be the beneficiary of benevolent inclusion efforts by white senior administrators and faculty, Black professionals' own labor and creative genius to navigate structural barriers to access these institutional spaces is downplayed or even disregarded. Further, any weaknesses are justifications of prior doubts about their admission or hiring, while successes are scrutinized and held under suspicion. In a power structure that goes out of its way to recognize and reward white effort over effectiveness or achievement, Black effort is deemed inadequate and is unrewarded.

Through these four forms of absence – (un)belonging, (un)safety, (in)validation, and (un)rewarded – Black graduate and full-time professionals experience an anti-Blackness that works systematically and structurally to exorcise and reduce their professional chances in student affairs. This is not to say that Indigenous and other People of Color do not share these experiences. They do. However, it is important to recognize that being subjected to anti-Blackness does not dilute the fact that anti-Blackness is in operation. Also, not all Black graduate and full-time professionals will resonate with these experiences. Ethnicity and (im) migration history, social class background, professional mentoring, and/or prior experiences

navigating historically and structurally white environments, differentially impacts how Black graduate and full-time professionals experience anti-Blackness.

Futurities of Blackness in Student Affairs

So then, what? Patel (2015) noted that one's critique is only as good as one's theory of change. Heeding her call, I turn from the focus on the intractability of Black death in Afro-pessimism to the realities and possibilities of life – for Black people and others – in the technocultural ideology of Afro-futurism developed by Mark Dery (2008) in the early 1990s and further advanced by Alondra Nelson (2002). As Steven Thrasher (2015) noted,

> [A] tenet of Afrofuturism deals with black people being told they must adhere to divisions that don't exist, and only accept a limited number of stories about ourselves, such that we have an extremely limited concept of what material reality can be. (para. 7)

As Wilson Okello (2018) has noted, Black bodies are more than vessels of oppression and trauma, but rather also exist as carriers of transformation and liberation. As such, I invoke Afro-futurism to reject these ideologies of absence couched in student affairs' practices of the rhetoric of inclusion. In so doing, I forward new stories about Black graduate and full-time professionals and the material realities of our student affairs practice.

I refer to these new stories as *ideologies of Black presence*. I understand this presence as two-fold: Black as present and accounted for and Black as present then, now, and again. Black presence as present and accounted for affirms that Black graduate and professionals are – as the current idiom goes – *outchea*. To be outchea [out here] is to be visible and engaged in whatever comes one's way. Black graduate and professionals are present and accounted for, *showing up and showing out* as the Black cultural expression says. Despite efforts to exorcise and contain Blackness, Black graduate and full-time professionals are indeed outchea and taking charge of their own lives and professional trajectories.

Black presence as present then, now, and again speaks to the historical (then), present (now), and ongoing future (again) of Black people and Blackness in student affairs practice. From Dean Lucy Diggs Slowe at Howard University in the early 20th century to current collectives of Black graduate and full-time professionals in online movement and support spaces such as the Twitter presence of @BlkSAP (Black Student Affairs Professionals), Blackness has influenced, directed, and changed the course of student affairs practice. This influence, direction, and change is promised to continue through upcoming generations of Black undergraduate students seeking to enter the field of student affairs.

These presences make themselves known through four forms of this ideology of Black presence: *Black belonging*, *Black safety*, *Black validation*, and *Black reward*. I explore each of these briefly. *Black belonging* draws on the acknowledgement – shared with Indigenous peoples – that lineage and ancestry matters. A common Black expression, "Who your people?" reflects that belonging comes through connection to a historical lineage of presence. Family members and professional mentors come together to construct lineages of memory and motivation. These lineages also are turned to as an explanation of how one is showing up in a space. Who your people are positions you as a recipient and bearer of accountability and responsibility to live up and into the hopes and dreams of those who pushed you forward. Belongingness unbecomes notions of disposition while becoming an apparatus of connectedness to family, community, and self.

Black safety is likewise rooted in connectedness. Stories abound among Black people of finding safety in Grandmama's bosom, her kitchen, behind the porch curtains. Grandmama

may not know anything about your particular profession or professional woes but led with love and desire to see you be full of life. Our Grandmamas capture the vital role of elders and the femme ethic of nurture, compassion, and guidance through "tough love." Grandmama did not excuse and agree with everything you did, but skillfully combined correction and love. Senior-level Black faculty and professionals of all genders in student affairs can be "Grandmamas" to Black graduate and full-time professionals providing warmth, affirmation, guidance, and validation.

Black validation then extends the notion of Black safety. As Black educational historians such as Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983) and Vanessa Siddle Walker (1996) have found, segregated Black schools were incubators of excellence because Black teachers were able to specifically and intentionally validate and nurture the development of their Black students. Such incubator spaces function as more than collection plates of grievances. In fact, such spaces as @BlkSAP, NASPA's African American Knowledge Community, and ACPA's Pan-African Network carve out safe spaces for the nurturing, development, and launching of Black genius in student affairs practice. These safe spaces are designed not to protect participants from the discomforts of engaging competing perspectives. Indeed, Black people have no access to such escapism. Rather, in alignment with the actual intent of safe spaces (Ahmed, 2012), incubator spaces for Black student affairs graduate and full-time professionals can help to strengthen and equip participants to remain present. It is important to note, however, that in order to fulfill this validating function, such spaces must not then replicate other forms of whiteness and settler colonialism by excluding Black queer, trans*, immigrant, and religiously diverse graduate and full-time professionals.

Finally, *Black reward* as a form of the ideology of Black presence prioritizes high expectations for achievement of identifiable goals and going beyond the bare minimum. As the Black cultural saying goes, you are not given the most for "doing the least." Rewards are withheld from those merely meeting the minimum qualifications but are extended to those who strive for excellence. Moreover, achievement despite the obstacles of white supremacy is noticed, acknowledged, and held up as testimony of the refusal to be (made) absent. The presence of Black reward rejects notions of reward as something granted later after a hard life/career. The presence of Black reward makes reward a right-now happening and one that is best given by and through community. In the safe bosom of Black validation and belonging, Black reward functions against other reward systems designed to reify "mainstream frameworks [that] have primarily relied on white supremacy" (Prescod-Weinstein, 2017, para. 2).

Conclusion

Rejecting anti-Blackness and its expression in these ideologies of absence goes beyond increases in demographic representation and goals of achieving critical mass of Black graduate and full-time professionals in student affairs programs and offices. Such a recruiting push unaccompanied by deep transformative change in consciousness could further the hyper/invisibility that Black graduate and full-time professionals already face. Those in the field must acknowledge that the perpetuation of internalized anti-Blackness has a broad reach to white, non-Black POC, and other Black student affairs professionals. Anti-Black student affairs practice is incapable of achieving racial justice or decolonization and is incapable of leading or inspiring true transformative change toward equity and justice. Consequently, student affairs practice, and higher education generally (Stewart, 2017b), must make a deliberate turning toward Blackness, neither away nor aside from it, as an ethic of anti-racism. #BlackLivesMatter in student affairs too.

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Dimensions of Doctoral Education: A Review of the Literature Review

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Abstract

Positioning doctoral education within historical, academic, and economic contexts, this article showcases the development of the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree and sheds light on challenges affecting doctoral students and Ph.D. programs currently. To this end, this thematic review of the literature explores issues pertaining to doctoral student socialization, attrition, and time-to-degree; the role of academic, social, and financial support in doctoral student success; and the inequitable experiences of underrepresented doctoral students. By examining these pervasive challenges, the article presents numerous opportunities for the student affairs and academic professionals who support the educational pursuits of doctoral students. The article closes with emergent trends in the field, particularly highlighting the need for broadened preparation of doctoral students. These contemporary approaches call for increased transferrable skill development in addition to customary research training. Not only does this approach differ from traditional pedagogical practices, it also illuminates the type of transformation needed in preparing doctoral students for the jobs that await them.

Keywords: dissertation, doctoral students, Ph.D. education, student support

As the epitome of educational achievement, the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree has sustained an incomparable level of academic prestige since its origin (Jairam & Kahl, 2012). Indeed, many other graduate programs require students to investigate a research problem; however, Ph.D. programs further this requirement, mandating that students make a novel knowledge contribution, either by augmenting existing knowledge or pursuing a novel sphere of inquiry (Clarke & Lunt, 2014). Given the complexities of this academic mandate, institutional systems of student support at the Ph.D. level often appear lacking and render many doctoral students defenseless to the myriad threats against their success (Bair, Haworth, & Sandfort, 2004; Pruitt-Logan & Isaac, 1995). Such a reality is particularly harmful to students whose access to support may appear infinitesimal in comparison to the herculean academic challenges they face (Gardner, 2009a; Sanford, 1962).

As a critical commentary, "Dimensions of Doctoral Education" presents a thematic review of literature on Ph.D. programs and aims to highlight some of the most pressing challenges doctoral students face. As such, the article sheds light on issues pertaining to doctoral student socialization, attrition, and time-to-degree; the role of academic, social, and financial support in doctoral student success; and the inequitable experiences of underrepresented doctoral students. Finally, the review closes with insights on emergent trends and provides recommendations for addressing the highlighted concerns. Although this overview does not, nor does it attempt to, provide granular insights into specific academic disciplines, it does, succeed in offering valuable findings applicable to student affairs practitioners, faculty, and other institutional personnel who support doctoral students.

Understanding Doctoral Education and the State of the Field

The doctoral degree has transformed significantly since its 19th century introduction to the United States of America (Golde & Walker, 2006). Surprisingly, even though newer versions of the degree – "taught professional doctorates, doctorates by published works, doctorates by portfolio and practice doctorates" (McKenna, 2005, p. 246) – have gained notoriety, the number of traditional Ph.D. degrees awarded each year continues to grow (Lederman, 2014). While degree conferment has expanded exponentially, research on doctoral education has only witnessed a modicum of comparable growth.

Limited national statistics (Lovitts & Nelson, 2000) and outdated references tell a tale of research scarcity, practical obsolescence (Boud & Lee, 2009), and a dire need to rethink the practice of doctoral education (Walker, Golde, Jones, Bueschel, & Hutchings, 2012). Similarly, institutional approaches to doctoral student support currently in use appear neglected, unchanging, and in need of reform (Bair et al., 2004; Gardner, 2009a; Pruitt-Logan & Isaac, 1995). Recognizing that institutional stakeholders have erroneously assessed the needs of graduate-level learners, Pruitt-Logan and Isaac (1995) have argued that higher education institutions continuously view post-baccalaureate students as having "developed to the point where they can handle the new responsibilities of graduate study on their own" (p. 1). Such an unfounded perspective has made countless graduate students feel isolated, unsupported, and – specifically at the doctoral level – resulted in the departure of many students (Gardner, 2009b; Lovitts & Nelson, 2000; Patterson, 2016).

Challenges of Doctoral Education

Compared to other graduate programs, doctoral education presents increased academic challenge for students and bestows unique expectations and responsibilities upon institutions. While Lovitts and Nelson (2000) highlighted attrition as the main crisis in Ph.D. programs, the challenges discussed in this review will explore some of the factors which contribute to this student departure.

Student Socialization, Attrition, and Time-to-Degree

Many doctoral students decide to leave their Ph.D. programs because they are unable to adapt to departmental and disciplinary norms (Lovitts & Nelson, 2000). Such premature departure does not appear to be anomaly, as program withdrawal continues to be a reality for as many as half of the students who enroll in a doctoral program (Council of Graduate Schools, 2008). The cost of Ph.D. student departure, otherwise known as attrition, is particularly debilitating because its burden is carried not only by the student, but their faculty, and institution as well (Ampaw & Jaeger, 2011; Gardner, 2009a, 2009b).

To combat such attrition, student socialization often plays a major role in the successful integration of doctoral students into programs, disciplines, and careers (Ampaw & Jaeger, 2011; Ellis, 2001; Gardner, 2008, 2009a). In building on the seminal works of Pascarella and Terenzini (1977), and Gardner (2008), Bagaka's, Badillo, Bransteter and Rispinto (2015) highlighted the value of socializing experiences in enhancing doctoral students' persistence and success. Bagaka's et al. showed that students who successfully acclimated to their academic department did so by developing strong student-faculty relationships and by internalizing the values and practices of their discipline.

With only 41% of students earning their doctoral degree within a seven-year period (Council of Graduate Schools, 2008), it is safe to assume that the persistence and completion of Ph.D. students require further investigation. Interestingly, Pacheco, Noel, Porter, and Appleyard (2015, p. 6) argued that, "students with strong scores and impressive grades" still ended up

parting ways from their Ph.D. programs, suggesting that in-program experiences may be more influential to student success than the abilities students bring with them upon entry (Patterson, 2016).

Even for students who successfully complete the doctorate, they too, often grapple with the program duration measure known as the time-to-degree. Lengthy completion times pose a challenge to students and institutions alike, leading researchers to investigate the impact of student demographics (Ellis, 2001), cohort sizes (Groen, Jakubson, Ehrenberg, Condie, & Liu, 2008), student-faculty relationships (Lovitts & Nelson, 2000), and sources of financial aid (Ampaw & Jaeger, 2011; Ehrenberg & Mavros, 1995; Gardner, 2009b) on time-to-degree. Unfortunately, with so many concurrent factors possibly influencing a student's time-to-degree (Ferrer de Valero, 2001), exploring completion time may rightfully constitute a literature review of its own.

Academic, Social, and Financial Support

A variety of challenges jeopardize degree completion and can result in students reaching as far as the All-But-Dissertation (ABD) stage, but never seeing their dissertation through successful defense. When a student progresses this far and is unable to complete, it highlights the difficulties caused when the academic challenge a student faces is in disequilibrium with institutional support available (Sanford, 1962). In such cases, students are impeded from completing their degree requirements and are ultimately hampered from realizing their full potential.

Dissertation writing has been reported to be both an academic and emotional challenge with which doctoral students often grapple (Klocko, Marshall, & Davidson, 2015; Maher, Feldon, Timmerman, & Chao 2013). Specifically, Maher et al. (2013) highlighted that although doctoral students represent an elite class of thinkers, those who are unfamiliar with conventions of scholarly writing will undoubtedly require additional support to master the technique (Klocko et al., 2015). In addition to the academic challenge associated with the dissertation writing process, authors have also noted the isolation inherent at this stage of Ph.D. completion. This isolation often occurs because students do not have the same collegial support afforded by peers during the coursework phase (Ali & Kohun, 2006; West, Gokalp, Peña, Fischer, & Gupton, 2011). Continued support by a student's social and peer networks has been shown to serve as a buffer between the student's abilities and accumulating stress caused by program requirements. As a result, strategies such as the formulation of doctoral writing groups offer a valuable approach to supporting doctoral students through dissertation completion (Aitchison, 2009; Jairam & Kahl, 2012).

Apart from the academic and social support required for students to persist in doctoral programs, financial support often becomes necessary, as many students require financial assistance to cover the cost of degree attainment (National Science Foundation & National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, 2018; Weissman, 2014). Whereas the availability of funding may affect a student's decision to enter a program, the type of assistance received can also impact the student's persistence and completion (Ampaw & Jaegar, 2011; Ehrenberg & Mavros, 1995). For example, Ampaw and Jaeger noted "that although financial aid as a whole is important, the type of financial aid received is even more significant" (p. 640). These authors were able to make such an assertion because of the non-pecuniary benefits and varying completion rates associated with different the categories of financial assistance in their study. Notably, Ampaw and Jaeger concluded that students who held research assistantships (compared to other forms of financial support) were exposed to additional opportunities for social bonding and mentorship, which produced the greatest likelihood for completion.

Inequitable Experiences of Underrepresented Doctoral Students, Social, and Financial Support

While it is possible for impediments to affect the degree attainment of any student, in-program challenges disproportionately hamper underrepresented groups (Ampaw & Jaegar, 2011; Ellis, 2001; Graham, 2013; National Science Foundation & National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, 2018). Comprising smaller group numbers in doctoral programs than in their respective U.S. national population groups, students of color (specifically, Hispanic/Latino/a/x and Black), and first-generation students represent only two of many underrepresented groups in doctoral programs (Kniffin, 2007). "Lack of clarity around the process to degree and campus cultures… negatively impact" learners who are not traditionally represented within doctoral programs (Graham, 2013, p. 78). Gardner (2013) highlighted several difficulties to which first-generation doctoral students are generally predisposed, and since underrepresented minority students are often subsumed into this category, it justifiably allows readers to extend these findings to characteristically similar, minoritized groups as well. Further, Gardner acknowledged the nexus formed when a Ph.D. student who has limited knowledge of program expectations also fails to reflect the demographic norm within Ph.D. programs. In examining this relationship, Gardner alluded to the negative effects students of underrepresented socio-economic demographics experience due to their otherness and restricted access to the cognitive maps that facilitate programmatic success.

It is important to note that inherent disparities in doctoral education affect majority and non-majority student groups differently. Gopaul (2014) shed light on these differences by revealing the effects of power differentials and inequality within doctoral education and highlighting how underrepresented doctoral students generally had less knowledge of the rules that govern Ph.D. education. Gopaul noted that students of non-dominant backgrounds often fell victim to further marginalization during their program and had less success with doctoral norms surrounding research publication.

Characterized by their relegated positions within academic systems and institutions, minoritized doctoral students "encounter distinctive challenges" that require deliberate preventative strategies (Graham, 2013, p. 77). In response to these challenges, Graham charged minoritized and underrepresented students to utilize all resources and support services at their disposal to facilitate productive in-program experiences and successful post-graduation career transition. Notably, Graham found that by allocating specific resources to the needs of minority students, elite research institutions fostered inclusive academic environments, ripe with opportunities for publishing, mentorship, professional association membership, and healthcare. In Graham's study, such support provided minoritized students with a host of amenities to which they often faced restricted access and which, ultimately, contributed to their success.

Emergent Trends and Recommendations for Doctoral Education

Traditionally, many have viewed doctoral education as preparation for the professoriate (Austin, 2002; Golde & Walker, 2006; Maki & Borkowski, 2006); however, the shortage of tenure-track faculty positions, along with recent demands for trained Ph.D.s in various employment sectors, has initiated a transformation in this perception (Boud & Lee, 2009). Additionally, research that illuminates and eliminates the factors leading to doctoral student attrition can assist many students, and the institutional stakeholders who support their quest for achieving the doctoral prefix.

Whereas former approaches to doctoral training focused mainly on honing strong research skills and producing a rigorous research project, contemporary approaches to Ph.D.

education have emphasized broad developmental training (Boud & Lee, 2009). Therefore, it is important for student affairs professionals, program directors, and dissertation supervisors to assume responsibility for providing developmental opportunities, outside of those required for conducting empirical research.

"Critics both within academia and in [non-academic] industry argue that new educational approaches are needed to prepare doctoral students for the jobs … that await them" (Aanerud, Homer, Nerad & Cerny, 2006, p. 109). This statement suggests that the types of jobs that currently await students may differ significantly from those of yesteryear. With a highly competitive academic job market for Ph.D. holders, the post-graduation employment options for doctoral degree holders have transformed vastly in past decades (Aanerud et al., 2006; Boud & Lee, 2009; Cassuto, 2016). Although doctoral education has been known to be the "training ground for scholars and researchers," many doctoral graduates have transitioned into non-academic jobs after successful dissertation defense (Pifer & Baker, 2016, p. 1).

Doctoral program departments are now encouraged to develop and adhere to learning outcomes that produce graduates who are capable of advancing national and international imperatives (Pifer & Baker, 2016). Lee and Boud (2009) have advised institutions to provide students with opportunities to develop competencies that enhance and supplement research skills and which equip their students with the skills for viable job candidacy in a variety of sectors. To do so, learners need exposure to instruction that develops leadership, administrative, and interdisciplinary research capabilities, and that prepares them for both academic and non-academic careers (Aanerud et al., 2006). Additionally, the transforming instructional environment for doctoral programs (Cassuto, 2016) also requires academic leaders to modify program assessments, by updating and expanding instruments and methods used to evaluate student learning (Maki & Borkowski, 2006). If these changes are made, students will be able to better demonstrate and articulate the fullness of their learning and more extensively prepared for the professional and societal roles which await them (Denecke, Kent, & McCarthy, 2017).

Conclusion

In developing "Dimensions of Doctoral Education," it became abundantly clear that while doctoral education, as a field of inquiry, has existed for over four decades (Jones, 2013; McCulloch, 2018), contemporary research will provide greater insights for improved doctoral student support. By exploring and summarizing sources of literature on the various challenges doctoral students face, this article has provided a foundation for future research and more inclusive and responsive student support of doctoral students. Finally, given the evolving role of doctoral education in society and the economy, this publication constitutes a timely addition to a dated body of literature; a contribution which is needed more than ever, given the inextricable link between doctoral education, knowledge production, and the valuable research required to improve societies and standards of living globally.

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FERPA Fear or FERPA Flex: Student Affairs Practitioners' Understanding of Federal Privacy Laws on Campus

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Abstract

Colleges and universities that accept federal funds must adhere to the Family and Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Many student affairs practitioners have a tacit understanding that FERPA is consistent across U.S. institutions. Different interpretations of FERPA and the ability of institutions to determine how they define and release directory information can lead to confusion among campus staff. In the present study, 110 student affairs practitioners were surveyed regarding the FERPA culture at their institutions. It was found that some employees work on campuses with a highly rigid interpretation of FERPA, while others work on campuses where discretion of FERPA is encouraged. Therefore, new terms are introduced – FERPA Fear and FERPA Flex – to address the discrepancies that persist in FERPA interpretation and practice. Higher education employees who understand how different FERPA cultures work will be in better positions to accurately explain FERPA to students, colleagues, and parents and family members.

Keywords: FERPA, FERPA fear, FERPA misunderstandings

Institutional implementation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is not as standardized or uniform across higher education institutions in the United States (U.S.) as some higher education employees may believe. Discussions and application of FERPA across U.S. institutions of higher education may vary even though these institutions follow the same federal statute. Aside from registrars, general counsels, and other senior level positions, it is possible that few higher education personnel have taken the opportunity to directly review FERPA guidelines as set forth by the Family Policy Compliance Office of the U.S. Department of Education. Rather, FERPA guidelines are typically re-created, told, and implied within institutions, which can lead to a "proliferation of FERPA misinterpretations" (Greenberg, 2018, para. 9).

The purpose of this article is to detail how FERPA is understood differently by discussing a) varying institutional cultures, and b) the results of a study in which we surveyed student affairs professionals regarding their campus experiences with FERPA culture. At one end of a continuum we have identified *FERPA Fear*, where student affairs practitioners are anxious and often fear violating FERPA, and might ascribe more authority to FERPA than warranted. At the other end of the continuum, we have identified *FERPA Flex*, where student affairs practitioners feel empowered to make their own decisions on how to best approach decisions related to FERPA. These terms and results of the study are described below. First, we offer an overview of the literature on organizational culture as these may correspond with an

institution's FERPA culture. We review the literature specifically on FERPA, which mostly includes federal guidelines and FERPA guidance from higher education legal experts, with little attention to the nuances of FERPA practices at different institutions. Implications for student affairs practitioners and future directions are also discussed.

Review of the Literature

Because the premise of this work is that different institutions interpret some portions of FERPA differently, this work is grounded within an organizational culture conceptual framework. Different institutions often operate differently due to an institution's organizational culture and the individuals who work at the institutions. Organizational culture is discussed below in addition to an explanation of what FERPA restricts and permits.

Organizational Culture

Much guidance has been offered to faculty and higher education administrators to understand how different institutions work, but this is not the case for student affairs educators (Hirt, 2006). For the purposes of this article, higher education administrators include those in student affairs leadership positions. Birnbaum's (1988) admonition, "a person who is familiar with one institution does not understand any institution" (p. 84) can apply to higher education employees, regardless of role. The belief that practices and experiences are typical and therefore must also occur at other places is known as false consensus (Ross, Greene, & House, 1976). These beliefs can also stem from one's graduate institutions: "the type of institution at which a graduate student trains influences the professional expectations that the student takes into the work setting after graduation" (Hirt, 2006, pp. 9-10).

Organizational frames. Bolman and Deal's (2013) organizational frames (i.e., *human resource*, *political*, *structural*, and *symbolic*) present additional ways in which graduate students are socialized into their professions. For instance, if individuals earn a graduate degree while simultaneously holding a graduate assistantship at an institution that operates in the human resource frame, they may come to value and expect that most institutions operate in more democratic environments where humans are seen as the greatest asset. In the human resource frame, employees are motivated because the organization respects them and meets the employees' needs. A campus department that operates within the human resource frame might offer more support and trust to individual employees to make the right decisions concerning FERPA. Those who are trained in the human resource frame might struggle when beginning new positions at institutions that operate in the structural frame, where position titles, bureaucracy, and organizational charts take more importance. In the structural frame, there may be fewer opportunities for employees at lower levels to make decisions related to FERPA, such as talking with a student's parent about the student's progress, without consulting supervisors. Innovative and questioning newcomers might not realize a good fit within the structural frame. In the political frame, different departments may vie for limited resources, and it is important for newcomers to discern who on campus has power because organizational charts do not always reflect this (Bolman & Gallos, 2011). The symbolic frame involves a leader's use of rituals, ceremony, and "constructing a heroic narrative and telling it often" (Bolman & Gallos, 2011, p. 117) in order to inspire a vision. An example of the symbolic frame applied at new student orientation would be when the institution manages how students and family members make meaning of FERPA. For instance, different meaning will be inferred if FERPA is explained to parents in a positive manner as a way to foster student responsibility in comparison to being explained as a bureaucratic governmental hindrance that can be resolved by requiring students to sign FERPA release forms. Additionally, different meanings are likely to surface from parents and family members of different identities.

Institutional culture. According to Tierney (1988), "the culture of an organization is grounded on shared assumptions of individuals participating in the organization" (p. 4). Culture is how people interpret reality (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008). Therefore, a college or university's FERPA culture is the FERPA reality experienced, understood, and practiced at that particular campus. As in some other cultures, newcomers come to understand FERPA though socialization, observation, and sometimes through being corrected if their FERPA behavior does not match the dominant culture's FERPA reality.

Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) identified several cultures found within higher education institutions. In the *collegial culture*, faculty autonomy and academic freedom are held in high value. In a collegial culture, there is more emphasis on faculty publications than on teaching. Conversely, teaching holds the highest importance in the *managerial culture*. In a managerial culture, faculty are more likely to be told by administrators how to teach their courses. Furthermore, "lines of authority should be clear…and administrators have control over the planning and managerial functions of the college" (p. 57). At these institutions, FERPA might be treated in the strictest sense with sets of rules and multiple guidelines. The *developmental culture* can be equated to a servant-leadership culture at the institution in which students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to work together to have their needs met at the institution. Additionally, in a developmental culture, "traditional authoritarian relationships between students and faculty are discouraged" (p. 105). Consequently, FERPA would not be as feared in the developmental culture as in the managerial culture. The culture of the institution shapes the ways in which individuals conduct their daily work and guides relationships with colleagues, supervisors, and students.

Clark and Trow's (1966) student subcultures of *academic*, *collegiate*, and *vocational* can be applied to institutional type, as institutions are largely responsible for recruiting the types of student subcultures that match the institution's mission and reputation. The collegiate institution enjoys high loyalty, school spirit, and a vibrant social scene, but sometimes at the expense of academics. Clark and Trow's typologies were revisited and investigated by Hendel and Harrold (2007), who found the same four subcultures were still prevalent with an increase in the collegiate culture. The mission of vocational institutions is viewed primarily as a means to help students gain credentials and secure employment. At the academic institution, students identify strongly with the faculty and are interested in the intrinsic value of pursuing knowledge.

Returning to false consensus (Ross et al. 1976), if an individual has studied at and gained professional work experience at a particular institution, this individual's expectations of how institutions work will be informed by that experience. If this person takes a position in student activities and expects the same level of student engagement at a different type of institution, this person may experience frustration. Similarly, a student or employee's experience and understanding of FERPA at one institution may lead to frustration at a different institution based on the new institution's FERPA culture. Learning more about campus practices can help educators understand how different institutions work.

Campus Practice

Increased pressure from parents to alert them of their student's problems is increasing (Fazackerley, 2018; Hartocollis, 2018). Higher education faculty, administrators, and staff may sometimes incorrectly refer to FERPA to avoid difficult conversations or to protect the image of the institution (Greenberg, 2018). Indeed, "FERPA has been invoked as the reason not to share student information, when in reality the law would permit disclosure" (Tribbensee & McDonald, 2007, para. 4). When staff are confused, it can be simpler and safer to invoke

FERPA. According to Miller (2017), "the truth is that many student affairs staff members do not want to share information with parents" (p. 119). For example, one employee shared, "It's just easier to say 'FERPA' to parents" (N. Mitchell, March 12, 2016, personal communication). Campus employees might seem more convincing and unyielding when they cite a federal law as opposed to a campus policy. Parents are more likely to accept a federal regulation as a rule that cannot have exceptions. Misunderstandings can occur when campus policies and practices incorrectly invoke FERPA (Greenberg, 2018; Miller, 2017), which can lead to more complicated issues with false consensus when student affairs practitioners leave one institution to work at another. When individuals change institutions, they might expect some difference at the new institutions, but learning how the new institution handles FERPA is probably not among the expected changes.

What FERPA Restricts and Permits

Put simply, FERPA restricts school employees from disclosing information about a student's educational record without the student's consent. However, school employees may disclose this information to those who have a "legitimate educational interest" (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2004, para. 21). Legitimate educational interest is established if the disclosed information helps other school officials in their professional obligations (Lowery, 2016). Different departments on the same campus might hold different interpretations of FERPA. When this happens, FERPA is bound to be misunderstood. For example, in an academic advising training session at one of our institutions, a faculty member said he was told to not look at a student's transcript during an academic advising appointment because it violated FERPA. However, one main function of academic advisors is that they must be knowledgeable of their advisees' transcripts in order be effective. Another faculty member at the same institution said she denied a coach's academic progress request of a student in her class because she believed sharing this information would violate FERPA. It would not; coaches would also fall under those campus personnel with a legitimate educational interest, as they must track student grade point average and credit earned toward degrees to determine continued athletic eligibility (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2018).

FERPA "prohibits the improper disclosure of personally identifiable information derived from *education records*" (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2015b, para. 4). An educational record is something that exists in physical form or as an electronic file. Observations and conversations that did not derive from reviewing educational records are not protected by FERPA. More specifically, "information that an official obtained through personal knowledge or observation, or has heard orally from others, is not protected under FERPA" (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2015b, para. 4). Moreover, "if a college or university employee develops a concern about a student based on the employee's observations of or personal interactions with the student, the employee may disclose that concern to anyone without violating, or even implicating, FERPA" (Tribbensee & McDonald, 2007, para. 7). Put another way, if an instructor contacts a student's parents to report a student's disruptive classroom behavior, there would be no issues with FERPA. There may be ethical issues and questions of professionalism by both the student and instructor, but this is not a violation of FERPA.

According to Rust (2014), "FERPA is likely the most often cited and yet also the most poorly understood" (para. 1) U.S. law related to higher education. A great source of confusion, if not the greatest source of confusion, concerns directory information, which is not covered under FERPA. Therefore, institutions may share students' directory information without consent if institutions publish the items they include within directory information and if they provide students an opportunity to opt out. Directory information may consist of:

> The student's name, address, e-mail address, telephone listing, photograph, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended, grade level or year, and enrollment status. (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2015a, para. 19)

FERPA permits, but does not require, the disclosure of directory information. State privacy laws and campus policy should be consulted, but FERPA should not be cited as the reason to withhold this information. Moreover, student affairs practitioners should be reminded that only educational records are protected under FERPA. No campus has ever lost funding due to violating FERPA (Lowery, 2016). Additionally, "FERPA is merely the minimum when it comes to privacy laws" (Rust, 2014, para. 9). In fact, FERPA may allow certain disclosures that state privacy laws may not (Rust, 2014). For example, under FERPA, a student's date of birth falls under directory information and is therefore not protected. However, state privacy laws may prevent the disclosure of a student's date of birth without the student's consent. To learn more about how different institutions interpret FERPA, we conducted a study of student affairs practitioners' experiences with FERPA, which is described in the next section.

Methods

The purpose of this study is to understand how student affairs practitioners describe their FERPA experiences. Upon obtaining Institutional Review Board approval, we designed and distributed an electronic survey to student affairs listservs and contacts we had in different areas of the U.S. to gather more information on practices related to FERPA. This method, known as purposeful sampling (Merriam, 1998), is appropriate when the research question is so specific that it necessitates a certain sample, and in this case, the sample was student affairs practitioners who had worked with students, parents, and family members. One hundred ten individuals from a variety of institutions (76 from four-year public; 15 from four-year private; 18 from two-year; one unknown) from 23 U.S. states completed the survey. The survey consisted of 20 forced-choice items relating to campus experiences with FERPA, contacting parents without student knowledge, requesting FERPA release forms, and trends in customer service. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Results

Results showed that campus practices and understanding of FERPA varied widely. Table 1 concerns the use of FERPA release forms, which students may complete and sign to grant consent for school officials to discuss their educational record with those who are indicated on the release form, usually students' parents.

Table 1: *Do you encourage students to sign a FERPA release even when not requested?*

Responses	Count	% of total
Never	20	19.4
Rarely	39	37.9
Sometimes	16	15.5
Often	16	15.5
Always	12	11.7
Total responses	103	100

Table 2 shows responses to how or if school officials had contacted parents without students' consent. Note this survey question mentions encouraging a release form *even when not requested*. Over a quarter (28%) of student affairs employees answered in the affirmative. Among those who responded "often" and "always," providing a student with a release form is routine practice. Interestingly, no respondents who marked "yes," were reprimanded. Nearly half of the respondents (46.5%) have contacted parents without a student's knowledge. Their role on campus was likely in areas of student case management, student conduct, or as senior student affairs officers on their campuses. A majority (51%) of respondents said they would be reprimanded and/or would never consider contacting parents without a student's consent.

Table 2: *Have you made contact with student's parents without student knowledge? Check all that apply.*

Responses	Count	% of total
Yes, I had concern about the student	13	11.9
Yes, I already had a prior contact with them	29	26.4
Yes, and I was reprimanded	0	0.0
Yes, my role requires this	9	8.2
No, but I would be reprimanded	13	11.9
No, I would never consider this	43	39.1
Other	22	20.0
No response	7	6.4
Total	136	123.9

Table 3 reflects marked philosophical differences related to FERPA. The two largest responses to the question of the institution's view on FERPA are seemingly opposite responses where 38% said their campus holds an "absolutely strict" view of FERPA, whereas over 42% of respondents believed their institution held a more flexible view of FERPA. Two questions in the study related to shifting patterns of institutional efforts to improve parent relations (Table 4) and customer service skills (Table 5).

Table 3: *Your institution's view on FERPA is…*

Responses	Count	% of total
Absolutely strict – any perceived violations should be promptly reported to supervisors	42	38.1
We are encouraged to use professional judgment and may be flexible when acting in the student's best interest	47	42.7
Individual or departmental interpretations of FERPA vary on our campus	17	15.4
Other	2	1.8
Did not answer	2	1.8
Total	110	100

Table 4: Your institution has made attempts to become more "parent friendly"

Responses	Count	% of total
Strongly Agree	28	25.45
Agree	56	50.91
Neither Agree nor Disagree	21	19.09
Disagree	3	2.73
Strongly Disagree	2	1.8
Total	110	100

Table 5: In recent years, your department has made attempts to improve its customer service skills

Responses	Count	% of total
Strongly Agree	52	47.27
Agree	40	36.36
Neither Agree nor Disagree	14	12.73
Disagree	3	2.73
Strongly Disagree	1	0.91
Total	110	100

FERPA Flex vs. FERPA Fear

FERPA's manifestation on campuses may follow a continuum from relaxed to hyper vigilant. A hyper vigilant FERPA stance – which we call FERPA fear – can be depicted as a campus on edge for fear of reprimands, sanctions, or lawsuits for violating FERPA. Conversely, a campus with a more relaxed and flexible FERPA attitude – which we call FERPA flex – may view FERPA as suggested guidelines for good practice.

With FERPA fear there is no gray area. For example, when speaking with a student's parents on the telephone, student affairs practitioners will not pull up the student's information on their computer so they are not tempted to divulge any information about the student. Some individuals may overreact about FERPA including holding the erroneous belief that they may never share anything about any student, even with other campus officials who work with the student. Fear exists in several forms including, "We could get shut down," or "We could lose our jobs" if FERPA is violated. In more extreme cases, employees might even withhold information from a student's educational record from the student in question. When faced with ethical dilemmas, FERPA is the standard to use in decision making. College and university employees may also extend FERPA protections to other areas that FERPA does not cover. For instance, some campus personnel will falsely invoke FERPA as a means to cease a tense or unpleasant conversation with a parent even if the conversation is unrelated to the student's educational record (Miller, 2017). Withholding student information that falls within "directory information" is a common occurrence in which practitioners might falsely invoke FERPA.

Conversely, in FERPA flex, campus staff freely share information with those on campus who have a legitimate educational interest. Gray areas do not cause undue anxiety. For example, appropriate campus officials may contact a student's parents to share concerns about the student, even in non-emergency situations. Instead of citing the commonly used campus

phrase, "When in doubt, don't give it out" found within FERPA fear, they are more likely to consider the greater impact that withholding information could have on the student. When facing ethical dilemmas, FERPA is not the only factor to consider. There is a case study (The Prodigal Son, 2010) about a father calling a student affairs practitioner to show gratitude for mentoring his son toward graduation in a few days, but the son is not, in fact, graduating as expected. In FERPA flex, the student affairs practitioner knows the student has not been truthful to his father and would not say, "Due to federal law, I cannot give you any information." Instead, a more typical FERPA flex response might be, "Let me check in with your son to confirm that. I'll have him give you a call." They realize that establishing some doubt about the upcoming graduation is a better decision than remaining silent on the issue. Raising doubt in this situation is preferred over having an irate parent in one's office on graduation day shouting, "Why didn't you say something? You knew I was coming in for graduation!" Rather than allowing FERPA to restrict their work, they believe acting with empathy will be in the best interests of the student, and sometimes the greater family, is the more ethical decision.

Discussion

FERPA's reputation has become exaggerated over time for some campus staff when they experience discomfort with student information, whether when sharing information with parents, the media, or among other campus personnel. The fact that 44% of the respondents in Table 2 routinely ask students to complete FERPA release forms could be indicative of a campus culture in which student affairs staff are fearful of facing FERPA dilemmas. Similarly, that a majority of respondents believe they would be reprimanded and would never contact parents without students' permission also supports this heightened anxiety related to FERPA. These individuals operate within FERPA fear. Applied to organizational culture, these institutions seem to be operating within the structural frame (Bolman & Deal, 2013) and the managerial culture where rules are more rigid, authority is clear, and there is a "businesslike orientation" at work (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008, p. 73). Twenty-eight percent of those surveyed in the present study encourage students to sign FERPA release forms without being prompted by the student. Proponents of this practice might say having release forms on as many students as possible ensures employees are protecting themselves, being more parent-friendly, and therefore improving their customer service skills. Opponents of this practice would say students should have the right to decide whether they should request release forms rather than feeling as though they do not have a choice when asked by administrators to complete such a form. It is likely those who operate under FERPA fear have been trained and socialized by colleagues, perhaps informally and formally, that FERPA mistakes are to be avoided at all costs, for violating FERPA could cost someone's job. If a campus employee's job is terminated, then that would be a local campus decision rather than from FERPA's administrator, the U.S. Department of Education's Family Policy Compliance Office (FPCO). When a violation has been determined, the FPCO works with the institution to correct the error or the incorrect practice (Lowery, 2016). In FERPA fear, there is an inclination to be more concerned with following orders than considering the welfare and concern of the student. Recall the earlier example of the professor who did not think an athletic coach was able to know a student athlete's grades because of FERPA. The FERPA culture on that campus perpetuated and maintained that myth, yet athletic departments are required by NCAA guidelines to monitor academic progress of their students (NCAA, 2018).

Nearly half (47%) of the respondents said their institutions empowered them to use their best judgment in FERPA matters. These institutions trust their campus personnel to act in the student's best interest. This is the essence of FERPA flex, and also resembles the human resource frame (Bolman & Deal, 2013) and the developmental culture (Bergquist & Pawlak,

2008). Individuals on these campuses do not have to work under the constant tension or fear that a perceived violation of FERPA would shut down the institution. Faculty and staff do not aim to violate FERPA; rather they think about the student first, and FERPA second. For instance, a student's grades would still not be disclosed to parents, but staff-parent conversations are not cut off in the name of FERPA. Rather than beginning and ending a conversation with, "Due to federal guidelines, I cannot share any information with you about your student," these faculty and staff members might say, "I'm glad you called. Although there are some things I cannot share, here are some of the topics we covered today…What can you tell me about Jamie that might help in my work with her?" Release forms are only used as a last resort as students are encouraged to have open communication with parents and family members.

Implications for Student Affairs Practice

One aim of this article is to show that FERPA remains a confusing and sometimes feared force in higher education. Faculty and staff at all levels should continue discussing what FERPA is and what it is not. To begin, readers are encouraged to visit their institution's website to review how their institution has designated directory information, and then visit the directory information website of some of their peer institutions to understand how directory information might differ. Difficult yet important conversations should occur, initiated at department levels (including academic advising, orientation, parent and family programs, and the Dean of Students), with some variation of the following questions: Whose goals are served by requesting students complete FERPA release forms? Do institutions encourage parents and family members to have their students complete release forms, or do institutions first encourage the family to have an open and honest dialogue? Who on campus should have a legitimate educational interest in which a student's record can be discussed without fear of violating FERPA? What happens if a student employee or campus professional releases an item from directory information (i.e., the student's address) to a parent?

Institutions must become more thorough in helping their staff understand FERPA. Senior student affairs officers could meet with directors so a consistent and accurate understanding of FERPA can be disseminated across campus. Institutional training materials related to FERPA are often written on campus websites or letterhead by legal staff or Registrar's offices without reference to the FPCO. Directing staff to the FPCO and the Department of Education can minimize inaccurate interpretations. In fact, the FPCO manages appeals that students and others may have regarding perceived FERPA violations (Rust, 2014), which is another good reason for student affairs educators to familiarize themselves with the FPCO. Further, reminding faculty and staff that institutions have autonomy in designating directory information items would help constituents realize that directory information is not standardized at every campus. Campus policies and state privacy laws should be included in FERPA trainings. Better training would lead to a better understanding of these issues and subsequently less fear and anxiety surrounding FERPA.

Conclusion

Higher education institutions offer a rich variety of options for students, faculty, staff, and the communities that they enrich. An institution's organizational culture factors into many aspects of policies and decisions. Specifically, an institution's FERPA culture can affect student affairs educators' morale on campus. The work environment in FERPA flex, where student affairs practitioners are empowered to support students first, is vastly different from a FERPA fear environment, where an inadvertent FERPA error could cost employees their jobs. Most of the available literature on FERPA, including the references in this article, is written from

legal experts rather than from those with student affairs practitioner experience. Prior to the present study, limited research had been conducted on the lived experiences of student affairs educators and their understanding of FERPA. These everyday experiences reveal that FERPA takes on multiple interpretations at higher education institutions across the U.S.

Future Directions

As described in the results and in the literature review, FERPA continues to have numerous interpretations and understandings, and is deserving of more research. An important area that warrants additional study is how staff with different identities may experience FERPA. This study suggests that differences exist from campus to campus, and sometimes even within the same campus. Related to different types of institutions and organizational culture, future studies could look more specifically at institutional types. For instance, if community college employees are more likely to work within bureaucratic environments (Hirt, 2006) and within the structural frame (Bolman & Deal, 2013), would the FERPA culture at community colleges be more likely to fall within FERPA fear? Training of FERPA varies from institution to institution, which can include mandatory, voluntary, or non-existent training, and these training methods could also stem from institutional culture. Another area worthy of further investigation is whether individuals with master's degrees in higher education/student affairs, who have presumably received some FERPA training in the classroom, have more accurate understandings of FERPA than others. Tribbensee and McDonald's (2007) perfectly titled article, "FERPA allows more than you may realize," is an excellent starting point for those interested in dispelling FERPA myths and alleviating the anxiety surrounding FERPA fear. As these conversations continue, student affairs practitioners will be able to enhance their understanding of institutional FERPA culture by distinguishing among FERPA's intent, specific institutional application of directory information, and will be able to educate others when FERPA is incorrectly invoked.

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Religious, Secular, and Spiritual Identities: What We Know about the Transgender and Non-Binary Experience

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Abstract

Very few scholarly inquiries have focused on understanding the relationship between transgender and gender non-binary (trans/NB) students' experiences and the development of their religious, secular, and spiritual (RSS) identities and communities. Despite this dearth in research, the exploration into the intersection of these identities suggests tangible ways to elevate trans/NB student resilience and foster greater inclusion on college campuses. As a relatively new topic of research, this literature review documents how formal affiliation to an RSS community, disaffiliation from this group, or the construction of non-normative religious or spiritual identities or communities continue to shape the experiences of trans/NB individuals and students. This literature review brings light to the impact of one's beliefs on the formation of RSS identities, summarizes the experience of trans/NB individuals with respect to RSS communities, and documents a link between RSS identity development and mental and physical wellbeing. The literature review concludes with recommendations for practitioners and scholars.

Keywords: identity, transgender, gender non-binary, religious, spiritual

In the last two decades, there has been a significant call for a better understanding of the transgender and gender non-binary (trans/NB) college student experience. As the number of trans/NB individuals on campuses has increased, the scholarly contributions dedicated to this sub-population have also proliferated (Beemyn, 2005; Beemyn, Domingue, Pettitt, & Smith, 2005; James et al., 2016). Unfortunately, a summary of the literature indicates that this group consistently feels significantly marginalized (Beemyn, 2012; Effrig, Bieschke, & Locke, 2011; McKinney, 2005) – often in more overt and blatant ways when compared to those who are marginalized because of their sexual orientation (Rankin, Weber, Blumenfeld, & Frazer, 2010).

Campus interventions such as training on trans/NB student issues and research focusing on building a campus community of trans/NB allies has often emerged as a response to address this documented discrimination, creating trans-affirming campus environments, and fostering greater resilience among trans/NB identified college students (Beemyn et al., 2005; Singh, Meng, & Hansen, 2013). Unfortunately, many of these interventions and scholarly contributions have been limited to addressing the creation and implementation of bathroom and housing policies (Krum, Davis, & Galupo, 2013; Seelman, 2014b). Consequently, researchers have frequently questioned the scope of these studies, calling for a renewed intersectional perspective to the investigation of trans/NB students – particularly one that examines religious, secular, and spiritual (RSS) identity development (Beemyn, 2012; Krum et al., 2013; Levitt & Ippolito, 2014; McKinney, 2005; Seelman, 2014a).

The Need for Greater Understanding of RSS Identity

RSS identity attempts to capture the complexity of one's faith or worldview that shapes the way one sees and experiences the world (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education [CAS], 2017). Currently, there is no widely used term in the English language that fully captures all the identities and communities we colloquially define as "religious" or "spiritual" (Hill, 2015; Martin, 2012). The complexity of who uses what label, and which definition should be used, is widely debated (Ammerman, 2013; Heelas & Woodhead, 2005; Marler & Hadaway, 2002; Orsi, 2007; Schlehofer, Omoto, & Adelman, 2008; Smith, 2009; Wuthnow, 1998). Despite its imperfections, CAS uses RSS as the standard for student affairs practitioners engaging in RSS programming and will be used in this literature review (CAS, 2017).

Researchers have linked one's RSS identity and gender identity to perceptions of campus climate (Bryant & Craft, 2010; Cole & Ahmadi, 2003; Herrera, 2015; Rockenbach et al., 2012; Rockenbach & Crandall, 2016; Rockenbach et al., 2017). However, while these scholarly contributions have captured the experiences of LGBQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Queer) individuals who have a marginalized sexual orientation, there is a considerable dearth in research on trans/NB identified people and their experiences with different RSS worldviews (Davidson, 2000; Hopwood, 2014; Kidd & Witten, 2008; Lee & Ostergard, 2017; Love, Bock, Jannarone, & Richardson, 2005). To address this gap in the literature, we summarized the literature addressing the experience of trans/NB individuals with respect to RSS communities, including emerging issues such as trans/NB people's mental and physical wellbeing. This literature review concludes with recommendations for practitioners and scholars to capitalize on current knowledge and to identify areas for future exploration.

Understanding the Impact of RSS Affiliation

As a whole, the literature suggests that LGBQ individuals have used religion to counter stigma and marginalization. However, they have also experienced discrimination within those same religious communities (Bockting & Cesaretti, 2001; Fullilove & Fullilove, 1999; Love et al., 2005; Wentz & Wessel, 2011; Yip, 2007). In this section, we examine the concept of RSS affiliation focusing on: formal affiliation, departure from a religious community, and the development of non-normative affiliations. To begin, we present a summary of the literature on how trans/NB people reconcile this affiliation. Further, we introduce literature that describes the connection between RSS affiliation (affiliation, departure, or non-normative affiliations) and the well-being for trans/NB individuals.

Formal Affiliation

Often limited in scope, the ways of capturing the trans/NB RSS experience might undermine our understanding of what RSS communities represent for this group. Kidd and Witten (2008) argued one of the reasons for this limited understanding stems from the use of traditional RSS standard surveys centered in Christian faiths. That is, the way researchers study RSS identity assumes a formal affiliation that obscures understanding of how trans/NB individuals interpret their ties to formal religious institutions (Bockting, Knudson, & Goldberg, 2006). Kidd & Witten (2008) found the responses from trans/NB people about their RSS beliefs differed significantly from traditional conceptualizations of formal RSS communities and faiths. For example, trans/NB respondents who reported formal affiliation with the Christian faith held "highly ethereal images God; in contrast to the anthropomorphic imagery dominant in European and North American Christianity," (Kidd & Witten, 2008, p. 20). These findings challenged the authors to question the validity of traditional RSS surveys.

Another area of the literature suggests that a critical aspect of understanding RSS affiliation must be concerned with the concept of integration within a RSS community (Oswald, 2001). The literature indicates that historically, it is common for trans/NB individuals to be raised and grow up in a formal RSS community. However, it is in this community where trans/NB individuals often first encounter discrimination and marginalization (Oswald, 2001). A recent study indicated that 18% of trans/NB individuals experienced this type of marginalization in their faith community (James et al., 2016), leading to instances of transphobia, extreme feelings of discord, and rejection by one's religion, religious community, and the higher power one believes in (Hill, 2015; Ryan, Russell, Huebner, Diaz, & Sanchez, 2010).

Westerfield (2012) explained RSS communities often view trans/NB identity and RSS affiliation as identities that are unable to be integrated. Consequently, trans/NB individuals end up positioning themselves as "outsiders" to resolve conflicts between their LGBTQ+ and RSS identity and community (Oswald, 2001). For a trans/NB identifying individual, this marginalization can have a heavy toll on mental health and well-being (Kidd & Witten, 2008; Ryan, Russell, Huebner, Diaz, & Sanchez, 2010; Wood & Conley, 2014), with significant psychological and behavioral implications (Mashek, Stuewig, Furukawa, & Tangney, 2006). Trans/NB individuals can respond with adaptive (e.g., recovery and self-acceptance) coping strategies that mediate negative emotions and societal exclusion, or can engage in maladaptive (e.g., addiction, promiscuity, unhealthy sexual behaviors) coping strategies that can impact mental and physical health (Golub, Walker, Longmire-Avital, Bimbi, & Parsons, 2010).

Despite these tensions, there are powerful accounts that suggest formal RSS affiliation can positively impact the trans/NB individual experience. These examples can be found in almost every formal religion or worldview (e.g. Isherwood & Althaus-Reid, 2009; Mollenkott, 2001). A frequently cited example of a supportive worldview belief system comes from some Native American spiritual traditions where their beliefs are inclusive of two-spirited identified people – which can encompass trans/NB people and hold a sacred, spiritual role in the (Jacobs, Thomas, & Lang, 1997). Scholars have documented tangible positive effects associated with RSS affiliation for trans/NB individuals. For example, rituals such as prayer or community engagement have helped trans/NB identified people come in terms with their identity (Kidd & Witten, 2008). RSS affiliation has also mediated successful aging in trans/NB identified adults and reduced the likelihood of unhealthy sexual behaviors (Golub et al., 2010; Porter, Ronneberg, & Witten, 2013). Finally, for people who identify as intersex (an umbrella term to describe people are born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't seem to fit normative definitions of female or male and is sometimes included in the trans/NB umbrella), formal RSS affiliation has helped individuals to overcome trauma or find happiness related to their intersex identity (Kerry, 2009; Preves, 2003).

Departure from Affiliation

Researchers found that 1 in 5 trans/NB individuals who have been part of a faith community at some point will depart from this community reporting rejection, discrimination, and marginalization (James et al., 2016). Confronting departure, trans/NB identified individuals are more likely to seek more general "spiritual" or non-religious orientations to their RSS identity outside of the Western Jewish or Christian traditions (Halkitis et al., 2009; Kidd & Witten, 2008). Part of this process of departure includes rejecting formal group affiliation to an RSS community (Wilcox, 2002, 2009). Interestingly, this rejection of a group identity mirrors a national trend of RSS disaffiliation in the U.S., where this increase in people identifying as "not religious" has growing steadily each year since the turn of the century (Pew Research Center, 2008), especially with those attending college (Pew Research Center,

2014). For this group who does not identify with any formal religion, religious disaffiliation has been associated with facing higher levels of discrimination (Cragun, Kosmin, Keysar, Hammer, & Nielsen, 2012), poorer mental health, and deteriorating conditions of physical well-being, which are exacerbated by isolation and marginalization (Fenelon & Danielsen, 2016; Hayward, Krause, Ironson, Hill, & Emmons, 2016; James et al., 2016).

Non-Normative Affiliations

Scholars suggest trans/NB individuals who reject RSS group affiliation can participate in what is called religious individuation, where one defines their religion individually and outside of traditional religious institutions. For example, Wilcox (2002) coined the term "Sheila-ism" named after a pseudonym of one of her participants. Sheila as a religion or spirituality is invented by oneself to integrate multiple religious and spiritual tenants and still be inclusive of one's trans/NB identity. "Sheila-ism" has been described as adaptive and fulfilling for trans/NB people's relationship to their RSS identity (Wilcox, 2002).

Although not explicitly named as religious individuation, similar trends were found in Sullivan-Blum's (2004) in-depth qualitative study on four drag queens, a population sometimes included in the larger trans umbrella. Sullivan-Blum (2004) postulates that these individuals "... mine the inconsistencies and contradictions in Christian discourses of sin, sexual morality and theology to carve out a space for their spirituality that is reconciled to their gender and sexual identity even if this requires going beyond traditional Christianity" (p. 206). This corroborates why Trans/NB individuals were more likely to select "other" even when presented with an extensive list of categories representing different RSS affiliations (Kidd & Witten, 2008). Kidd and Witten (2008) found trans men were twice as likely to select "other" despite reporting growing up within Jewish, Christian, or Muslim communities when compared to their cisgender peers. Illustrating this theme, one respondent who identified as a Female to Male (FTM) questioned the survey stating, "Most of the questions were more applicable to conventional western monotheistic spirituality and many didn't make sense for my belief system," (Kidd & Witten, 2008, p. 19).

As trans/NB individuals depart from formal RSS communities, there is emerging literature that suggests that they seek other communities under the realm of non-normative affiliations such as pagan or mystic religions (Coleman, Colgan, & Gooren, 1992; Conroy, 2010; Smith & Home, 2007). Findings from an in-depth case study exploring trans/NB student's RSS identity suggests that online religious communities can emerge as spaces where trans/NB people can affirm both their gender and RSS identity (Nicolazzo, 2015). There is some indication in the research that trans/NB people can use peer models – particularly in virtual spaces integrating both their trans/NB identity and their RSS identity – to increase student success and psychological well-being (Nicolazzo, Pitcher, Renn, & Woodford, 2017). Indeed, several online communities merging different religious faiths and trans/NB identity can be found online (see for example Michigan State University's Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, and Transgender Resource Center, 2018; Transfaith, n.d.).

Summary of Implications for Practitioners

Colleges and universities are often microcosms of larger societal trends and offer a space to develop identity, belief, and community bonds – including one's RSS identity (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2010; Mayhew, Rockenbach, Bowman, Seifert, & Wolniak, 2016). Unfortunately, without proper and intentional engagement and discussion of religious diversity, campus communities can fracture around different RSS identities (Nash, 2001). Drawing from the literature, we provide the following recommendations to improve campus climate for trans/NB people.

Belief systems might continue to position trans/NB identity and RSS affiliation as mutually exclusive. Therefore, practitioners must address the effects of discrimination, isolation, and marginalization associated with this interpretation. For example, we must consider the creation of spaces where trans/NB individuals can find affirmative models and messages about both their trans/NB and RSS identities. Practitioners may help students find supportive narratives, doctrines, or even online communities where they can find kinship and support.

For students grappling with sentiments of leaving their RSS communities, practitioners must be aware that this can be a particularly vulnerable time for trans/NB students. In essence, a corresponding loss of support in their RSS community may require not only intentional support fulfilling this void, but also expertise helping trans/NB individuals confront discrimination and overcome trauma related to RSS affiliation, disaffiliation, or the journey of building new interpretations.

For those looking for alternative forms of RSS affiliation and spirituality, spaces such online or virtual communities could provide support and guidance to ease the transition into a new RSS identity. Support could help trans/NB individuals overcome trauma and avoid opening past wounds (Singh & McKleroy, 2011). These communities could also help minimize anxiety, fear, and isolation. Considering one's social network can be a strong determinant of what strategies (adaptive or maladaptive) trans/NB individuals pursue (Hill, Hill, 2015), guidelines to navigate these spaces could help trans/NB maximize the benefits of becoming part of these new communities.

Conclusion and Future Directions

This literature review focused on the experiences of trans/NB individuals and their RSS identity. Our examination brought light to the concept of RSS affiliation focusing on formal affiliation, departure from a religious community, and the development of non-normative RSS identities. Our findings summarized the impact of one's beliefs on the formation of RSS identities, and emphasized an important link between RSS identity development and mental and physical wellbeing. In this section, we identified three potential directions for future research.

First, researchers could focus on experiences of trans/NB students that enhance resilience and foster a greater sense of inclusion on college campuses. In-depth grounded theory studies could provide additional nuances pertaining to these experiences. Second, as established by Hill (2015), it is vital to understand how trans/NB individuals construct their networks. Studies could further explore the process and importance of kinship and its relationship to RSS identity development. Lastly, quantitative studies are largely absent from the literature examining the trans/NB experience as a whole, and in particular exploring their RSS identity. We encourage researchers to consider surveys such as the Interfaith Youth Core Interfaith Diversity Experiences and Attitudes Longitudinal Survey (IDEALS) and The United States Trans Survey (USTS) as tools not only to help institutions understand how to better engage religiously diverse students, but also to specifically examine the experiences of Trans/NB individuals and the development of their RSS identity.

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Asian American Transracial Adoptees: Identity Development in College

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Abstract

The multifaceted identities of Asian American transracial adoptees in college are rarely – if ever – discussed in academic settings. Few studies exist on adoptees and education, adult transracial adoptees, or adoptee identity development in college. Since the majority of Asian American adoptees are adopted into White families, many are exposed to a new and often more diverse environment for the first time in college. While all college students go through developmental changes, this process can be elevated for transracial adoptees, triggering insecurities about their identity and self-worth. This article reviews several critical areas of literature that inform the development of Asian American transracially adopted college students, including transracial adoption, trauma related to adoption, adoptee identity development in college, and the transracial adoption paradox. While there are many studies on adoption, trauma, college students, and identity development, it is critical for these issues to be addressed together as they specifically relate to Asian American transracially adopted college students.

Keywords: Asian American transracial adoptees, college students, identity development

Initial research on transracial adoption – the adoption of a child of one race by parents of a different race (Baden, Treweeke, & Ahluwalia, 2012; Baden & Willey, 2007; Lee, 2003; Park 2012) – began in response to various social and political controversies in the late 1960s and 1970s (Lee, 2003). Most adoption researchers have focused solely on babies and children, and little is known about identity-related processes that occur during late adolescence and adulthood (Raible, 2006). In addition, limited studies exist on international and transracial adopted persons that move beyond basic adjustment issues (Kohler, Grotevant, & McRoy, 2002). While focusing on children is crucial to understand identity development, adoption is increasingly being recognized as a lifelong process (Baden & Wiley, 2007). Early adulthood is a time when important shifts in life roles and relationships occur, which correlates with the traditional college years. As many adoptees move away from home, they are exposed to a new and often more diverse environment (Hall & Steinberg, 2013). While all college students go through developmental changes, this process may be elevated for transracial adoptees, triggering insecurities about their identity and self-worth (Suda & Hartlep, 2016).

Importance of Understanding Asian American Transracial Adoptees

The number of families touched by adoption has increased over the last several decades, with approximately 1.7 million adoptive households in the United States (Park, 2012). Families can experience adoption through a number of different ways, including domestic, international, and interfamily. Approximately 85% of transracial adoptions are international (Lee, 2003) and in 2000, 95% of parents adopting internationally were White (Park, 2012). Creating interracial families through adoption can result in complex dynamics for adoptees around race, identity, and self-worth. This paper will focus specifically on the identity development of Asian American transracial adoptees who were placed in White families.

The high number of international transracial adoptions is due to various social, political, and legal factors, including that White parents often feel safer adopting internationally due to the closed nature of those adoptions (Park, 2012). Adoptive parents often feel a strong desire to "keep their own family intact and protected," and international adoptions are less likely to come with birth parent contact (Park, 2012, p. 493). Yet, closed adoptions have been shown to be less than ideal for adoptees; questions around their origins, identity, belonging, and feelings of betrayal are left unanswered (Hall & Steinberg, 2013). Seemingly rejecting a transracial adoptee's birth family can be perceived by a child as "the rejection of the race, culture, or country of origin of the child" (p. 125).

Nearly 60% of internationally adopted children between 1970 and 2001 were adopted from Asia (Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute, 2002). Following the Korean War in 1953, there was a large spike in the number of adoptions from South Korea (Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute, 2002). Between 1958 and 2001, more than 100,000 Korean children were adopted by families in the United States (Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute, 2002), particularly by older, White, and infertile couples (Lee, 2003). The United States Department of State Bureau of Consular Affairs (2016) reports that more than 20,000 babies and toddlers were adopted by families in the United States from South Korea from 1999-2015. Similarly, 80,162 children were adopted to families in the United States from China – over 85% of whom were girls – between 1999 and 2017 (Bureau of Consular Affairs, n.d.). In 2013, China sent 2,306 children to the United States to be adopted, which was the largest number of intercountry adoptees that year (Fong, McRoy, & McGinnis, 2016). India is also a leading country for adoptions to the United States with growing numbers since 2013 and 5,946 adoptions from 1999-2017 (Bureau of Consular Affairs, n.d.). However, concerns about baby selling, kidnapping, and manipulation has led to a recent decrease in the number of children sent to the United States for adoption from many countries in Asia. Some countries have shown remorse over the high number of international adoptions that took place – for example, in 2018; South Korea dedicated a park in honor of their "lost" children (Gamel & Chang, 2018).

Despite the large numbers of Asian American transracial adoptees, research on transracially adopted college students is extremely limited. With thousands of Asian American transracial adoptees quickly approaching traditional college age, it is important for higher education professionals to acknowledge, value, and learn more about the unique challenges and struggles facing this specific demographic.

Transracial Adoption

The existing research on transracial adoption focuses almost exclusively on adoptive parents and young adopted children (Raible, 2006). The problem with this method is that only early, measurable, and quantifiable outcomes for adoptees are accounted for, ignoring the "lifelong impact of the adoption experience itself on adoptees and their families" (Raible, 2006, p. 181). Such outcomes-based measures also ignore the continuous flux and negotiation of racial identity development. Exploring the identity development of older transracial adoptees requires going beyond the child's experience while contained within the adoptive family (Raible, 2006), and the early college years may be their first experience with independence (Iarovici, 2014).

The vast majority of transracial adoptive parents are White. When White families adopt children of color, the family instantly becomes visible due to the obvious physical differences between the child and their parents (Baden, Treweeke, & Muninder, 2012; Hall & Steinberg, 2013). Thus, certain unconscious expectations may be placed on the adopted child; for example, they may be expected to integrate fully into their new White family and culture

and in many cases, spend very little time with people that look like them (Hall & Steinberg, 2013). Historically, parents adopting transracially have rejected or downplayed their child's racial or ethnic differences, engaging in the practice of cultural assimilation (Lee, 2003). This is done by downplaying the adopted child's race and heritage in favor of assimilated them into their White culture. Often times, cultural assimilation takes place with minimal effort by the adoptive parents, especially when they are surrounded by and exposed to the dominant White culture (Lee, 2003). Some parents believe their child "inherits" Whiteness and may even deny or invalidate racialized experiences (Hall & Steinberg, 2013, p. 42).

This often leads to a "colorblind" approach to parenting. Parents who adopt transracially can show racial ambivalence through touting a colorblind ideology, claiming not to see skin color or implying that issues of race are unimportant or irrelevant (Park, 2012). As a result, many Asian American transracial adoptees actively work to shield their adoptive parents from their encounters with racism or racialized experiences. In a qualitative study on Korean adult adoptees who had been raised by White parents, Docan-Morgan (2010) found that the adoptees (as children) had actively avoided discussing negative encounters with their parents. This was due to a fear of parent unresponsiveness and a need to self-protect.

Asian American transracial adoptees are often raised by adoptive parents who internalize stereotypes like the model minority myth or the notion that adopted Asian children have an easier time assimilating into White culture than Black children (Park, 2012). The model minority myth is a stereotype that promotes the argument that all Asian Americans are the same and "achieve universal and unparalleled academic and occupational success" (Museus, 2017, p. xiv). Developed in response to political and social events during 1960s, the model minority myth gave rise to the idea that Asian Americans could have an honorary White status and discounted their minority status in the United States. Many White people – citing the new idea of the model minority – elevate Asian Americans as "better than Blacks but not quite as good as Whites" (Museus, 2017, p. xv). Thus, this stereotype has been used to reinforce and propel racism in America, as well as disregard the vast diversity and uniqueness of the vast number of Asian American subgroups.

While identity formation – the task of achieving a sense of self while individuating from parents and family – is a normal part of adolescent development, adoption adds the complexity of discovering a unique meaning of self (Kohler et al., 2002). For transracial adoptees, this includes exploring their complex racial and ethnic identity (Baden et al., 2012). The White population in the United States tends to experience and view life through a lens of certain privilege (Raible, 2012), and it can be difficult for White adoptive parents to recognize that the racial and ethnic differences between them and their child are important (Hall & Steinberg, 2000). Baden et al. (2012) found that more than three quarters of Korean transracial adoptees "reported thinking they were White or wanting to be White as children" (p. 387). On the other hand, when adoptive parents prioritize enculturation by emphasizing the importance of race, encouraging ethnic participation, and living in racially integrated communities, transracial adoptees demonstrate a greater sense of racial and ethnic pride (Lee, 2003).

Trauma Related to Adoption

At its very core, adoption is the result of the traumatic event of a child being given up, and primarily involves what is known as the adoption triad: the birth parents, adopted child, and adoptive parents (Grotevant, Dunbar, Kohler, & Lash Esau, 2000). Higher levels of behavioral and psychological problems among adopted children and adolescents have caused clinicians and researchers to investigate the impact of this adoption-related trauma and its effect on identity and social development (Baden, Mazza, Kitchen, Harrington, & White,

2016; Grotevant et al., 2000). Adoptees also tend to exhibit symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and trauma at higher rates (Baden et al., 2016). Empirical research has shown that over 17% of adopted persons are in therapy, which is approximately twice as many as non-adopted individuals (8.67%) (Baden & Wiley, 2007; Hall & Steinberg, 2013). Numerous studies (Hjern, Lindbland, & Vinnerljung, 2002; Slap, Goodman, & Huang, 2001; von Borczyskowki, Hjern, Lindblan, & Vinnerljung, 2006) found higher rates of suicides among adolescent adoptees compared with non-adoptees (Baden et al., 2016), and Raible (2006) writes, "I encounter too many stories of self-destruction, including suicide, among transracial adoptees" (p. 186). In addition to the trauma of adoption in general, transracial adoptees must contend with issues related to race, family visibility, and a loss of culture.

While some researchers support the belief that adoptees are more adversely affected by psychological problems related to their sense of self and belonging, others disagree (Baden et al., 2016; Grotevant et al., 2000). Grotevant et al. (2000) attribute these differences in findings to the fact that some studies only "looked at identity in a global way" without accounting for societal attitudes about kinship, rather than using a holistic view of "one's sense of identity as an adopted person" (p. 381). Adoptive identity development relates to how adoptees construct meaning about their adoption through three core components: the cognitive and affective process, relational contexts within families, and the interaction with contexts outside of families (Grotevant et al., 2000). In transracial adoptions, family visibility increases the challenges of being accepted as a "real" family (Grotevant et al., 2000; Hall & Steinberg, 2013). Adoptees are often questioned about their "real" parents, leading them to believe that their family is perceived as inferior to traditional, biological ones (Kim & Hall, 2016; Wegar, 2000). Adoptee identity development is extremely complex and difficult, with "adoption transgress[ing] our notions about identity" (Yngvenson quoted in Grotevant et al., 2000, p. 382). A difficult aspect of adoptee identity development for transracial adoptees is that they are expected to immediately fit into and accept their new White family. Children adopted from Asia leave behind a completely different culture and language yet are expected to fit into their new White family without any trouble. For Asian American transracial adoptees, this pressure is coupled with racist stereotypes about well-behaved, quiet Asians, as well as the model minority myth.

Identity Development for Adoptees

Adoptees can become preoccupied with their adoption, grappling with missing or difficult information about their past and questioning where their familial loyalties lie (Hall & Steinberg, 2013). While everyone struggles with their identity at some point in life, transracial adoptees face additional challenges (Hall & Steinberg, 2013). Since transracial families are visible, it is impossible to hide the physical differences between parent and child, automatically inviting unwanted attention and intrusive questioning from acquaintances and even strangers (Hall & Steinberg, 2013). In addition, society often sends the message that adoptees should always be grateful for their adoption – ignoring the fact that it is a complicated, lifelong, and often traumatic journey – and more than just a "happy one-time event" in the lives of the adoptive parents (Raible, 2012, p. 115).

It may not be surprising then, that most transracially adopted adolescents and adults express discomfort with their appearance and lack of racial or ethnic identity (Baden & Wiley, 2007). Between the ages of four and five, transracially adopted children begin to encounter racism and microaggressions and notice that they do not physically match their parents (Baden et al., 2012). This lack of a "biological mirror" may be the first realization of adoption for young children, although their ability to cognitively understand what this means does not occur

until much later in life (Hoffman & Vallejo Peña, 2013, p. 153). For parents raising transracial adoptees in predominantly White areas, it can be easy to view racial issues as isolated events instead of ongoing messages that shape their child's perceived identity and feelings of self-worth (Hall & Steinberg, 2013). This can result in adoptees feeling uncomfortable with their identity, and Baden et al. (2012) found that approximately two thirds of transracial adoptees identified with a race different than their own.

Adoptee Identity Development in College

Many young adults get their first taste of independence and freedom during college, which has come to signify a transitional time from youth to adulthood (Iarovici, 2014). For some students, especially those from homogenous communities, college is their first exposure to a variety of worldviews that differ from those with which they were raised (Kryder, 1999). This may increase questions and doubts about long-held beliefs and values and many college students decide to abandon parts of their identity that no longer work or fit into their sense of self (Iavovici, 2014). According to the 2011 National College Health Assessment Survey, nearly half of college students reported feeling overwhelming anxiety, which may be caused in part by struggles with identity development (Iarovici, 2014). Such a transition may be especially startling for transracial adoptees who grew up in a White family. White parents experience the benefit of White privilege because they are often "presumed by others to be smart, safe, or trustworthy not because they demonstrate those traits but simply based on racial stereotypes" (Hall & Steinberg, 2000, p. 42). One way in which this privilege is demonstrated by White parents is by embracing notion that racism or discrimination does not exist because they do not personally experience it. While growing up, transracial adoptees may have received some of the benefits of belonging to a White family (Pinderhughes, Matthews, & Zhang, 2016); however, even when transracial adoptees self-identify as being White, they still "contend with experiences associated with lower status" and are seen by outsiders as being a person of color (Pinderhughes et al., 2016, p. 155).

Going to college is a significant life event and may trigger transracial adoptees to doubt their sense of self, create a desire to learn about their birth culture, or inspire a search for their birth family (Baden et al., 2012; Kohler et al., 2002). First-year students with pre-existing attachment anxiety – a tendency to cling fearfully to relationships – may have additional problems with their sense of social self-worth (Iarovici, 2014). Since transracial adoptees often struggle with attachment disorders or anxiety, campus life might increase these insecurities (Hoffman & Peña, 2013). Transracial adoptees may have received an honorary White status within their families and communities, but this "honor" ceases to exist once the adoptee leaves home (Baden et al., 2016). Some transracial adoptees struggle to hold on to their White status, while others may desire to shed it completely (Baden et al., 2012).

In college, transracial adoptees may experience isolation or feel a sense of grief and loss when interacting with groups (Hoffman & Peña, 2013). College may also be the first-time adoptees fully comprehend the lack of knowledge they have about their past (Kryder, 1999). This is especially true for those with closed adoptions, which tend to be international, since this information is usually inaccessible (Pinderhughes et al., 2016). In addition, transracial adoptees experiencing new independence or diverse environment may be shocked to realize the varying social attitudes that stigmatize adoption (Hall & Steinberg, 2013).

Transracial Adoption Paradox

For many adoptees, college is their first opportunity to form relationships with fellow adoptees, which can validate their feelings and realities (Kryder, 1999). Some adoptees may feel freer

to explore their adoptive identity after leaving home and have a cathartic experience when meeting and interacting with other adopted college students (Kryder, 1999). This is especially true for adoptees that grew up with emotionally present adoptive parents, with whom they could discuss their adoption (Docan-Morgan, 2010; Grotevant et al., 2000; Kryder, 1999).

For some transracial adoptees, however, this experience is more complex and difficult to navigate. For example, if Korean adoptees seek out Asian groups on campus, for example, they may feel caught between two worlds – the White one in which they were raised, and the one they have never known (Lee, Yun, Yoo, & Nelson, 2010). This phenomenon is known as the transracial adoption paradox (Lee, 2003; Pinderhughes et al., 2016). Adoptees are expected to meet society's expectation for what their race "should" be while being simultaneously rejected by these ethnic groups who view them as inauthentic (Baden et al., 2012). These students may also experience a dissonance between their appearance and their cultural knowledge. Transracial adoptees may identify with more than one racial or cultural identity, shaped by their exposure and self-worth within different groups (Baden & Wiley, 2007); however, some adoptees fail to identify at all with any racial or ethnic group. For some transracial adoptees, this struggle leads to internalizing various stereotypes or experiences about their racial or ethnic group (Baden & Wiley, 2007). Transracial adoptees may not understand or be comfortable with their sense of self or their racial identity. This lack of understanding or discomfort can turn into self-destructive behavior for college students (Baden & Wiley, 2007).

Conclusion

The multifaceted identities of Asian American transracial adoptees are seldom discussed in higher education, in part due to the lack of research on adoptees and education, adult transracial adoptees, or adoptee identity development in college. As thousands of Asian American adoptees approach college age, however, it is important for educators to recognize and validate the unique challenges and struggles these students face.

For Asian American transracial adoptees, college may be a time of multiple forms of identity development. Asian American transracial adoptees are in a unique position of not wholly fitting in with one ethnic or racial group on campus and may feel conflicted about their place on campus (Suda & Hartlep, 2016). Too often, educators make assumptions about a student based on their appearance. Asian American transracial adoptees, for instance, might be presumed to come from recently immigrated families and have knowledge about different languages and cultures. In addition, Asian American students are often subjected to educators' belief in the model minority myth or stereotyped as a monolithic and homogenous group (Museus, Antonio, & Kiang, 2012). These types of assumptions can make Asian American transracial adoptees feel even more isolated and unsettled in their identity.

The more that higher education faculty, staff, and practitioners understand the process of student identity development, the better they can "assist in promoting student learning and development" (Torres, Jones, & Renn, 2009, p. 578). For Asian American transracial adoptees, this includes being seen as a whole, unique, and individual person that is not lumped into a large, stereotyped "model minority Asian" group. By seeking to understand the strengths and struggles of Asian American transracial adoptees, student affairs practitioners have the unique opportunity to have a significant impact on the identity development of those whose voices are unknown or silenced in the dominant discourse.

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Examining Diversity in Student Affairs: An Analysis of Diversity Definitions and Supports

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Abstract

The presence of diversity on campus can generate an environment of increased innovation, creativity, and inclusive excellence. However, despite efforts to increase diversity in equitable, economical, and culturally responsive ways, data on diverse student admissions and retention indicates that the intention to increase diversity to a level reflective of the student body has yet to be accomplished in the United States. In addition, contention and confusion exist regarding who should be considered under the canopy of diversity and how best to sustain diversity efforts in higher education. Accordingly, through analysis of a national multi-institutional survey, this study explores how student affairs professionals and college leaders understand, shape, and support diversity at their institutions. The inquiry highlights how the concept of diversity is often linked with social justice and equity, which influences how individuals believe they ought to shape diversity efforts to serve their students. The article concludes by featuring promising practices that work to support diversity in student affairs, followed by a discussion of implications for research and practice.

Keywords: diversity, diversity efforts, equity, inclusion, social justice

Along with demographic changes, economic, political, and social justice rationales have been used to compel and persuade higher education leaders to develop and integrate more diversity into their institutions, and more recently, student affairs (Chickering & Braskamp, 2009; Dixon, 2001; Humphreys, 2015). As a result, *diversity* has come to represent different types of students, initiatives, and efforts to different people on campus (Antonio & Clarke, 2011; Smith, 2015). Although support for increases in diversity grow, enduring discussions continue regarding the importance of what this term means in higher education and, in particular, the field of student affairs (Kuh, 2015; Pope, Mueller, & Reynolds, 2009; Smith, 2015).

This study grounds itself in scholarship that asserts that increasing diversity, as defined by biological, social, physical, and cultural difference, is both a desirable and necessary action for higher education institutions in the United States (Chang, 2013; Haring-Smith, 2012; Smith, 2015). Based on this literature, scholars assert that perceptions of diversity and the strategies that practitioners use to interact with diverse students could significantly influence the experience of these students (Castellanos, Gloria, Mayaorga, & Salas, 2008; Hakkola & Ropers-Huilman, 2018; Haring-Smith, 2012; Karkouti, 2015; Patton, McEwen, Rendon, & Howard-Hamilton, 2007). Moreover, researchers argue that the ways in which individuals engage with different types of students may normalize certain perceptions of diversity, while inadvertently marginalizing other types of diverse identities at the same time (Iverson, 2012; Patton et al., 2007). The way that student affairs professionals interact with diverse students, then, indicates a necessity to analyze how this term is defined and supported in institutional programming, as well as how diversity definitions are shaped and mobilized by such professionals.

In response to this gap in the literature, this article describes a multi-institutional study that explores how student affairs professionals define diversity, support diverse students, and operationalize diversity programming at their institutions. The analysis reveals that confusion exists relating to who should be included under the umbrella of diversity and how diversity efforts should be sustained from an institutional level in student affairs. Despite these tensions, however, results from the study feature specific strategies that student affairs professionals can use to support diversity and challenge problematic diversity language on their campuses.

The Evolving Nature of Diversity on Campus

According to Marine (2011), the profession of student affairs has long been supportive of diversity and diverse students in accordance with the mission to serve and develop the whole student. Based on this philosophy of care, many scholars have argued that the whole student ought to be inclusive of all types of identities (Haring-Smith, 2012; Karkouti, 2015; Marine, 2011; Pope et al., 2009), meaning support should include an intersectional approach to cultivate students (Mitchell, Simmons, & Greyerbiel, 2014). The intersectional lens allows for the ability to acknowledge multiple and overlapping identity elements within each student, rather than limiting an individual to identify with only one element of their identity. For example, Aguirre and Martinez (2006), have described diversity as a vital component of higher education, including "population differences in society that are identifiable by status characteristics such as age, gender, race, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability, and religion" (p. 1-2). While this definition has lent itself to a more comprehensive discussion of what it has meant to be diverse, all higher education scholars have not been in agreement with how this elusive term ought to be defined, and who should fall within its parameters (Aguirre & Martinez, 2006; Antonio & Clarke, 2011).

In *Diversity at the Crossroads: Mapping our Work in the Years Ahead*, Beckham (2008) has argued that historically speaking, diversity has been a euphemism for Blacks, and only recently has come to include a multitude of different identities. Hurtado (2007) has reasoned that Beckman's more traditional and exclusive definition of diversity ought to continue to be upheld, as it specifically supports policies and programs that redress past inequalities for the purpose of social justice for people of color. Conversely, Haring-Smith (2012) has contended that higher education institutions should adopt a more inclusive diversity discourse to be fully cognizant and respectful of the evolving social, cultural, biological, political, philosophical, and religious identities typical of an undergraduate, college student population. Adding to this multifarious dialogue, Antonio and Clarke (2011) have maintained that how diversity has been defined and who has been included in this definition have been dependent on specific institutional rationales, including why particular Chief Diversity Officers were initially hired.

Within this context, the complicated platform of diversity definitions has ensued. Diversity has varied in definitions because it has been contingent upon individuals' social identities, backgrounds, political contexts, and ontological perspectives. It follows that these varying conceptions have affected students differently depending on which conception has been legitimized and privileged by student affairs professionals at particular institutions (Iverson, 2012; Hakkola & Ropers-Huilman, 2018). For some, diversity has been synonymous with inclusion, equity, and social justice objectives (e.g., Chang, 2002; Hurtado, 2007; Smith, 2015). However, for others, diversity has simply meant human differences, without recognition of the ways in which power and oppression are inextricably linked with those differences (e.g., Haring-Smith, 2012, Michaels, 2006). It is important to note that while connected, equity, inclusion, and social justice are independent of diversity and focus specifically on problematizing privilege and dismantling oppressive structures (Mitchell et al., 2014).

The evolution of how diversity has been and is currently defined and promoted is important to student affairs; Pope et al. (2009) has asserted that student affairs professionals' attitudes, policies, and practices affect the support for diversity and diversity efforts on campus. While in recent years, scholars have begun to study student affairs professionals, most research in this field over the past fifty years has focused on student identity and development, instead of the professional development of student affairs practitioners themselves (Pope et al., 2009). Additionally, much of the research on diversity has focused on academic affairs rather than on a systemic understanding of how university policies, practices, and discourse influence the development and implementation of diversity in student affairs (Dixon, 2001; Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2014). Thus, an area requiring research in relation to diversity is that of student affairs, and more explicitly, how diversity is defined, communicated, and supported (or not) by student affairs professionals (Hakkola & Ropers-Huilman, 2018; Karkouti, 2015; Pope et al., 2009).

While uncertainty continues to surround exactly who is and ought to be served within the definition of diversity and diversity efforts, it is clear that the profession is committed to supporting the whole student (Castellanos et al., 2008). At the same time, the ways in which diversity is defined and operationalized by student affairs professionals remains unclear, and different definitions are established and mobilized depending on individual and institutional contexts (Hakkola & Ropers-Huilman, 2018). Accordingly, it is critical to examine how student affairs professionals and college leaders understand, communicate, and support diverse students and diversity efforts at their institutions.

Study Background

In 2007, the Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education at the University of Minnesota (Twin Cities) convened a committee to develop a series of recommendations designed to enhance student support services for undergraduate students. The resulting Student Support Advisory Committee (SSAC) represented a broad base of university staff and administrators with direct and indirect responsibilities that related to student support services and student affairs. In addition to the SSAC, the Diversity and Inclusion Standing Committee (DISC) was formed to develop specific strategies and recommendations designed to improve how student affairs and student support services could increase graduation and retention rates, as well as academic success for diverse students at the University of Minnesota.

Mendoza, Taylor, and Weissbrodt (2006), scholars who studied diversity on the University of Minnesota (Twin Cities) campus, affirmed that, within a value-added framework, diversity, inclusion, and access programs could serve as an opportunity to enhance diversity on campuses and promote one of the missions of the University. Accordingly, under the SSAC, the DISC was charged with purposeful coordination of sustainable student success and retention efforts for diverse student populations and to make recommendations on how to bolster cultural competence for student support services and student affairs professionals. The committee was also charged with exploring ways to create opportunities to increase diversity within student affairs undergraduate and graduate majors.

Methods

The research team employed an interpretive research design, which allowed us to center on respondents' meaning-making processes regarding diversity (Patton, 2015). Upon securing Institutional Review Board approval, in 2013, an online survey was designed and piloted at the University of Minnesota (Twin Cities) with fifteen student affairs professionals. After conducting four cognitive interviews and working through revisions, the survey was then

administered to 196 administrators, educators, and diversity officers in four-year private and public higher education institutions across the United States.

The survey was designed to be open-ended and exploratory. Specifically, the committee encouraged respondents to draw from their professional experience in their departments, units, and institutions to inform their answers. The goal of the survey was to develop a better understanding for how student affairs professionals framed and operationalized diversity by investigating the processes that they use to implement these definitions on their campuses. As such, respondents were asked to identify how they defined the term *diversity* as it related to their institutional policies and practices. We then focused several follow-up questions on how and to what extent respondents' institutions and units effectively implemented diversity efforts to increase and support diversity. Our last section of the open-ended analysis explored the role of institutional supports such as leadership, strategic planning, funding, and accountability measures that aided in maintaining and strengthening diversity at the respondents' institutions.

Respondents were randomly chosen according to the Student Affairs Professionals in Higher Education (NASPA) contact list, accessible through the University of Minnesota Office for Student Affairs (Twin Cities). The committee used a case selection sampling strategy, as our goal was to gain knowledge about particular experiences and perceptions of diversity work within specific university settings (Patton, 2015). The survey included a set of thirty-five open-ended questions that explored the breadth of diversity definitions, initiatives, accountability measures, structural support, retention, and recruitment efforts that higher education institutions currently supported within their student services and affairs units. Once a contact email address was identified, respondents were invited via email through a secure University of Minnesota server to participate in the study. No incentive was offered for participation.

Participants

Thirty-one out of a potential pool of 196 individuals responded to the survey. The respondents were asked to self-identify the professional position(s) they held at their institutions. For this study, we were specifically interested in participants who held a position in student affairs or student support services, which we defined as university staff who primarily worked in a non-curricular capacity outside of the classroom. Our respondent list included fifteen directors, two vice provosts, three vice presidents for diversity offices, one senior director, one senior advisor to the president, one manager for multicultural affairs, one department chair, one dean of students who was also the director of multicultural affairs, one chief diversity officer, and seven student affairs professionals. Several of the respondents held dual roles within their institutions, increasing our spread across student affairs professionals. The institutions ranged from holding eight to 1,904 student affairs and student support services positions on their campuses; within that range, there were anywhere between three to 498 student affairs professionals of color.

Data Analysis Procedure

The research team included one graduate student and eight student affairs leaders and professionals from the University of Minnesota (Twin Cities). Qualitative findings from this study were analyzed via the analytical software Nvivo. Responses from the student affairs professionals were coded using deductive analysis methods, consisting of recording emerging themes in respondents' answers and group analysis of the findings to ensure a collective understanding of the team's interpretations. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis within Microsoft Excel.

Limitations

Despite the DISC's attempts to increase response rates through several notifications, this research has its limitations. In particular, the sample was limited to student affairs professionals and leaders who were listed in the NASPA Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education public contact list. While a response rate of 16% was small, the sample of participating schools included a representative selection of higher education institutions ranging from Big Ten institutions, research universities, and small private colleges. The number of undergraduates at these institutions ranged from 2,200 to 42,347 students, including the population of students of color. Disaggregating the numbers, there were from 200 to 16,914 students of color at these institutions; Table one provides the list of participating higher education institutions.

Table 1: *Participating Institutions*

Big Ten Institutions	State Universities	Private Colleges
Indiana University – Bloomington	University of California, Las Angeles	Pepperdine University
Michigan State University	University of Florida	Webster University
University of Iowa	Georgia State University	Union College – Kentucky
University of Illinois	San Diego State University	Cornell University
University of Iowa	University of Texas at San Antonio	
University of Minnesota	University of Wyoming	
	Indiana University – Northwest	
	Michigan Tech University	
	University of North Texas	
	Buffalo State College	
	North Carolina State University	
	Cleveland State University	
	Auburn University	
	Missouri University of Science and Technology	
	University of Hartford	

Results and Discussion

Based on the survey responses, 68% reported having a university-wide division for diversity, while only 26% reported having diversity units in student affairs or student support services. Nineteen percent of respondents reported having diversity units in central administration and academic affairs, and 22% report having diversity committees in their units or departments. Forty-five percent of respondents reported having a leadership position responsible for diversity efforts within student support services or student affairs.

Defining Diversity

A significant finding in the results was that strong and consistent support for diversity clearly existed among survey respondents; however, definitions and interpretations of how it was defined and implemented differed to a great extent. A major distinction was that some respondents linked diversity with equity and social justice aims, while others did not note that connection. In general, diversity definitions were quite broad, including terms such as cultural, social, political, gender, sexual orientation, religious, physical, economic and philosophical characteristics.

This finding is supported in research in the field of higher education; for example, the Ford Foundation cites:

> Fifty percent of survey respondents interpreted "diversity" as meaning different ethnicity, race, nationality, or culture. Some survey respondents (18%) interpreted "diversity" as referring to people with different thoughts and ideas. Some survey respondents (12%) interpreted "diversity" as

referring to different social status or economic and education levels. Eight percent of survey respondents interpreted "diversity" to mean different religious backgrounds. (ASHE, 2009)

Similar to the Ford Foundation study, many respondents reported that their institutions used a highly inclusive definition of diversity – one respondent reported that their university definition included "the variety of human difference."

Repeatedly, respondents went beyond simple descriptions of race and ethnicity and included descriptions that mentioned educational enhancement and benefits for all students. As an illustration of such detail, one respondent affirmed:

> Valuing inclusion benefits MSU [Michigan State University] scholars who advance knowledge by exploring the vast range of questions that result from our differences. It benefits our employees by creating a stronger work environment that draws on various points of view. And it benefits our students by enriching their learning experience and better preparing them to function as effective citizens.

Another respondent defined diversity in the following way:

> People of color, including historically underrepresented groups and new immigrant populations; People with both visible and hidden disabilities; Women; People of various gender and sexual identities and expressions; and First-generation students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

In an attempt to be as inclusive as possible, these respondents took into account the broad scope of diversity in the descriptions and examples they provided. In other responses, terms such as "multi-dimensional," "everything," "all facets," and "multitude of dimensions" were utilized for distinction. Based on these findings, it was evident that a comprehensive array of descriptions of diversity mirrored the wide-ranging ways in which diversity is understood and communicated.

Some respondents elected to cite more distinctive and narrower definitions of diversity for their institutions. They also did not capture the entire canopy of diversity elements that other respondents noted in their definitions. These respondents included descriptors of diversity that focused solely on racial and ethnic differences; for example, one respondent maintained, "[diversity is defined] primarily through the language of Racial and Ethnic differences." Defining diversity narrowly with race and ethnicity was reflective of many of the survey responses and exposed the multifaceted uses and understandings of how diversity could and should be operationalized in student affairs. Further, some individuals may not have understood or recognized the difference between racial as opposed to ethnic distinctions within their diversity definitions.

Other respondents expressed concern that the all-encompassing way that diversity was defined at their institution was minimizing difference within some groups, which moved away from equity intentions. Other respondents felt that a comprehensive definition created an equitable and inclusive campus environment for everyone. This contention and ambiguity regarding how diversity ought to be defined is present in current higher education literature as well. According to Hurtado (2007), and suggested in some survey responses, an inclusive and broad vernacular weakened the significance of specific issues related to racial and ethnic minority groups. Powell (2008) agreed, concurring that broad based diversity policies failed to consider the positionality and situated conditions of specific marginalized individuals. He contended that false universalism of diversity legitimized the perpetuation of discrimination

and oppression of the very people that were intended to be helped by diversity efforts (Powell, 2008). Ultimately, an expansive notion of diversity failed to acknowledge the historical inequities, implicit bias, and subsequent racism that marginalized individuals still face today.

Similarly, Archer (2007) noted that broad definitions using a general description of diversity tended to fall under the canopy of "institutional diversity," and left out notions of equity. Institutional diversity, Archer argued, aligned more with the economic benefits of encouraging historically underrepresented students to attend higher education institutions. Equality, meaning equal treatment, and equity, meaning fair treatment, aligned more with "student diversity," and sought out greater participation of nontraditional students based on both a social justice rationale and an economic basis. Archer stressed that if diversity was viewed only under the canopy of "institution diversity," issues of equity and inclusion would be disregarded or minimized. These topics are critical to consider, as they are important to student development and sense of belonging (Strayhorn, 2012). Comparable to some of the survey findings, this scholar pushed for a disaggregated definition of diversity because the various concepts of this term were innately different and needed to be recognized and discussed in distinct ways for a more encompassing effect (Archer, 2007).

While *diversity* originated with race and ethnicity as a grounding focus (Michaels, 2006), one of the ways it has become more inclusive is by recognizing the intersections of various ethnic, racial, cultural, sexual, religious, political, and gender identities and how they overlap within the spectrum of diversity (Haring-Smith, 2012). Following this logic, regardless of the decision to support a broad or narrow definition of diversity, the majority of student affairs professionals in this study agreed that fundamental components of diversity were equity and inclusion. These components are represented in both the ACPA and NASPA professional competency areas (ACPA & NASPA, n.d.). Accordingly, this finding demonstrated alignment of theory to practice with regard to diversity and inclusion standards in this field.

Supporting Diversity through Intercultural Competence

The development of intercultural competence begins with diversity, including diverse classrooms, curriculum, and understandings of difference (Otten, 2003). Language that is consistent with intercultural competence literature was present throughout the findings. Based on the majority of the survey responses, student affairs professionals and leaders found these verbal skills essential to supporting student diversity on campus. As one respondent stated, "[diversity means] recognizing and appreciating the unique beliefs, values, skills, attributes, and characteristics of all individuals in an environment that promotes and celebrates individual and collective achievement."

Bennett (2004) asserts that development of intercultural competency is geared toward fostering cultural pluralism within culturally diverse societies with the acknowledgment that individuals live in an interdependent world. This approach is primarily grounded in democratic practices and values. Within this perspective there is a focus on beliefs, attitudes, awareness, knowledge, and skills (Pope et al., 2009, Smith & Ota 2013). While most respondents mentioned intercultural competence skills as elements of what makes a campus diverse, this topic rarely fell within respondents' diversity definitions. Rather, respondents mentioned intercultural competence as a characteristic their leaders possessed when they felt that diversity was supported and present on their campuses. When asked what positions, if any, their campus maintained which were responsible for diversity efforts within student affairs, one respondent reported, "The Multicultural Center and International Student Affairs Office. Our purpose on campus is to assist students to develop intercultural knowledge and competence." Two other respondents stated that the Director of Intercultural relations and

the Director of Intercultural Affairs were student affairs positions that provided support for diversity on their campuses.

It is important to note that respondents gave the terms *intercultural* and *diversity* distinct functions. Specifically, the term intercultural was typically not included as an element of their institutions' diversity definition. However, according to our findings intercultural competence was considered a necessary mechanism for supporting and strengthening diversity efforts on their campuses. Respondents noted that support for diversity through intercultural competence highlighted the ability to work effectively across difference, including cultural, racial, and ethic identities, while support for diversity through equity was more focused on fair treatment and empowerment of these unique identities.

The Role of the Institution in Supporting Diversity

The institution was named as a vital diversity support mechanism. Dixon (2001) has asserted that colleges and universities need to be "more intentional and foresighted about what they do today to position themselves as viable institutions of learning for a future population that is significantly different from the one that exists today" (p. 79). The survey findings strongly reflected this belief as over half of the responses indicated that it was the university's responsibility to provide support for diversity, access, and inclusion initiatives. These respondents maintained that through specific policies, services, and leadership, diversity would be adequately supported on an institutional level. It is important to note, however, that when asked whether respondents' institutions had a university-wide division for diversity only 64% responded "yes," while 33% responded "no," and when asked whether there was a diversity unit within the student affairs office on campus, only 27% reported that one was present at their institution. This finding revealed a discrepancy with how student affairs professionals thought they should be supported, compared with the reality of support they received at their respective institutions.

The role of institutional leadership. According to a 2009 Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) report on *Best Practices in Diversity Planning and Assessment*, strong institutional leadership "who not only articulate the vision of diversity but also recognize the importance of the infrastructure and resources needed to achieve a culture of diversity" is crucial to the support and promotion of diversity in higher education (p. 91). Supporting this claim, survey respondents consistently articulated that leadership played an integral part in incorporating diversity into their institutions. As one respondent declared, "Diversity must be owned by the campus leadership and supported by a diversity office at the Vice Provost or Chancellor Level." This message was echoed throughout the survey findings and in research about institutional leadership, affirming that student affairs professionals, administrators, and faculty must be used as a critical strategy for instilling diversity into institutional missions and visions (Hurtado, 2007; Smith, 2015).

Strategic plans. The results indicated that there was a positive correlation between an institution having a more inclusive definition of diversity and reports of dedicated institutional leadership and the existence of specific diversity strategic plans. A diversity strategic plan is an instrument that can be used to articulate the definition, importance, and value of diversity as an institutional resource in its mission and vision (ASHE, 2009). Hurtado (2007) states that within these plans, mission and vision statements that intentionally include diversity are becoming increasingly prominent in higher education institutions. In fact, according to Smith and Wolf-Wendal (2005), a strategic plan that is geared toward increasing diversity is an effective tool for holding institutions accountable for their diversity goals. The importance of specific diversity goals couched within strategic plans was evident in our survey findings.

For instance, when one respondent was asked how their institution reflected its commitment to diversity, they stated, "Improving and expanding diversity has to be a part of any unit's strategic plan. Whether academic or service no strategic plan can be approved without serious consideration of the unit diversity efforts both with students and faculty." Respondents that reported having a university diversity strategic plan also testified to having higher levels of institutional assistance and more financial backing for diversity efforts.

Financial support. Survey results reflected a broad spectrum of support, or lack thereof, for its diversity efforts, as one individual described, "Financial support is sporadic and not systemic in the area of diversity. We currently do not have funding for diversity trainings or speakers. We do provide some support to fund scholarships for qualified students of color."

Conversely, another answered:

> The University's commitment is reflected in its multi-million dollar provision of scholarships for underrepresented students, especially at the undergraduate levels, plus individual underrepresented graduate scholarship support at the graduate level including the Equal Opportunity Fellowships of the Graduate School itself.

In general, respondents conveyed the need for financial support from central administration in order to adequately support and promote diversity. This finding is reflective of existing research, which states that substantial budgetary support is an effective best practice for diversity planning (ASHE, 2009).

The Role of Student Affairs Professionals in Supporting Diversity

In addition to institutional assistance, the majority of respondents elicited beliefs that student affairs professionals played a critical role in creating leaders and citizens who have the skills to contribute to and succeed in diverse environments. Respondents expressed that, with effective administrative leadership, they had the capacity to advance this process among students to create a greater consistency in the preparation and development of undergraduates. One respondent's statement epitomized this sentiment, asserting:

> Diversity broadly defined, is essential to the educational experience and central to all parts of the University's mission. A diverse learning environment – particularly one that has achieved a "critical mass" of underrepresented individuals – helps members of the University community to challenge stereotypes and develop complex critical thinking skills; better prepares them to become active citizens and leaders; and equips them to live as members of an international community, in which success and personal happiness increasingly depend on the ability to appreciate and negotiate difference on a global scale.

Many scholars expect future generations of Americans to be more flexible, comfortable with difference, and interested in diverse experiences, compared with previous generations (e.g., Chickering & Braskamp, 2009; Haring-Smith, 2012; Otten, 2003). Respondents reflected this projection as they recognized their responsibility, as student affairs professionals, in supporting diverse student beliefs and perspectives and in integrating diverse learning experiences into their institutions.

There is a concern in the literature that student support services and student affairs professionals are not receiving adequate training and support to work with multicultural students (Castellanos et al., 2008; Dixon, 2001; Pope et al., 2014). The survey results provided

some examples of diversity efforts dedicated specifically to student support services and student affairs; albeit, many of these examples were at the central administrative level rather than specifically targeted toward student affairs professionals. Several respondents expressed a lack of formal intercultural training and financial assistance for professional development opportunities to support diversity on campus. This finding demonstrates the importance of creating distinct training and support for entry and mid-level professionals, in additional to having strong central leadership to support diversity in student affairs and student support services units.

Implications for Research and Practice

The study has significant implications for research, preparation, training, and practice for current and future student affairs professionals. The study indicates that many higher education institutions have augmented their missions and strategic plans to promote and support diversity efforts. While these efforts are a step toward creating a more equitable, competitive, and democratic learning environment for students in higher education, our results reveal that tension and ambiguity continue to exist around diversity's perceived and measured value as an institutional priority.

It is not the authors' intention to argue for a unified belief about diversity or to advocate for particular goals regarding how to best support diversity efforts. Rather, this study demonstrates the importance of how diversity is discussed, how these understandings are operationalized, the potential consequences of mobilizing certain diversity discourses over others, and how institutional factors can support or hinder diversity on campuses. Specifically, the themes from this study reveal that student affairs professionals draw from a variety of definitions to define diversity, which influences how effectively they connect with diverse students and engage in their lives. Accordingly, including workshops that evaluate how power, privilege, and inclusion operate within the parameters of diversity would be valuable to incorporate into student preparation programs and staff trainings. Considering the findings, strengthening intercultural competence could also assist student affairs professionals in their practice when working with individuals different from themselves. Moreover, it may be helpful for professional associations in the field of student affairs and higher education to join efforts in creating common guidelines and accessible workshops focused on how to effectively support diversity on campus.

In "Looking Back, Moving Forward: Future Directions for Diversity Research in Student Affairs," Pope et al. (2009) explained, "within higher education, student affairs professionals have always played an important role in addressing multicultural issues" (p. 640). It follows that supporting diversity in this field is particularly important, as student affairs professionals are significant resources for students to rely on during their higher education experience (Castellanos et al., 2008; Dixon, 2001; Karkouti, 2015; Pope et al., 2014). Moreover, findings from this study indicate that structures such as institutional policies, resources, and leadership are central to supporting student affairs professionals in their diversity work. Failure to support diversity and diversity efforts in student affairs would have detrimental and long-term impact on the development of students (Karkouti, 2015; Pope et al., 2009; Pope et al., 2014). These consequences are particularly important when considering the exponential growth of the multicultural student population and decline in the White student population in the U.S. (Humphreys, 2015). This trend signals a demand to research the ways in which student affairs preparation programs train their students, faculty, and staff to engage with all types of diverse constituents. Additional scholarship could focus on the extent to which institutional factors,

such as leadership and financial support, play a role in advancing or thwarting diversity and diversity efforts in student affairs.

Conclusion

Over the past several decades, education systems in the U.S. have experienced extreme changes in the demographics, languages, customs, and practices of their students (Smith, 2015). These cultural changes are due to growing rates of immigration, increased higher education access among traditionally underrepresented students, and the continued impact of globalization (Antonio & Clarke, 2011; Chang, 2013). The findings in this study highlight several strategies that respondents felt were effectively supporting diversity at their institutions, including student affairs professionals who were interculturally competent and having institutional financial support, central leadership, and strategic plans dedicated to supporting diversity. Findings also indicate that diversity is a nebulous concept that can either enhance or complicate programming for diverse individuals. Further research is required to explore how diversity is constructed and perceived in student affairs as well as measuring the extent to which the strategies identified truly support diversity on campuses across the nation. Nevertheless, this study suggests that having a clear definition about diversity and having institutional supports specifically designed to enhance diversity can create equitable and inclusive educational environments for students within the context of student affairs.

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Socialized Masculinity and Its Influence on Male Foster Youth Alumni Stopping-Out of College

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Abstract

Using a narrative approach and a gendered lens that focuses on hegemonic masculinity, this qualitative research study examined how foster care experiences and dominant forms of masculinities influenced the college-going experiences of cisgender men who are foster youth alumni. The study identified the in and out of college factors that led participants to exit college prematurely. Five participants were individually interviewed twice about their experiences in college. Findings from data analysis indicated that experiences in foster care coupled with subscribing to social expectations of maleness made establishing and maintaining meaningful relationships in college challenging. Male foster youth alumni, who are vulnerable due to their experiences, have perceptions of dominant masculine norms that negatively shaped their help-seeking behavior in college, as they viewed vulnerability in men as socially unacceptable. Therefore, in spite of the resilience they demonstrate by enrolling into college, for which they are often underprepared, male foster youth alumni face additional challenges in college due to a toxic belief that men can be successful without help. Recommendations are offered for student affairs professionals, as are areas for future research.

Keywords. foster youth alumni, help-seeking avoidance, higher education, masculinities, resilience

Introduction

Having experience in foster care and identifying as a man may have direct and indirect influences on an individual's experiences and success in college, yet those two intersecting identities have not been critically examined together. Male foster youth alumni (FYA), the term used throughout this article describing cisgender male youth with foster care experience who may identify as alumni of foster care, are the focus of this study.

While women have been surpassing men in overall college enrollment and degree attainment for decades (Case, 2011; U.S. Department of Education, 2015), research suggests this gender gap may be greater among marginalized groups, including youth emerging from foster care (Day, Dworsky, Fogarty, & Damashek, 2011). Various studies have stated that women FYA's first-year completion rates in college are 29%-45%, while male FYA first-year completion

rates are 21%-33% (Courtney, Dworsky, & Lee, 2010; Courtney et al., 2011). Additionally, Day et al. (2011), found that male FYA stop-out at a five percent higher rate than women FYA. Stop-out refers to students who exit college prematurely but intend to return to their program of study (Hoyt & Winn, 2004). Overall, women FYA reported more than twice the likelihood of achieving a bachelor's or graduate degree than male FYA (Kirk, Lewis, Brown, Nilsen, & Colvin, 2012). Therefore, examining how gender shapes the college student experience may be helpful in understanding the difference in success rates between men and women FYA.

Performing masculinity incorporates inherent socialized behaviors that cisgender men oftentimes subscribe to in order to maintain their identity as men (Brannon & David, 1976). One characteristic of dominant masculinity described in the literature is the idea that men should not show weakness or vulnerability (Edwards & Jones, 2009). Additionally, men often conclude that it is outside the traditional male role to express a need for help (Addis & Mahalik, 2003). When examining male FYA who have grown up experiencing vulnerable circumstances, such as being separated from family or facing regular instability, yet are socialized not to express their vulnerability to maintain their status as men, it becomes understandable how internalized ideas of masculinity can, without intervening support, lead to negative outcomes in college. The focus of this study is to better understand, without generalizing, factors influencing men with foster care experience to enter college and stop-out prematurely. Notably, the identity and lens of the lead researcher is that of a cisgender man.

Literature Review

Student Persistence

National data consistently indicate that approximately one-fifth to one-quarter of college students are at highest risk of dropout during their first year (Chen, 2012; Ryan, 2004). Moreover, the cumulative six-year dropout rate is about 56% (Chen, 2012). Tinto's (1975) model of persistence theory identified characteristics that have direct and indirect impacts on students' performance throughout college: personal attributes (e.g., sex, race, ability), pre-college experiences (e.g., grade-point averages, academic and social attainments), and family backgrounds (e.g., social status attributes, value climates, climate of expectations).

Astin's (1984) theory of student involvement proclaims that students must elicit sufficient effort to particular curriculums, activities, or organizations to increase persistence. The importance of students being actively involved in college led Astin (1984) to conclude, "if we conceive of involvement as occurring along a continuum, the act of dropping out can be viewed as the ultimate form of noninvolvement" (p. 524). Unfortunately, Gildersleeve (2011) found that nontraditional students (e.g., foster youth) felt that involvement on campus was not geared towards them and tended to be less involved.

Validation Theory

Support by guardians, encouragement by instructors and staff, and feelings of belonging on campus were found to create an affirming sense of value, allowing students to contribute to the learning that takes place in classrooms and on campus (Nora, Urick, & Cerecer, 2011). However, levels of support can vary for many students, particularly non-traditional and/or marginalized students, who struggle to feel valued, have difficulty getting involved on campus, and doubt their ability to succeed in college (Yorke, 2004; Chen, 2012; Barnett, 2011). In order to increase students' feelings of acceptance, validation theory was developed with particular applicability to low-income, first-generation college students as an alternative to integration or involvement that may lack consistency with college student experiences from diverse backgrounds (Gildersleeve, 2011; Rendón & Muñoz, 2011). Validation refers to the

intentional, proactive affirmation of students by in and out of class agents (i.e., faculty, student, and student affairs personnel, family members, peers) in order to: (a) validate students as creators of knowledge and as valuable members of the college learning community and (b) foster personal development and social adjustment (Rendón, 1994). Furthermore, validation can be viewed as a precondition for integration when relationships are built with staff and/or faculty who validate students, including FYA, particularly if they have a deep understanding of student's cultural and social background (Barnett, 2011).

College Men and Masculinities

Male gender roles have become helpful in understanding why men behave as they do. According to Brannon and David (1976), children are commonly assigned their gender role at birth, and despite how they identify later in life, those gender role expectations influence nearly every aspect of a person's life. Nevertheless, it is helpful to recognize that gender roles are socially constructed concepts influenced by cultural beliefs about how men ought to behave (Mahalik, Good, & Englar-Carlson, 2003).

Male gender norms. Brannon and David (1976) were one of the first to frame masculinities into a set of four socially constructed masculine norms, known as the *Male Code:* (a) Avoidance of acting in a feminine way; (b) striving to be recognized as successful; (c) never showing physical or emotional weakness; and (d) willing to engage in risky or thrill-seeking behavior, and even engaging in violence if necessary. The authors went on to state that when united, the four dimensions create an unattainable male image. Brannon and David's work has remained relevant, as it has been used as the foundation for contemporary work, such as Mahalik et al.'s (2003) masculine scripts, while also remaining consistent with recent research on masculine character traits (Messerschmidt, 2016) and college men's gender identity development (Edwards & Jones, 2009).

Reinforcing male gender roles. For many cisgender men, a conflict between the gender roles they feel obligated to fulfill and their actual behavior arises, in part due to various intersecting identities, including race, sexual orientation, class, etc. (Edwards & Jones, 2009). Many men find it difficult to break free from dominant male roles due to the relentless monitoring and criticism, primarily from other men, that comes from deviating from those roles (Harris & Harper, 2010). Additionally, the more men endorse dominant masculine ideologies, oftentimes due to peer-pressure, the more likely they will personally experience a host of issues including poorer self-esteem, problems with interpersonal intimacy, greater depression and anxiety, abuse of substances, problems with interpersonal violence, as well as greater overall psychological distress (Mahalik et al., 2003).

Help-seeking avoidance. Seeking help through counseling, academic advising, and other forms of emotional expressiveness are inconsistent with the restricted emotionality that hegemonic men tend to adopt (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Edwards & Jones, 2009). Additionally, educators may misunderstand inexpression as a lack of need, possibly leading to lower academic support and outcomes for college men (Davis, 2002). Instead of seeking necessary help, feelings of failure and fear of exposing those feelings to others, may only reduce the willingness to seek help (Wilmer & Levant, 2011). Fears of failure and intense pressure to succeed are two consequences accompanying men's obsession with achievement and success (Edwards & Jones, 2016; O'Neil, 1981).

Foster Youth Alumni

FYA, a group of individuals with personal experiences in foster care and who are now independent adults, are described as one of the most vulnerable populations in our society

(Okpych, 2012). FYA have experienced traumatic events in their lives that generally result in being separated from their families and placed in foster care, often through no fault of their own. While foster care is designed to ease trauma experienced by children and increase their well-being, many children are reportedly experiencing additional trauma while in care (Pringle, 1995; Riebschleger, Day, & Damashek, 2015). Different factors may contribute to FYA's trauma, including high turnover rates of caseworkers with overwhelming caseloads (Davis, 2006; Villegas, Rosenthal, O'Brian, & Pecora, 2014), multiple placement changes, and frequent changing of schools (Pecora, 2012), which affect stability and lead to lower academic achievement (Unrau, Font, & Rawls, 2012). The perpetual instability foster youth experience in care oftentimes prevents the development and maintenance of stable relationships once they exit or age-out of care (Merdinger, Hines, Osterling, & Wyatt, 2005; Samuels & Pryce, 2008).

FYA educational experiences. FYA's resilience in overcoming traumatic events in their lives is highlighted by their desire to enroll in college, despite the personal and educational barriers they face. While FYA graduate high school at lower rates than their non-foster care peers (Vacca, 2007), they have reported having college aspiration rates as high as 84% (Courtney, Terao, & Bost, 2004). However, in a longitudinal study of FYA, 33% of study participants had completed at least one year of college, compared to 53% of the national average (Courtney et al., 2010). Moreover, FYA graduate college at a rate as low as six percent (Day et al., 2011), compared to the national average of roughly 30% (Dworsky & Perez, 2010). Day, Riebschleger, Dworksy, Damashek, and Fogarty (2012) cited not having relationships with caring adults both in and out of college as the most frequent challenge for FYA.

Methodology

It is essential to understand the personal experiences of male FYA, challenges they face, and how they construct and define their realities. According to Perl and Noldon (2000), qualitative research "values individual voices and aims to understand individual cases" (p. 38). Furthermore, Mertens (2015) stated that in qualitative research, individual perspectives incorporate different "beliefs, values, intentions, and meanings, as well as social, cultural, and physical contextual factors that affect causal relationships" (p. 238). Therefore, a qualitative research design was the most appropriate for purposes of this study.

Research Questions and Theoretical Foundations

Three research questions guided this study: (a) What were the experiences of male FYA while in foster care, and how did those experiences influence their decision to pursue higher education? (b) What were the in and out of college factors that caused them to stop-out of college? (c) What role did masculinity play in their decisions, behaviors, and experiences related to higher education?

Validation theory (Rendón, 1994) and the male code (Brannon & David, 1976) were used to guide the design of this study and the data collection procedures. Using validation theory allowed for a better understanding of participant experiences in building relationships, seeking help, and their need for proactive support by faculty and staff. The male code, reinforced by current research on masculine character traits, provided a framework that was consistent with socialized masculinities described by participants and helped simplify data organization, while also offering a critically examined theory to help formulate socialized masculinity (Mahalik et al., 2003; Messerschmidt, 2016).

Narrative Approach

Socially constructed ideas can best be gathered through interactive interviews with direct and open-ended responses (Mertens, 2015). Correspondingly, narrative inquiry is described as relying on life experiences of participants as narrated by those who live them (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2014). In order to generate narrative inquiry in this study, data analysis involved complete interview readings to ascertain general themes, multiple readings of each transcript to track differences at play within each and how they relate to one another, and linking themes with theoretical literature to deepen the researcher's understandings of meanings and emerging stories (Jones et. al., 2014). Using narrative inquiry allowed participants to shape their stories by sharing the relationship between their stories and the quality of their experiences (Jones et al., 2014).

Participants

This research study focused on a specific population sector. Criterion for participation in this study were: (a) cisgender men, (b) 19 years or older, (c) had exited foster care after the age of 16, (d) enrolled and attended an accredited two or four-year college, and (e) stopped-out of college within three years of the study. Participants were not compensated for participating in this study. Additionally, participants were assigned the pseudonyms Rico, Mack, Nate, Ethan, and Jay to protect their identities. Table 1 offers supplemental participant information.

Table 1. Supplemental Participant Information

Participant Name:	Participant Information:
Rico	20-year-old White male In foster care since age 8 due to abuse Attended flagship public university Stopped-out after 20 months
Mack	21-year-old White male In foster care since age 15 due to the death of his mother Attended community college Stopped-out after 2 and ½ months
Nate	20-year-old Black male Involvement in child welfare since an infant due to neglect Attended out-of-state public university Stopped-out after 7-8 months
Ethan	21-year-old White male In foster care since age 14 due to neglect Attended private for-profit institution Stopped-out twice within 9 months
Jay	20-year-old Black male In foster care since age 17 due to behavior issues Only one placement and school change Attended small public state college Stopped-out after 4 months

Note. Information collected from participants during research process.

Data Collection

Two in-person semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to provide what Mertens (2015) described as flexibility in participant's answers, while providing structure with an interview protocol to help guide the process. Interviews were conducted in-person over a two-month period. Examples of questions include, (a) can you tell me about your foster care

experience, and (b) what does being a man mean to you? (See Appendix for full interview protocol).

Appendix: *Interview protocol questions provided to all participants.*

First Interview Questions:

> Can you tell me about your foster care experience?
> How has being in foster care/state ward affected your decision to go to college?
> Why did you decide to go to college?
> Tell me about your experiences going to college?
>> – What did you do in your free time?
> Who did you make connections with in college, if any?
> How long ago did you stop attending college?
> What factors led you to leave college?
> Is there anything else you would like to share?

Second Interview Questions:

> Was there anything in our last interview that you wanted to tell me more about?
> What does being a man mean to you?
> How do you think being male affected you while in care?
> How did being male affect your college going experiences?
> Tell me your experiences of asking or seeking help from others while in college, or in general.
>> – Who did you seek help from the most while in college?
> What would your advice be for professionals working with youth in foster care interested in applying to college?
> What would your advice be for college staff and faculty who interact with foster youth alumni enrolled in college?
> Is there anything else you would like to share?

Data Analysis

Data analysis used a three-step process explained by Mertens (2015): (a) preparing data for analysis, (b) data exploration, and (c) data reduction. First, interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Second, researchers reviewed, selected, and organized data addressing research questions. Third, notes were used to create categories that emerged from data and reflected each participant's story. However, acknowledging the use of a narrative analysis and ensuring the "story remains the central focus"(Johnson-Bailey, 2002, p. 323) was important, as was ensuring data was analyzed using a procedure termed the *principal identifiers of salience*, originated by Alexander (1998), which used omission, frequency, and emphasis to sort through the data. As themes emerged, participant experiences of maleness were consistent with the male code described by Brannon and David (1976), reinforcing the framework's applicability.

<div align="center">

Results

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Through an in-depth data analysis process, three main themes emerged: relationships, vulnerability, and help-seeking behavior. Those themes, including subthemes, help in understanding participants' experiences before entering and during college. Those experiences are described below.

Relationships

Relationships in care. Foster youth are commonly separated from one's family either due to abuse, neglect, abandonment, or even the death of their parents, meaning one of the most important relationships in participants' lives is adversely affected. While participants often maintained a relationship with their biological family, they shared that entering foster care meant being introduced to many new individuals who had decision-making authority over their lives, such as case workers, foster parents, therapists, legal representatives, and service providers. Participants mentioned having both positive and negative relationships with these individuals; however, most of those relationships were inconsistent and changed often.

Youth in foster care change placements an average of five times (Villegas et al., 2014), which was consistent with participants' experiences, leading them to change schools often, in turn making it difficult to establish and maintain relationships with school staff. As a result, their academic standing and preparation for post-secondary education was disrupted. Adding to their concern was a negatively impacted social life resulting from their foster care involvement and overall instability. Ethan expressed this sentiment by saying, "I didn't really make that many friends in care. Every time you make a friend, it's like [snaps fingers] you'd be moved."

Participants, however, found sources of comfort while in care. Foster care provided participants with financial opportunities to go to college. Many FYAs are prospective first-generation college students, meaning that their biological families are less familiar with college-planning processes. It was often their relationships with professionals in their lives that helped them understand what college resources were available to them and how to utilize them. Mack valued supportive professional staff, stating, "I feel that they're willing to do it because they want *me* to succeed."

Variations of relationships in college. In spite of their circumstances while growing up, participants demonstrated resilience by ultimately deciding to enroll in college. However, having few meaningful relationships while in college made persisting difficult for them. Most participants had few friendships, and those they had were often unsupportive or inhibited them from being successful. Participants admitted wanting more supportive relationships but struggled to establish them. While some faculty and staff offered general support to participants, those relationships were often not meaningful enough for students to be successful. Jay recalled having two professors reach out to him who recognized his potential, but added that he was unable to connect with them when he most needed help.

Partly due to their involvement in foster care, participants tended to be vulnerable, distrustful, and independent. Even though they demonstrated independence, participants were not adequately prepared for college. This created a paradox of independent students who still needed guidance from others, but lacked effective and supportive relationships in and out of college.

Understanding unique experiences of foster care alumni. Participants felt misunderstood in college due to their unique background. Their experiences, which were often traumatic and different from traditional students' experiences, affected their ability to establish meaningful relationships in college. Rico recalled difficulties he faced, comparing them to other students', saying, "Some of these kids [FYA] need that extra drive" because they "do not have it from their parents or grandparents, like other students." He added that if someone goes out of their way to reach out and help FYA students "it really does mean a lot" to them.

It was clear participants possessed the capacity for building relationships, as evidenced by four participants crediting at least one trusting relationship with a professional they had while in foster care as a main motivating factor to enroll in college. However, participants' concerns over stereotypes often associated with FYA being bad kids, prevented them from deepening relationships with college staff or peers. Feeling shame from their experiences in foster care and fearing unwanted pity associated with speaking openly about their identity exacerbated closed-off tendencies. In order to help alleviate aforementioned concerns, participants felt faculty and staff could be more proactive in reaching out to students, instead of relying on students to be responsible for establishing relationships.

Vulnerability

The *vulnerability* theme is difficult to separate from the *relationships* theme, as vulnerability may stem from severed relationships with trusted adults. However, making clear differences between themes is important, as they are separate concepts irrespective of overlaps between them.

Instability and lack of trust. The vulnerability participants experienced due to severed familial relationships was only the first in a string of broken relationships that yielded a slow depreciation of trust in adults, which later affected their relationships at school. Nate touched on the impact instability caused in his life, saying, "yeah, over time I felt like that affected me, just going to a lot of different schools. I wasn't able to really build a good relationship with my teachers or with friends."

Though participants changed placements and schools often, they felt their caseworkers were supposed to be a constant in their lives. It was a caseworker's job to care, advocate, and build trusting relationships with youth. Unfortunately, mainly due to being overwhelmed with large caseloads in a stress-filled environment, caseworkers regularly changed often. Participants, often in vain, felt that their caseworkers should be consistent enough in their lives to build trust with them. Mack emphasized that point by saying, "I think that absolutely, when you're in the foster care system you want to have somebody that you know you can absolutely trust and a caseworker as one of them should be an easy one." Mack went on to say he did not trust the majority of his caseworkers.

Vulnerability growing up. Before entering foster care, most participants experienced inconsistency and instability in their homes, causing them to feel vulnerable. Relatedly, participants generally did not express their emotions due to observing family members suppressing their emotions growing up, while simultaneously receiving societal messages that men should be emotionally unexpressive. Rico's withholding of emotion was re-enforced by his father early in life. Not only did Rico's dad not support him in his extracurricular activities, he would not cooperate in mandated family therapy. Rico stated, "My dad never wanted to participate, always told the therapist, 'I don't want to talk to you, get out of our house, blah blah blah." Suppression of emotions often led to self-destructive behaviors. Some participants partook in habits such as drinking, drugs, truancy, and unprotected sex. These types of behaviors generated a negative self-image among participants, causing isolation from positive individuals, fearing those individuals may not want to associate with them. Negative self-images left participants vulnerable with few strong, positive relationships.

Vulnerability in college. Participants started college with a sense of optimism and sought a fresh start by being open to new experiences and support. However, when academic unpreparedness and unique challenges related to reaching independence as a FYA arose, participants often regressed. Rico shared:

> As far as later on [in college], when things got hard for me in my own life, I just kind of isolated myself. I didn't really like asking for help or care to get to know anybody, like how I did previously…when I isolated myself, I made it difficult for myself and it stressed me out because I didn't really have any extra help when I truly needed it the most.

An inability to express a need for help correlated directly with unease related to sharing their background with others. Participants felt seeking help would negatively affect their college experiences due to being perceived as vulnerable, which participants viewed negatively and contradictory to their identity as men. Regarding the need for vulnerability in sharing his background, Jay stated, "I don't think it would change anything. They [college faculty and staff] [are] just going to do their job and go on about their business." Participants felt sharing of their past experiences would only yield perceptions of weakness instead of resilience, causing increased feelings of vulnerability when circumstances in college became more difficult. Yet, participants indicated wanting faculty to know their foster care status, though circumstances were never in place to comfortably do so.

Societal expectations. Society's expectations of what it means to be a cisgender and hegemonic man, which can fluctuate based on various identifying factors, played a significant role in participants' lives. Participants were keenly aware of what society deems appropriate for men. Participants felt that to be seen as men, it was important to be leaders, have others look up to them, be the breadwinner, be aggressive, have multiple sex partners, and not show weakness. Rico expressed his thoughts on masculinity by saying, "Being a man, I believe, is being successful, you know. I don't think you can call yourself a man if you aren't successful, or aren't on your way to becoming successful." Rico felt anything less than success would result in social ramifications that would question his masculinity.

Participants concluded that being a traditional man is synonymous with being successful and being successful is synonymous with graduating from college. Nate admits that being successful was his "main motivator" to attend college. Pressures for men to succeed are so high that adverse effects resulted in a rooted fear of failure for participants. Since failure went against characteristics of their identity as men, it created feelings of shame for some participants. Rico feared stopping out of college would only repeat mistakes made by his family, saying:

> I would say it kind of makes me feel like a loser in a way, like I'm just going to turn out to be, well not necessarily like my mom or dad, but I just feel like without that degree I won't have the skills necessarily to be successful. So, when I dropped out of college it kind of made me depressed in a way.

Academic difficulties participants faced in college led them to believe they were set up for failure. Participant's low trust of others due to experiences in care and habit of not seeking help resulted in minimal help-seeking behavior; often not fulfilling their academic and emotional needs. Whereas participants had various campus resources to utilize when they feared failure, subscribing to masculine norms blocked help-seeking behaviors. Seeking help was perceived as negative and weak by participants, even when doing so would be advantageous to their goal of being successful. Student services in place to improve academic standing for participants were underutilized, preventing success, which ironically is a hegemonic masculine ideal.

Help-Seeking Behavior

Participants' turbulent relationships in care likely generated perceptions that relationships could not be stable or trustworthy. Such perceptions, along with traumatic experiences before

and during care, and masculine expectations to not appear weak, created barriers to help-seeking behavior.

Individualized help-seeking. Participants recognized their inability to seek help due to fear of looking vulnerable or unintelligent, not to say they did not utilize or would be unreceptive to support had it been offered to them. While this may seem inconsistent with the vulnerability theme's discussion on help-seeking avoidance, it is important to acknowledge participants' willingness and attempts to seek help.

Participant's desire to succeed and excitement of starting college offered opportunities for openness. Unfortunately, those efforts only seemed to occur when circumstances were manageable in their lives, not necessarily when life became difficult. For example, participants discussed instances of seeking help when familiar with academic material, yet avoiding help when material was unfamiliar. Reasoning for such behavior was not clear, but seemed to originate from masculine tendencies of feeling obligated to know information. Moreover, participants' willingness to seek help seemed fragile, as it would often only take difficulty in one area to derail a student from persisting, aligning with Mack's experience. "I am pretty good at most – pretty good at most subjects, except I'm not good at writing. I'm horrible. Never understood it. I don't care for it at all. So, I just gave up [in college]," Mack recalled.

Not utilizing relationships. It was clear participants did not have the relationships with faculty and staff necessary to be adequately supported. Participants inferred more time was needed to build relationships and establish trust. Therefore, it was unsurprising that having unsupportive on-campus relationships with whom to seek help from likely contributed to participants' stopping-out.

Participants were not incapable of establishing trusting relationships, as evidenced by relationships with family, foster parents, and service providers from their time in foster care, yet something within them prevented outreach to them when faced with obstacles, both academic and emotional. Participants consistently expressed an underutilization of established relationships when they were facing challenges in college, a behavior common among college students. A need for support initiated by a support network was also expressed with a hope of being held accountable, as demonstrated by peers' parents. Nate emphasized this by saying, "It wasn't like my mom was calling and checking in on me like other students whose parents call and asking them 'okay, how are your grades?'" In essence, participants felt the burden to seek help should not reside solely on them, as they still yearned for supportive relationships.

Overall, participants were conditioned not to seek help due to their upbringing, experiences in foster care, and adherence to socialized masculine roles. Participants infrequently reached out to their supportive network established while in foster care. Reasons ranged from a strong desire to disassociate from the foster care system to a fear of exposing their vulnerability and being viewed as weak. Jay best summarized college male FYA behavior by saying, "I don't know. I really just don't like asking for help because it's going to make me look dumb. I guess me falling back made me want to quit too." While certainly more complex, Jay touched on a paradoxical sentiment: participants were more comfortable in actually failing than being perceived as failures.

Discussion

Participants' experiences were generally consistent with literature on both foster youth who went to college and college men and masculinities. Participants' experiences in foster care, coupled with characteristics of socialized masculinity, created a masking of their true

feelings of being hurt, afraid, and alone (Edwards & Jones, 2009). Participant vulnerability, attributed in part to broken relationships in foster care, created hesitancy in establishing new relationships while in college. Furthermore, participants placed importance on being perceived as successful (O'Neil, 1981), while attempting to avoid perceptions of weakness or vulnerability (Addis & Mahalik, 2003), leading to ineffective help-seeking behavior (Edwards & Jones, 2009; Good & Wood, 1995). Ultimately, participants' behavior led to stopping-out of college.

Validation theory's premise proved consistent with participants' experiences in college, as they were mostly first-generation and nontraditional students of diverse contextual backgrounds who were not well integrated on campus (Rendón & Muñoz, 2011). Participants did not feel as though they received the interpersonal validation from validating agents to promote student personal development, social adjustment, or social support (Rendón & Muñoz, 2011). Still, relationships were at the core of participants' meaning-making process related to their college-going experiences, as broken relationships with family resulted in participants being placed into foster care. Consequently, a difficulty in establishing relationships in foster care continued into college, adversely affecting their success (Villegas et al., 2014; Day et al., 2012).

While the instability of being FYA may seem unrelated to the college-going experiences of participants, Tinto's (1975) model of persistence ties students' college performance to their personal attributes, precollege experiences, and family background. Therefore, it is important to consider participants' relationships and experiences in foster care, which were largely negative, to better understand how they navigated college. It is not surprising participants had difficulty establishing validating relationships in college.

Subscribing to socialized masculine norms may have made the relationship-building process in college more difficult. Society inadvertently conditions men to be invulnerable, which is implicit in Brannon and David's (1976) male code as well as in more recent literature on dominant masculine traits (Mahalik et al., 2003; Edwards & Jones 2009). Participants' gender roles are noted because they help explain the reality that participants are vulnerable due to their experiences in foster care and feel incapable of showing their feelings due to inconsistency with socially constructed masculine norms. Therefore, participants rarely shared foster care experiences openly with others due to associated stigma and decreased trust levels with adults.

Male FYA's vulnerability is intertwined with participants' broken relationships, regular instability, and distrust, which created a lowered self-esteem and feelings of isolation. Therefore, based on findings of this study, it is understandable why male FYA may strive to achieve society's dominant depiction of maleness (Brannan & David, 1976; Messerschmidt, 2016) to increase their self-worth and mask their true selves and emotions to present a more confident persona (Edwards & Jones, 2009). Masking emotions made authentic relationships more difficult to establish between participants and others while in foster care and college, inhibiting them from reaching their desired level of success, despite being resilient.

Many participants felt alone and misunderstood in college, even with willing support systems in place. Consequently, participants found it challenging to build trust with others, disclose their foster care status, and properly express challenges they faced in college. Adding to their frustrations were false societal narratives that men are inherently confident and successful (Brannan & David, 1976; Edwards & Jones, 2009), which participants expressed were ideas they felt pressured to adopt. Participants exhibited confident behaviors despite their feelings of inadequacy. Consequently, a false perception was created that participants were not in need of help, a sentiment consistent with the literature (Davis, 2002).

Good and Wood (1995) state it is outside the traditional male role for an individual to express a need for help, oftentimes leading to lower academic self-efficacy and further limiting academic help-seeking (Wilmer & Levant, 2011), a behavior consistent with participants in this study. O'Neil (1981) found that fears of failure and intense pressure to succeed are two consequences accompanying men's fixation with achievement and success, a sentiment shared by all participants. Participants' avoidance of appearing as failures coupled with the idea that seeking help would negatively affect their masculinity created a lose-lose situation for them as their need for help increased during their time in college.

Recommendations for Student Affairs Practice

College personnel have opportunities to increase the rates of persistence and success for college male FYA. For that to occur, there needs to be an increased on-campus visibility of male FYA, as well as an awareness and deeper understanding by college personnel of FYA's unique background. Doing so has the potential to increase male FYA's comfort in better connecting with campus staff and faculty. Additionally, college personnel should have a deeper understanding of socialized gender roles and their impact on students' help-seeking behavior.

Male FYA should have opportunities to voluntarily share their identity and experiences. Additionally, student affairs professionals should be informed of those experiences in order to be supportive of open sharing. To be better informed of FYA's experiences and backgrounds, student affairs professionals could attend conferences, trainings, or read literature related to FYA experiences. Additionally, the utilization of validation theory can increase this population's feelings of acceptance and potential impact on the campus-learning environment, as well as place a larger onus on college personnel to reach out to students. Furthermore, creating programming specifically designed for FYA can offer opportunities for establishing supportive adult relationships, sharing personal experiences, while simultaneously challenging stigmas associated with FYA's experience by focusing on their in and out of class resilience.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study focused primarily on cisgender male FYA's college-going experiences. While participants held varying racial, college institution, and foster care experiences, this study did not examine those important differences. Studies focusing on the intersectionality of college students with varying lengths of foster care experiences and other genders, races, and sexual orientations, could highlight unknown challenges and barriers. Furthermore, examining differences between public, private, and community college experiences for FYA could prove insightful. Accordingly, having additional data could allow college personnel to adequately support vulnerable foster youth in college and increase their chances of success.

Limitations

This research study was qualitative in nature, was an exploration into these five participants' experiences, and should therefore not be generalizable across the population. Among other common limitations associated with this populace, criteria were specific and made identifying and contacting a diverse participant pool more difficult. The aforementioned challenges magnified the limitation of time to conduct the study and finish gathering data.

Conclusion

This study sought to explore how experiences in foster care and how socialized masculine characteristics influenced male FYA's college-going experiences. This study used a gendered lens perspective, which helped identify gaps in literature that has yet to explore gender's effects on FYA in college. Findings suggest that male FYA face unique challenges to persist in higher

education that require interventions to help address their specific needs. Masculine norms coupled with trauma and instability experienced by male FYA inhibits establishing meaningful relationships and seeking effective help, reducing their chances of college success. Based on these findings, student affairs professionals can be better informed on FYA experiences and how socialized masculinities can affect their experiences in college in an effort to support persistence.

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Student-Athletes: Academics and Identity for Black Male College Students in Revenue-Generating Sports – A Literature Review

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Abstract

This literature review delves into the documented social and academic experiences of Black student-athletes competing at the highest level of competition in the most high-profile, revenue-generating sports (most typically defined as football and men's basketball) for university athletics in the United States. Black student-athletes as a whole have lower graduation rates than their fellow student-athlete peers, and social commentators and researchers have suggested that they are widely and uniquely exploited by the institution of collegiate athletics. Issues such as "dumb jock" and "dumb negro" stereotype threats, inequitable social treatment by peers and professors, insufficient academic support for athletes, the imposed social isolation of athletes on campus, and the roles of institution type and student identity development are discussed in how they affect the experiences of Black male student-athletes in college, specifically those participating in revenue-generating, high-profile sports. Likewise, the dual nature of the identity of student-athlete is analyzed, and the various hardships and social stigma faced by these competitive males in football and basketball on college campuses are explored in depth.

Keywords: Black college students, higher education, stereotype threat, student-athlete, university athletics

For the greater population, the most salient feature of higher education institutions is their revenue-generating sports – typically defined as men's football and basketball teams (Bates, 1997). However, this enterprise goes beyond March Madness brackets and bowl season when dissecting the lives of student-athletes off the court or field. Saffici and Pellegrino (2012) defined "student-athlete" as a term indicating that being a student is first priority, and being an athlete is second. However, as the literature reveals, this prioritization is not always upheld. While athletic programs were initially introduced to supplement the academic experience by adding school spirit, personal development opportunities, and institutional visibility, the literature illustrates that college athletics has actually led to mixed or adverse outcomes for student-athletes (Saffici & Pellegrino, 2012). This literature review highlights the experiences of Black male student-athletes in revenue-generating sports at the Division 1 level – the highest tier of competition in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) – by focusing on their unique identities and academic achievement as they must navigate being both a student and an athlete (Thelin & Wiseman, 1989).

Identities: Black, Student, and Athlete

Among student-athletes, personal identity development is rooted in a struggle for balance between the identities of student, athlete, and other prominent identities like race. Within the literature, it is revealed that student-athletes endure all of the challenges experienced by non-athlete students in college, in addition to the tribulation inherent to their sport-related activities, which is further magnified for Black students facing additional pressures and

discriminatory treatment due to their race (Melendez, 2009; Singer, 2016; Steinfeldt, Reed, & Steinfeldt, 2010; Watt & Moore, 2001). The challenges posed by participating in collegiate sports create unique issues for development among Black students in higher education, particularly in regards to their identity development – being an athlete creates additional racial identity tensions, along with the inherent conflicts in navigating the complicated dual identity of student-athlete (Melendez, 2009).

Blackness Among Male Student-Athletes. The realm of revenue-generating collegiate athletics (men's football and basketball) does not exist within a vacuum of outside politics – thus, external identities play a powerful role in the experiences of student-athletes. Racial identity, in particular, has a dramatic effect on the experience of student-athletes – some have referred to the experience of Black student-athletes in NCAA Division I sports as "akin to the merchandising of human beings" (Griffin, 2017, p. 354) and "21st century Jim Crow" (Jackson, 2018). Black student-athletes, in contrast to their athletic peers, have the lowest six-year graduation rates of any racial group – 55.2%, compared with 69.3% for student-athletes on the whole – while constituting roughly half of all NCAA Division I football and basketball teams (Beamon, 2014; Griffin, 2017; Harper, 2018). This not only further feeds into stereotypes of Black student-athletes lacking intellectual capabilities, but the existence of such categorizations has been shown to influence the thoughts and behaviors of those who are targeted by them, creating an ouroboros-like self-perpetuating cycle of prejudice and marginalization (Griffin, 2017; Steinfeldt et al., 2010). Socially, Black student-athletes consistently report being negatively viewed and treated on their campuses compared to their fellow, non-Black student-athletes, which includes discriminatory actions from faculty members (Beamon, 2014; Edwards, 1984; Griffin, 2017; Harper, 2006; Melendez, 2009; Sailes, 1993; Singer, 2016; Steinfeldt et al., 2010). Given the negative experiences of so many Black student-athletes, some have come to question whether access to higher education is worth the physical and social hardships endured as part of the Black male student-athlete experience in sports like football and basketball (Griffin, 2017). Research on the specific disenfranchisement of the significant subgroup of Black male student-athletes in revenue-producing college sports continues to be at the forefront of academic discussions on the role and treatment of student-athletes in higher education.

Student-Athlete as a Singular Identity. Beyond racial identity, the identity of 'student-athlete' itself carries a degree of stigma on many college campuses. Partially due to a history of deliberate isolation from the rest of the student body via housing assignments and rigid scheduling (Carodine, Almond, & Gratto, 2001; Melendez, 2009; Miller & Kissinger, 2009; Watt & Moore, 2001), campuses are rife with negative stereotypes and preconceptions about the high-profile population of competitive student-athletes, regardless of ethnicity or culture, from both non-student-athletes and staff/faculty members (Griffin, 2017; Melendez, 2009; Sailes, 1993). The disconnection to campus life often results in a negative experience for the student-athlete resulting in personal isolation, which worsens if removed from their sport by injury or other extenuating circumstances (Carodine et al., 2001). Not only are student-athletes aware of these negative views, but some have reported attempting to hide their athletic status, going so far as to avoid dressing in ways that clearly mark them as athletes – wearing large, over-ear headphones and university-sponsored sweatpants are instant indicators of student-athlete status on many campuses (Griffin, 2017). The most prominent of the stereotypes levied at student-athletes is that of the "dumb jock" – a belief that students who are athletically gifted must be intellectually lacking, and given less rigorous coursework than their non-athletic peers to, above all, retain eligibility (Griffin, 2017; Howard-Hamilton & Watt, 2001; Miller & Kissinger, 2009; Sailes, 1993; Steinfeldt et al., 2010). However, it is important

to note how this particular prejudice correlates to a common stereotype that is levied at Black students, sometimes referred to as the "dumb negro" stereotype, that traces its origins to Jim Crow racist caricatures (Jardim, 2016; Steele, 1997; Steinfeldt et al.; 2010).

Student-Athlete as Dual Identity. The identity of student-athlete is, by nature, a hybridization of identities. Student-athletes are presented with a majority of the challenges typical of any college student (reading, studying, group projects, homework, presentations, etc.), with the additional pressures and responsibilities of being a competitive amateur athlete (training, traveling, practices, etc.) (Griffin, 2017; Watt & Moore, 2001). For all students, there are issues with making decisions about careers, identifying personal values, forming interpersonal relationships, developing integrity, and achieving independence and autonomy (Carodine et al., 2001). Due to the duality of the student-athlete designation, there is a gap in personal development. Difficulties of role conflict, role strain, value alienation, and exploitation all contribute to a gap in personal development; this absence suggests that the student-athlete faces additional challenges attached to their multiple roles (Carodine et al., 2001; Harper, 2006). This degree of conflict between the dual identities of 'student' and 'athlete,' often causes a more prominent connection to one over the other, especially given the greater perceived opportunities one aspect may present over the other (Knott, 2016; Steinfeldt et al., 2010). However, there have been indications from the literature that each identity can develop concurrently and without conflict when both are encouraged and catalyzed by effective college personnel (Knott, 2016; Steinfeldt et al.; 2010). The Black student-athlete takes on multiple, challenging identity roles, which are forced by necessity to coexist – this forced adaptation can cause conflicts of personal development in the absence of such effective guidance and support (Steinfeldt et al.; 2010).

Academic Issues

The literature reveals that for student-athletes at Division I institutions, the academic component of their college experience can have a myriad of advantages and disadvantages for their learning outcomes. It is occasionally argued that an institution's focus to maintain a strong athletic program in reputation and performance has taken precedence over the scholastic quality provided to student-athletes, as was the case with the academically non-rigorous "dummy courses" offered to student-athletes at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill (Ganim & Sayers, 2014; Harper & Donnor, 2017; Saffici & Pellegrino, 2012). Hence, they argue, there is documented evidence of lowered academic standards for student-athletes in the admission process and even "preferential treatment" for student-athletes once they are enrolled (Saffici & Pellegrino, 2012). As previously mentioned, Black student-athletes face inequitable grading from their professors, likely based, in-part, on the professors' belief in the academic advantages offered to student-athletes, or their adherence, consciously or not, to the racist belief in the lack of academic worth of Black students compared to their peers (Beamon, 2014; Edwards, 1984; Griffin, 2017; Sailes, 1993). The literature stresses the dire nature of focusing on the academic development of student-athletes, as a 2016 study revealed that 45% of Football Bowl Subdivision School football players are not receiving degrees, while only 2% of Division I football players are expected to make it to the National Football League (Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016). Graduation rates for Black student-athletes are consistently lower than their already low-graduating peer student-athletes, according to 2018 data (Harper, 2018).

Time Commitment. The concept of excelling in both academics and athletics begins with the recruitment process, as promises of the prioritization of academics are often elicited to parents and interested students (Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016). Student-athletes then

transition to higher education within what has been termed a "Magic Kingdom" period where it seems that the possibilities are truly endless for them in the classroom and with their team (Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016, p. 502). However, this mindset is dangerous because, as a result, it is far too common for student-athletes to develop unrealistic expectations of their academic abilities and intense schedules. So, when these student-athletes are inevitably faced with adversity and the sometimes harsh reality of college courses, they often begin to lose confidence, self-efficacy, and academic motivation as they become fearful of the "dumb jock" stereotype that has already begun to actualize in their minds and identities (Edwards, 1984; Griffin, 2017; Howard-Hamilton & Watt, 2001; Miller & Kissinger, 2009). As previously mentioned, this stereotype threat is two-fold for Black student athletes, who also have the "dumb negro" stereotype to contend with (Edwards, 1984; Jardim, 2016; Owens & Massey, 2011; Sailes, 1993; Steele, 1997). The way this stereotype manifests in higher education is astonishing, as the literature notes that even professors are guilty of expressing micro-aggressions towards student-athletes concerning their academic abilities (Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016; Sailes, 1993). While there have been efforts to limit the amount of time these student-athletes can spend on their sport, the literature emphasizes the toll that mental and physical exhaustion, injury, and recovery can take on the ability to focus on academics, let alone make it a priority (Carodine et al., 2001).

Academic Support. Given this challenging balance, academic support of student-athletes is a vital concern; however, the literature presents mixed opinions about whether or not the structures currently in place are best suited for supporting student-athletes, let alone Black student-athletes. For student-athletes at Division I institutions, there is often a silo effect created when support services for academics are housed within the athletic department, rather than externally in other areas of the university structure (Miller & Kissinger, 2009). Additionally, the literature emphasizes that housing academic programming within athletic facilities has implied to student-athletes that their academic needs are substantially different from non-athletes, and thus has created the perception that the general campus academic cultural environment is unsuitable for students of their caliber (Miller & Kissinger, 2009). This then "subtly encourage[s] student-athletes to view themselves less as students and more as athletes" (Miller & Kissinger, 2009, p. 57). Subsequently, if academic performance begins to decline as the emphasis shifts more towards athletics, Jayakumar and Comeaux (2016) argue that because these facilities and support services exist, the decline is perceived to be solely the fault of the student-athlete. Coaches claim that struggling student-athletes are simply unable to manage their time or avoid social commitments, deflecting any blame they might be responsible for (Jayakumar and Comeaux; 2016). While some sources highlight positives regarding the existence of internal resources within athletics departments as being more convenient and relevant to student-athletes and their specific NCAA eligibility requirements, others articulate that this policy has major negative consequences (Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016; Navarro, 2015). Two of the greatest consequences are shifting the blame of poor academic performance onto student-athletes, and placing too much emphasis on maintaining their academic eligibility rather than academic flourishing (Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016; Navarro, 2015). This is evident, in part, in the selection of academic majors by student-athletes. One study revealed that student-athletes, who chose majors based on 'fit', in regards to interests and career aspirations, were typically non-revenue generating student-athletes who received advice from campus professionals outside of athletics (Navarro, 2015). In contrast, the revenue-generating student-athletes who either consulted exclusively or primarily with athletic-housed advisors were less concerned about 'fit', which led many of these student-athletes to subsequently feel remorseful toward their major choice (Navarro, 2015).

Given these differing perspectives on the advantages and disadvantages of internal athletics resources, it appears that a greater focus must be placed on the organizational culture of athletic departments, and how appropriately student-athletes are being supported through their academic journeys (Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016). Overall, there is a "consistent body of research suggesting student-athletes, particularly football and basketball players, may not be achieving the [same] cognitive outcomes from college as their non-athletic peers" (Miller & Kissinger, 2009, p. 202), in part because of the insufficiency of academic support services located within athletics departments. Thus, the insufficient academic structures and services provided by many athletic departments, coupled with the extensive time commitments placed on student-athletes, can result in harmful, unfavorable effects on academic performance for student-athletes (Miller & Kissinger, 2009). It can be extrapolated, due to the lower graduation rates and academic performances for Black student-athletes, that this sub-group is likely experiencing additional hardship in regards to academic performance, in part due to internal stereotype threats as well as inequitable treatment by members of the academic community on their campuses (Griffin, 2017; Harper, 2006; Steele, 1997).

Black Student-Athletes at Black Colleges

Because of the similarities between Black-targeted forms of stereotype threat and the challenges often faced by Black athletes, one might assume that Black student-athletes at predominantly Black colleges, like Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), are able to circumvent many of the challenges faced by their Black student-athlete peers at Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs), as Black institutions have a rich history of successfully educating Black males to postsecondary matriculation (Gasman, Nguyen, & Commodore, 2017). However, while there are indications that Black student-athletes at Black colleges enjoy more positive relationships with professors and less isolation from the social functions of their campuses than their Black student-athlete peers at PWIs, there are still indications that they face comparable levels of negative social stigma and low public regard from their campuses as a whole (Cooper & Hall, 2016; Steinfeldt et al., 2010). While race can significantly contribute to the negative experiences of college student-athletes – and that interplay merits serious academic discussion – student-athlete stigma inarguably exists beyond the bounds of race as well.

Conclusion

Past scholarship on college student-athletes in revenue-generating sports have documented a number of consistent patterns within the institution of American higher education: a pervasiveness of negative identity stereotypes, chaotic scheduling, a history of isolation from the general student population, and a struggle to exceed the socially-imposed, low academic expectations of them – many of which are effects dramatically and negatively enhanced for Black student-athletes. Taken together, these findings paint a portrait of a hostile and generally inhospitable landscape within higher education for Black student-athletes in revenue-generating sports. However, future research must be conducted to understand the elements of bias and prejudice shown to exist among faculty and non-student-athletes towards their Black student-athlete peers, in order to identify a remedy for their current stigmatization. Likewise, much work needs to be completed to examine the efficacy and potential deleterious effects of the well-intentioned academic support services for student-athletes offered at various higher education institutions: it is debatable whether these implementations are inequitably applied or effective along racial lines. If, as some studies suggest, numerous currently-employed athletics academic support services significantly hinder the academic performance and identity development of Black student-athletes, then serious reassessment must be applied

on behalf of higher education institutions to improve the misguided and counterproductive academic services offered to student-athletes.

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Does Emotional Intelligence Predict Persistence among Students on Academic Probation?

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of emotional intelligence (EI) on persistence among students on academic probation utilizing the Multi-Health Systems EQ-i 2.0 Higher Education Assessment. Binary logistic regression was used to determine the manner in which EI and other student-level variables of interest affect the likelihood of college students' persistence to the following semester. When holding all other independent variables constant, the regression results found the intrapersonal domain of EI is a significant predictor of the likelihood of persistence. The intrapersonal domain includes dimensions related to self-regard, emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, independence, and self-actualization. This domain is an essential element in student development, as it relates to a student's view of self and can be improved by focusing on developing one's individuality, boundary setting, and communication skills. For higher education institutions to enhance the EI skills of their student body, particularly for those most at risk for departing the institution, a redistribution of resources is needed to address holistically the non-cognitive measures that influence persistence, retention, and overall student success.

Keywords: academic probation, at risk, emotional intelligence, persistence

The dynamics of student retention are changing rapidly and outpacing college and university resources as institutions have become increasingly dependent upon enrolling students who may be unprepared academically, financially, and emotionally for higher education (Fowles, 2014; Selingo, 2013). Higher education institutions are realizing the responsibility to serve all students, and particularly those with varied levels of preparedness, so they are turning their attention to both cognitive and non-cognitive approaches to retain students. Traditional academic interventions, such as academic advising and tutoring services that target cognitive abilities, are being complemented with first-year programming, mental health counseling, and peer mentoring to enhance non-cognitive abilities, such as emotional intelligence (EI) (DeAngelo, 2014; Permzadian & Credé, 2016; Tinto, 2012; Whiteman, Barry, Mroczek, & MacDermid Wadsworth, 2013).

The role of EI in one's life was popularized by Daniel Goleman's (1995) *Emotional Intelligence: Why it Can Matter More than IQ.* He outlined EI as the self-awareness, self-regulation,

social skills, empathy, and motivation competencies and skills that drive performance. It is defined as, "A set of emotional and social skills that influence the way we perceive and express ourselves, develop and maintain social relationships, cope with challenges, and use emotional information in an effective and meaningful way" (Multi-Health Systems [MHS], 2011, p. 1). In applying EI to higher education, students who understand and successfully manage their emotions may possess the skills necessary to perform better academically and to be more socially prepared for success in the postsecondary education environment (Keefer, Parker, & Saklofske, 2018; Stein, Book, & Kanoy, 2013). This study considers this supposition by examining the influence of EI on persistence among students on academic probation utilizing the MHS EQ-i 2.0 Higher Education Assessment. The EQ-i 2.0 is one of the only EI assessments designed specifically for use with college students.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the national six-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time undergraduate students in 2015-2016 was 59.8% at four-year institutions, while the retention rate for first-time students was 80.8% (McFarland et al., 2018). Morrow and Ackermann (2012) reported "approximately 35% of students depart a university because of academic reasons; the other 65% leave for non-academic reasons" (p. 483). These percentages highlight the effect of non-cognitive factors, such as EI, on the academic success and dropout rates of students, which cannot be remedied by cognitive interventions alone (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994; Habley, Bloom, & Robbins, 2012; Hartley, 2011; Keefer et al., 2018; Parker, Hogan, Eastabrook, Oke, & Wood, 2006; Tinto, 2012). Colleges and universities often support students on academic probation with academic skill building, but theories of EI have brought attention to the "whole" student, which include reasoning capabilities, creativity, emotions, and interpersonal skills (Stein et al., 2013). The development of EI skills may be beneficial in helping students regain satisfactory academic standing (Afolabi, Ogunmwonyi, & Okediji, 2009; Friedlander, Reid, Shupak, & Cribbie, 2007; Ridgell & Lounsbury, 2004). In an effort to improve retention rates, assessing and developing students' EI may help them to better understand and effectively manage their emotions.

Purpose of the Study

Considerable research has been conducted relative to EI and its possible influence on student success and overall adjustment to college life (Afolabi et al., 2009; Keefer et al., 2018; Keefer, Parker, & Wood, 2012; Mega, Ronconi, & De Beni, 2014; Noor & Hanafi, 2017; Parker et al., 2006). This empirical evidence has challenged the age-old notion that cognitive ability alone is responsible for academic success; it is conceivable that new and successful methods for increasing persistence and retention rates can be accomplished by attending to non-cognitive factors of collegiate life. The purpose of this cross-sectional survey study is to examine the influence of EI on persistence among students on academic probation for the first time utilizing the MHS EQ-i 2.0 Higher Education Assessment. A binary logistic regression was performed to determine the manner in which EI affects the likelihood of college students' persistence to the following semester while controlling for student-level variables of interest. This form of regression was appropriate because the dependent variable of persistence is binary/dichotomous; students either persisted to the next semester at the institution or they departed. The research question for this study is: Does EI increase the likelihood of persistence among students on academic probation?

Literature Review

As institutions of higher education are pressured to increase retention rates among students who struggle academically, they are turning to cognitive and non-cognitive methods to do so (DeAngelo, 2014; Fowles, 2014; Selingo, 2013; Tinto, 2012). Concerns regarding academic

performance are not new; however, specific consideration is now devoted to the prediction of college persistence among students at risk for dropping out due to unsatisfactory grades (Balduf, 2009; Bryant & Malone, 2015; Ishitani, 2006; Mega et al., 2014; Moore, 2004; Pritchard & Wilson, 2003). Low grades can be a direct result of academic difficulty or unpreparedness, although often they are an outcome of a myriad of factors including poor campus integration, financial struggles, personal and family issues, as well as a lack of responsiveness from higher education institutions to systematically address these student realities (Keefer et al., 2012; Mega et al., 2014; Tinto, 2012). Awareness of non-cognitive factors is invaluable to postsecondary institutions that seek to lower attrition rates and may aid in the creation of programs to assist students who struggle to adjust to collegiate life (DeAngelo, 2014; Tinto, 2012). Tinto (2012) emphasized both academic and social cultural integration as the most important factors in college retention and persistence, as students who are not assimilated into classroom and institutional cultures are more likely to struggle academically and, ultimately, leave higher education altogether.

Researchers have found students with high EI are more self-assured and transition through college with a greater degree of academic success (Afolabi et al., 2009; Keefer et al., 2018; Keefer et al., 2012; Parker et al., 2006; Salovey, Mayer, Goldman, Turvey, & Palfai, 1995). Keefer et al. (2012) compared GPA, age, and course load of students and found that those with high EI were more likely to graduate than those with lower levels of EI. It also has been suggested that a strong level of EI aids in psychological functioning and overall mental health and wellness (Keefer et al., 2018; Keefer et al., 2012; Morales, 2008; Noor & Hanafi, 2017; Parker et al., 2006; Ruiz-Aranda et al., 2012; Saklofske, Austin, Mastoras, Beaton, & Osborne, 2012). This theory has been supported by Houghton, Wu, Godwin, Neck, and Manz (2012), who found the ability to manage and to interpret one's emotional processes is a key component of EI, particularly when stressed with academic difficulties.

Additionally, Morales (2008) found that "emotional intelligence is a core attribute of resilient individuals and is prominently displayed in how students have coped with the stress inherent in their academic journeys" (p. 166). Further, he purported that a student who demonstrates high EI exhibits the ability to (a) self-motivate and persist when challenged and frustrated, (b) control impulse and selfish indulgence, (c) regulate mood and keep distress from clouding the ability to think, and (d) be compassionate and hopeful. Singh and Sharma (2012) added: "A growing body of research has found a wide range of important life outcomes ... are not adequately predicted by traditional measures of cognitive intelligence but can be predicted by emotional intelligence" (p. 108). In order to support EI efforts, colleges and universities are allocating resources toward the development of a sense of connectedness and belonging through the use of mentoring, first-year interest groups, and counseling programs to actively incorporate students into college life through co- and extra-curricular activities (Balduf, 2009; DeAngelo, 2014; Permzadian & Credé, 2016; Quaye & Harper, 2015; Tinto, 2012).

Other researchers, however, have found little or no correlation between EI and measures of academic success (Bastian, Burns, & Nettelbeck, 2005; Newsome, Day, & Catano, 2000). Some studies have found lower than expected EI scores for college students, leading to the possible conclusion that those entering higher education have insufficient life experiences for mature EI (Leedy & Smith, 2012). Nowack (2012) reported EI results are further complicated by the multiple models commonly recognized in the literature. At least four exist based on (a) trait, (b) competency, (c) mental ability, and (d) personality. Accordingly, various instruments are used to measure EI and the emotional-social competencies for each model. Some of the measurements do not overlap, while others appear to assess similar or identical aspects of this broad concept (Nowack, 2012). Thus, EI measured with various theoretical frameworks and

measurement models yields differences that lead to contradictory findings in the literature on its role in academic success (Parker et al., 2006). Sparkman, Maulding, and Roberts (2012) suggested the need for additional research to determine the effects of education on EI and its use in higher education. Much remains to be studied about EI and its effect on academic persistence; it is essential to the future of college student success to explore its role, as it may potentially engage and motivate students academically.

Method

Research Design

A cross-sectional survey design was utilized to examine whether EI is a predictor of persistence among students on academic probation for the first time as it allows one to make inferences about a population of interest at one point in time (Fowler, 2013). The survey allowed for a descriptive and predictive exploration of EI as measured by the EQ-i 2.0 Higher Education Assessment, with special attention to the five EQ-i domains of intrapersonal, interpersonal, stress management, adaptability, and general mood. The research question for this study was: Does EI increase the likelihood of persistence among students on academic probation?

Research Site

This study was conducted at a comprehensive, public university in the Mountain West. The university is categorized as a mixed residential-commuter campus and is one of the fastest growing institutions in the country. The student body includes nearly 20% students of color and an almost equal female-to-male ratio. Additionally, 30% are eligible for Federal Pell Grants and nearly 80% receive some form of financial aid.

Procedures

The research site's Institutional Review Board granted permission to pursue this study with a sample of all students enrolled in a course designed for those on academic probation (students who attempted at least 12 credit hours and whose cumulative GPA falls below 2.0 are placed on academic probation). The course focuses on enhancing college success skills, such as understanding one's learning style, developing effective study habits, and improving time management skills, as well as connecting with university academic resources and co-curricular activities. Course instructors offered extra-credit points for students to participate in this study. They were asked to submit their consent forms, to complete the EQ-i assessment (emailed to them and administered through MHS), and to participate in a debriefing session with a certified EQ-i coach. The debriefing sessions were held to review the EI assessment results with the students and to guide them to connect the way in which the EI dimensions intersect with their strengths and areas for enrichment. Ultimately, the sessions combined advising and coaching techniques in discussing ways to change their learned negative EI behaviors and to increase their EI agency to improve their overall well-being.

Sample

All 134 students who were on academic probation for the first time and who were enrolled in an academic probation course were invited to participate in this study; thus, a non-randomized, criterion-based sampling method was utilized (Patton, 2014). Eighty-eight of the 134 eligible students completed the EQ-i assessment. Of those, 69 submitted their consent form and met with an EQ-i coach to debrief their results, reducing the sample to 69 cases (51% response rate). The final sample included an almost equal female-to-male ratio, approximately 80% were White, the average age was 19, and 89% were first-year college students. The average high school GPA was 2.62 (SD = 0.597), and 93% were in-state residents. Nearly half worked

while attending the university. The mean completion rate of spring courses was 13 credits (*SD* = 2.495), and the mean spring term GPA was 2.67 (*SD* = 0.746).

Measure: EQ-i 2.0 Higher Education Assessment

The growing body of EI research in colleges and universities has utilized the MHS EQ-i 2.0 Higher Education Assessment. The assessment is a 133-item self-report inventory based on five specific domains and 15 corresponding sub-scales: intrapersonal (self-regard, emotional self-expression, assertiveness, independence, self-actualization); interpersonal (empathy, social responsibility, interpersonal relationships); stress management (stress tolerance, impulse control); adaptability (reality testing, flexibility, problem solving); and general mood (optimism, happiness). The items are scored on a five-point scale with anchors of *never/rarely* to *always/almost always*. According to the MHS EQ-i 2.0 results scale, an overall EQ-i score, domain score, and sub-scale score between 60 and 89 is considered low and indicates the student requires enrichment. The range of 90-119 notes effective functioning, and 120-150 suggests enhanced functioning.

The MHS EQ-i 2.0 remains one of the primary methods of assessing EI with college students and has been recognized as a valuable tool in determining an individual's ability to succeed academically (Dawda & Hart, 2000). This EI assessment was selected and utilized for the study based upon its reliability and validity. The overall internal consistency coefficient for the EQ-i is .97 with the North American normative sample, and the assessment has been shown to demonstrate high correlations with other social-emotional measurements (Bar-On, 2006). Additionally, the instrument is recognized by the Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations and is the only EI assessment included in *The Twentieth Mental Measurements Yearbook* (Carlson, Geisinger, & Jonson, 2017), thereby demonstrating its extensive review and credibility for use.

Outcome Variable: Persistence

The outcome variable for this study was persistence, defined as a student's continued enrollment into the next semester at the university (87% of the sample). For all first-time students on academic probation and enrolled in an academic probation course, 60% were retained; thus, an increased persistence rate was found among those on academic probation who participated in this study versus those who did not.

Explanatory Variable: EQ-i

The primary explanatory variable of interest was the EQ-i domain scores. The electronically generated raw scores were changed to standard scores with a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15 (MHS, 2011). Descriptive data of the overall EQ-i scores, domain scores, and sub-scale scores are included in Table 1. Overall, students in the sample scored in the low- to mid-range of effective functioning on each measure of EI, with lower levels of reality testing, problem solving, and optimism, and higher levels of interpersonal relationships, impulse control, and happiness.

Controlled Independent Variables

A number of other independent variables previously found to be predictors of persistence were included in this study: gender, ethnicity, GPA, credits completed, and academic status (freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior) (Afolabi et al., 2009; Balduf, 2009; Ishitani, 2006; Keefer et al., 2012; Moore, 2004; Parker et al., 2006). These variables were included in the model to control for variance, with EQ-i serving as the explanatory variable of the model. Gender (female or male) and ethnicity (White student or student of color) were treated as

dichotomous variables, whereas GPA, credits completed, academic status, and EQ-i domain scores were treated as continuous variables.

Table 1: EQ-i Data

	M	SD
TOTAL EQ-i Score	93.80	15.938
Intrapersonal Domain	95.07	16.494
Self-Regard	98.03	15.911
Emotional Self-Awareness	95.67	16.135
Assertiveness	99.90	15.569
Independence	92.77	16.603
Self-Actualization	96.86	15.256
Interpersonal Domain	97.49	15.400
Empathy	95.62	16.409
Social Responsibility	95.83	15.565
Interpersonal Relationships	100.20	14.874
Stress Management Domain	97.88	13.875
Stress Tolerance	94.19	15.089
Impulse Control	101.07	15.207
Adaptability Domain	92.13	15.944
Reality Testing	90.86	15.021
Flexibility	98.90	16.466
Problem Solving	91.13	16.224
General Mood Domain	97.06	14.402
Optimism	91.67	15.549
Happiness	101.84	14.222

Note. M = Mean; *SD* = Standard Deviation.

Statistical Analysis

Binary logistic regression was utilized to determine the influence of the EQ-i domain scores on the likelihood of persistence of students on academic probation. Binary logistic regression is an example of a generalized linear model; it is the appropriate type of regression to utilize because it allows the researcher to calculate the likelihood/odds of a dichotomous dependent variable using the most parsimonious model (Menard, 2002). In this case, "persistence to the next semester of college" versus "departure in the next semester of college" was modeled from a set of independent variables that are not required to be normally distributed, linearly related, or of equal variance. The dependent variable was expressed as the log of $p/(1-p)$ (the logit) (Menard, 2002). IBM SPSS Statistics Version 25 was used for all analyses. No student records were missing data and no unusual outlying cases were noted. Additionally, the assumptions of linearity, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity were met through the analysis of scatterplots and correlations.

Results

To understand the EI factors that increased the likelihood of persistence among students on academic probation for the first time a binary logistic regression was utilized. In the classification table, 88.4% of the cases were classified correctly for persistence, which is an

acceptable rate. The independent variables of the model included the EI domain scores, gender, ethnicity, GPA, credits completed, and academic status. Of the explanatory variables of interest, the intrapersonal domain of EI was statistically significant in predicting the likelihood of persistence among students on academic probation. More specifically, when holding all other independent variables constant, a one-unit increase in the EI intrapersonal domain score increased the odds of persisting to the following semester by approximately 17% (B = 0.154, S.E. = .078, p = .047, Exp(B) = 1.166). An additional significant independent variable was academic status. When holding all other independent variables constant, a one-unit increase in academic status (progressing from freshman year to sophomore and so on) multiplied the odds of students persisting to the following semester by nearly six times (B = 1.752, S.E. = .854, p = .038, Exp(B) = 5.768). No other predictors were significant in the model. The Nagelkerke pseudo R2 of the logistic regression model indicated a reasonable goodness of fit, as the model accounted for 35% of the variance in persistence. Refer to Table 2 for the full logistic regression model.

Table 2: Logistic Regression for Model for Predicting Persistence to the Next Semester

Independent Variables	B	S.E.	Wald χ^2	P	Exp(B)
Intrapersonal EQ-i Domain	0.154	0.078	3.936	0.047*	1.166
Interpersonal EQ-i Domain	-0.024	0.049	0.245	0.620	0.976
Stress Management EQ-i Domain	0.014	0.043	0.105	0.746	1.014
Adaptability EQ-i Domain	-0.135	0.075	3.265	0.071	0.874
General Mood EQ-i Domain	-0.056	0.054	1.059	0.303	0.945
Gender	-2.253	1.268	3.155	0.076	0.105
Ethnicity	-2.178	1.326	2.697	0.101	0.113
GPA	-1.031	0.681	2.292	0.130	0.357
Credits Completed	0.440	0.249	3.120	0.077	1.553
Academic Status	1.752	0.845	4.301	0.038*	5.768
Constant	0.720	6.311	0.013	0.909	0.057

Note. *p < 0.05.

Discussion

This study determined that the intrapersonal domain of EI significantly increased the likelihood of persistence among students on academic probation; for each one-unit increase in the EI intrapersonal domain score, students were nearly 17% more likely to re-enroll at the university the following semester. The intrapersonal domain included dimensions related to self-regard, emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, independence, and self-actualization. Thus, students were assessed on their confidence; the understanding of their emotions; their constructive expression of feelings; and whether they could make responsible, self-directed decisions (Stein et al., 2013). This domain is essential in student development, as it relates to their view of self and can be improved by focusing on developing one's individuality, boundary setting, and communication skills.

Lower scores within the intrapersonal domain are an indication that students typically are unaware of their emotions' effect on them personally (e.g., they do not possess a deep understanding of the reason they feel a particular way in a given situation), which suggests others may be able to take advantage of them. Further, they are unable to communicate their

emotions to others. Decisions by students with lower intrapersonal scores typically are made because of emotions rather than objective reasoning and experience. Additionally, those with low scores in this domain may not view themselves positively and may have difficulty in realizing their potential. These results are in line with other research that has found a relationship between EI and academic success, which indicates greater emotional adjustment problems are seen in students who struggle academically (Afolabi et al., 2009; Houghton et al., 2012; Keefer et al., 2018; Keefer et al., 2012; Salovey et al., 1995).

Table 1 indicates students' scores within the adaptability domain and the general mood domain are at the cusp of the effective functioning cutoff score of 90. Reality testing is a student's ability to understand reality without interference from emotions. Problem solving is a student's ability to solve problems and issues without emotional interference, and optimism is having hope for the future. The mean scores were 90.86, 91.13, and 91.67, respectively. These scores were the lowest overall of all the scales. Students with low optimism and reality testing scores tend to perceive the world in a more pessimistic manner, thereby allowing negative emotions to skew their perspectives. When students' problem-solving scores are lower, it is indicative of poor decision-making. They make impulsive decisions without thinking through the problem to find an appropriate solution. The combined lower scores in these sub-scales may interfere with a student's ability to persist. As found by Leedy and Smith (2012), the results also suggest these students may lack life experiences that would have enabled them to gain adaptive and optimistic thinking behaviors.

Limitations and Future Research Opportunities

The greatest limitation to this analysis was the small, non-randomized sample. An ideal sample size for the binary logistic regression would have been 10 events per variable in the model (Wynants et al., 2015). Consent forms, as outlined in the approved IRB protocol, were difficult to obtain from the students; embedding the consent forms within the assessment would have increased the sample size. Students also were invited to meet with an EQ-i coach to review the results and to ask any questions regarding the assessment. All 69 cases met with a coach. Despite issues with scheduling and determining a time to take the assessment, most students revealed it was accurate, useful, and worth their time and energy. All were grateful to be able to understand their EI behaviors, and particularly the ways in which their EI related to their academic success. Future observational research on debriefing sessions, as well as interviews or focus groups with students on their debriefing experiences, would yield rich data on the efficacy and value of the sessions.

Although the instrument was statistically valid and reliable, researchers in this study were unable to control the student fidelity in completing the assessment. Additionally, the costs of administering and debriefing the MHS EQ-i 2.0 Higher Education Assessment can be prohibitive when factoring in the assessment costs and the need for EQ-i certified coaches to provide the debriefing sessions. However, with this sample the benefits far outweighed the costs, as the participants persisted to a greater degree than those who did not take part in the study. Additional research is needed across student groups, such as minoritized students, given the potential for EI testing to aid in students' understanding of their strengths and areas for enrichment, as well as the effect of EI on academic persistence and overall student success. Further exploration into why the EQ-i intrapersonal domain was found to be a significant predictor for persistence among students on academic probation for the first time could provide deeper insight into the ways in which to increase this skill set among this population. It would also be prudent to test for replicability across other student populations considered

to be at risk for departing higher education, as well as focus on outlier students and their experiences.

Recommendations for Practice

If the premise of higher education is to retain students and to ensure all are academically successful, colleges and universities should focus on retention strategies that include non-cognitive attributes, particularly for those most at risk for attrition. This can begin with targeted EI programming and support services for students on academic probation. In this case, embedding opportunities for students to enhance their intrapersonal skills and abilities while enrolled in the academic probation course could prove to be valuable. For example, students could be required to keep a journal to document their experiences and feelings over the course of the semester to become more aware of how their emotions interact with their daily highs and lows. They could also conduct a personal SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis and/or complete inventories on their personality, interests, etc. to gain a deeper introspective insight about themselves. Last, students could engage in collaborative group projects that allows them to take on different roles within the group to leverage their strong points and address their shortcomings. Purposefully including strategies for increasing one's intrapersonal skills will certainly be of great benefit to students, and it could also demonstrate benefits to institutions interested in improving their retention rates.

Pritchard and Wilson (2003) suggested that, when institutions fail to properly attend to non-cognitive issues such as EI and focus only on cognitive matters, they miss students who depart from college for non-academic reasons. Awareness of these factors can be invaluable to postsecondary institutions that seek to lower attrition rates and may aid in the creation of effective programs that assist students who struggle to adjust to collegiate life. These include transitional programs such as mentoring and first-year initiatives. Additionally, wrap-around resources focused on assisting students with low functioning EI scores are as important as other traditional academic interventions (Balduf, 2009; DeAngelo, 2014; Habley et al., 2012; Tinto, 2012). Relevant resources and services involve counseling, wellness and recreation, and academic and career advising. These programs support the possibility of offering systematic EI teaching and learning experiences in postsecondary education.

In this study, EI influenced persistence among students on academic probation; therefore, higher education institutions should consider assessing students' EI to determine the ways in which institutions can plan and implement curricular and co-curricular initiatives that encourage retention. Most researchers have agreed that students who can manage their emotions are able to persist and to raise their levels of academic achievement because they possess an awareness of their ability to manage the pressures of an academic atmosphere (e.g., test anxiety, fear of failure, low self-confidence) (Afolabi et al., 2009; Houghton et al., 2012; Keefer et al., 2018; Keefer et al., 2012; Mega et al., 2014; Morales, 2008; Noor & Hanafi, 2017; Parker et al., 2006; Ruiz-Aranda et al., 2012; Saklofske et al., 2012; Salovey et al., 1995). Expanding EI assessment to all students, rather than only those at risk for attrition, may be useful in helping with the delivery of necessary services (e.g., mental health counseling, financial aid counseling) in a proactive rather than reactive manner (DeAngelo, 2014; Habley et al., 2012; Tinto, 2012; Whiteman et al., 2013).

Conclusion

Research of this nature is needed in order to dissect the complex challenges faced by students when entering postsecondary education institutions. As demonstrated in this study, EI skills, specifically intrapersonal skills, play an important role in the persistence of college students,

a one-unit increase in the intrapersonal domain score significantly increased the odds of persisting to the following semester by approximately 17%. As Tinto (2012) and others have suggested, student affairs administrators and faculty members can aid in reducing departure rates through ensuring students integrate academically, emotionally, and socially into college life by meeting both their educational and personal needs. From a policy perspective, if access for all is a serious goal, postsecondary education administrators must pay closer attention to these EI attributes and must begin to redistribute resources to address holistically the non-cognitive measures that influence persistence, retention, and overall student success.

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Surviving Whiteness and White People: The Coping Strategies of Black, Entry-Level Student Affairs Professionals

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Abstract

Though Whiteness permeates all United States colleges and universities, a concerted effort in postsecondary education to shatter White institutional presence and nurture inclusive and equitable environments for Black student affairs professionals does not exist. This qualitative study focuses on the narratives of three Black, entry-level student affairs professionals who share their experiences of working at a large predominantly White institution in the southeast of the United States. Through an interpretive phenomenological analysis, we ask the following research question: What does it mean to survive Whiteness as a Black, entry-level student affairs professional at a predominantly White institution? We answer this question by sharing descriptive profiles of each professional detailing their experiences engaging connection, compartmentalization, and community. Finally, we encourage campus leaders to address issues of racism and inequity on institutional, individual, and ideological levels to more effectively and genuinely retain, empower, and celebrate the knowledge, experiences, and contributions of all Black staff and faculty in postsecondary education.

Keywords: black professionals, student affairs, whiteness

On March 25, 2016 members of the Black Student Affairs Professionals Facebook group initiated #BLKSAPBlackOut. This social media movement flooded the Student Affairs Professionals Facebook group with hundreds of posts, multimedia, and comments. The culminating response to the hashtag led to an outpouring of narratives from Black student affairs professionals sharing experiences of racism, isolation, marginalization, and tokenization in their roles on college campuses across the country. One professional, Clyde Barnett III, wrote:

> Anyone else tired of reintroducing yourself to colleagues you've already met and worked on projects/committees with? I am! I could never hear, "Oh, yeah, that's right you work over there. I'm so sorry!" ever again and it would be too soon. What about walking by, looking right past you, and not speaking at all as if you are completely invisible? (personal communication, March 25, 2016)

Whether through social media, higher education scholarship, or personal interactions, Black student affairs professionals continue to discuss the reality of working on college campuses as a means to increase the awareness and ability of their White and non-Black counterparts to address issues of racism and inequity.

Among those sharing their stories are Black, entry-level student affairs professionals who are uniquely positioned to inspire students to pursue a career in student affairs and influence the future of the developing field. All leaders and scholars within postsecondary education should care about the experiences of Black, entry-level student affairs professionals because their experiences of racism, prejudice, lack of quality mentorship, discrimination, exclusion, and tokenism can and do negatively affect their retention, satisfaction, and belonging (Husband, 2016; Louis & Freeman, 2015; West, 2017a). Such outcomes can only lead to unfavorable consequences for the evolving demographic of college students who require a diverse composition of student affairs professionals to support their development, retention, and success (Harper & Quaye, 2009). Through our study, we aim to explore the unique experiences of professionals committed to student affairs work whilst navigating racist campus climates.

This qualitative study focuses on the narratives of three Black, entry-level student affairs professionals, Angela, Bernard, and Natalie (pseudonyms), who share their experiences of working at a large predominantly White institution (PWI) in the southeast of the United States. Through an interpretive phenomenological analysis, we ask the following research question: What does it mean to survive Whiteness as a Black, entry-level student affairs professional at a predominantly White institution? We answer this question by sharing descriptive profiles of each professional detailing their experiences as student affairs professionals and finish with specific strategies they employ to endure their roles on campus. Angela, Bernard, and Natalie grapple with issues of faux belonging, surviving Whiteness and White privilege, as well as the trauma of well-meaning/well-intentioned White people. We conclude this paper with tangible recommendations for postsecondary leaders as they strive to retain, empower, and celebrate the knowledge, experiences, and contributions of Black staff and faculty.

Black Staff and Administrators in the Academy

Although a significant body of literature exists documenting the racism Black faculty experience within predominantly White colleges and universities in the United States (Griffin, Ward, & Phillips, 2014; McCray, 2011; Patton & Catching, 2009), much less is known about Black staff and administrators who experience such racism in differing organizational and hierarchical contexts. The literature dedicated to Black staff and administrators remains scant and focuses predominantly on upper-level administrators. Within the literature focused on Black administrators', higher education scholars have addressed the discrimination, isolation, and marginalization they experience as well as their strategies for thriving despite working within toxic campus climates (Gardner, Barrett, & Pearson, 2014; West, 2017b). This body of scholarship calls attention to the need for increased representation of Black administrators, quality mentorship, and pathways to upper-level administrative positions (Banks, Hopps, & Briggs, 2018; Clayborne & Hamrick, 2007; Flowers, 2003; Gardner et al., 2014; Holmes, 2003; Jackson & O'Callaghan, 2011; West, 2017b; Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015).

Within their study of the adjustment, institutional, and career factors connected to the success of African American student affairs administrators, Gardner et al. (2014) found several enablers and barriers of success. Within their semi-structured interviews with 10 men and 4 women, they found that mentorship (same race and cross-race), a healthy self-image, social network and family support, institutional commitment to diversity, and professional preparation played a significant role in their success as vice chancellors, associate vice presidents, directors, and assistant directors. Conversely, perceptions of prejudice, feelings of separateness or difference, discrimination, and lack of advancement opportunities (a clear track for advancement) posed major barriers to their success. Based on their findings, Gardner et al. (2014) encouraged leaders at PWIs to "find ways to promote professionals from

within their existing staffs" (p. 248). Further, the authors called for increased efforts in the form of tangible resources (e.g., funding) to foster an institutional commitment to diversity in order to support the work of recruiting and retaining racially marginalized student affairs professionals.

While Gardner et al.'s (2014) work focused on factors connected to the success of Black administrators, West (2017b) engaged an intrinsic case study to examine a program designed to support Black women student affairs administrators – the African American Women's Summit (AAWS), held as a pre-conference event at the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators annual conference. Within the study, West (2017b) articulated the necessity of such programming and the use of Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000) to center Black women and support their ability to navigate PWIs. The program included Black women from a variety of institutional types and included conversations of preserving the legacy of the AAWS, campus climate, empowerment, dealing with racism, sexism, homophobia, marginalization, and isolation. Ultimately, West (2017b) found that collaboration amongst Black women and access to spaces for collaboration (via panels, sister circles, presentations, and other modalities) represented a multifaceted process that possesses the unique opportunity to mitigate some of the adversities Black women face in academia (specifically at PWIs). West's (2017b) study illuminates the intersections of racism and sexism Black women student affairs administrators face with special consideration to a nationally based program.

Although much is known about Black administrators' experiences at PWIs, their navigational strategies, support mechanisms, and career paths, significantly less is known about the experiences of Black staff in entry and mid-level positions. This group of college and university employees includes program coordinators, campus custodians, residence directors, admissions counselors, administrative assistants, and numerous additional professionals who fuel the work of the academy. Apart from a few studies examining competencies necessary for new student affairs professionals and experiences of recent student affairs graduates (Burkard, Cole, Ott, & Stoflet, 2005; Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008), minimal research exists dedicated to the experiences of entry-level student affairs professionals. Further, the higher education and student affairs literature does not yet include explorations of the experiences of Black, entry-level student affairs professionals who are inarguably numerically underrepresented at PWIs while experiencing daily racial microaggressions (among additional forms of oppression) given multiple intersecting identities. We aim to add to the literature devoted not only to exploring the experiences of Black, entry-level student affairs professionals, but their strategies for survival.

Critical Whiteness Studies

To theoretically ground our analysis and draw attention to the racist experiences of Black, entry-level student affairs professionals, we engage critical Whiteness studies (CWS) as a theoretical framework. CWS is an increasing and expansive scholarly project which centers the interrogation of Whiteness in the examination of racism (Gillborn, 2005; Gusa, 2010; Leonardo, 2009), as opposed to the emphasis on the racialized "other" (Applebaum, 2016). Several objectives thread the CWS discourse including the visibility, distinction, confrontation, and deliberation of Whiteness. Making Whiteness visible (Applebaum, 2016; Gillborn, 2005) and "strange" (interrogating the construct of whiteness) (Dyer, 1997, p. 4), requires an interruption to a pervasive epistemology of ignorance, commonly referred to as color blindness (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Mills, 1997). CWS scholars also wrestle with the distinction between Whiteness and White people and emphasizes the performativity and social construction of Whiteness as the object of examination (Gillborn, 2005). When White

people are heterogeneous, a distinct worldview with an ontological and epistemological orientation exists (Gusa, 2010). As Gusa (2010) notes, White notions of individualism, self-reliance, independence and, ultimately, meritocracy are examined, as "meritocracy and individualism legitimize the hierarchical and disproportionate concentration of White wealth and power in American society" (p. 469). CWS theorizing also provides scholars with a framework to confront the structures of White supremacy (Applebaum, 2016). To understand the structural nature of White supremacy, Mills (1998) offers the comparison of White supremacy's relationship to race as analogous to patriarchy's relationship with gender and heteronormativity's relationship with sexuality. The nature of this confrontation is a point of consternation and deliberation. Thus, the goals and approaches of CWS are many. Nayak (2007) identified three distinct, but not mutually exclusive paradigms, through which CWS are enacted. The *abolition* paradigm is concerned with class and labor relations and seeks to dismantle and eliminate Whiteness (Nayak, 2007). The *deconstruction* paradigm is a postmodern project that seeks to investigate the reproduction of Whiteness outside of the domain of labor (Nayak, 2007). The *rethinking* paradigm is a psychoanalytic approach that engages Whiteness as an issue of identity, emotion, and consciousness and intervenes the irrational fears and desires associated with Whiteness (Nayak, 2007). These paradigms draw from one another and exist in tension, and formulate their premise that Whiteness is a dynamic invention, a social standard linked with privilege and cultivated in American history – the destruction of which would improve modern society.

This study is informed by the distinct vein of CWS that attends to issues of racism in education. The CWS educational scholars analyze the roles of racism in education and problematizes race neutral policies and practices ultimately serving to reproduce White supremacy (Gilborn, 2005). We found Gusa's (2010) White institutional presence (WIP) framework particularly useful, as we derived meaning of our participants' survival at a PWI. Gusa's framework asserts that PWIs do not have to be explicitly racist to create hostile environments for People of Color (Gusa, 2010). There is demonstrable evidence of the harmful effects of adverse campus racial climate on students, faculty, and staff (Gusa, 2010). Such climate factors include perceptions of racial tension, experiences with prejudice and discrimination, and perceptions of racialized privilege (Gusa, 2010). Gusa (2010) provides four ideological attributes of WIP: *White ascendancy*, *monoculturalism*, *White estrangement*, and *White blindness* (obfuscation). White ascendancy reflects the thinking and behaviors that arise from White power and privilege, and the subsequent reproductions of White domination (Gusa, 2010). Monoculturalism names the implications of a single scholarly worldview that privileges White ways of knowledge and reality while limiting the possibilities of Black policy, curriculum, inquiry, research methodology, and pedagogy. White estrangement adheres to the maintenance of White supremacy through social racial isolation via structural barriers and culturally imposed segregation (Gusa, 2010). Lastly, White obfuscation preserves and protects White supremacy by exploiting progressive notions of color blindness, making race invisible and immaterial (Gusa, 2010). Our study, like WIP, focuses on the White normative messages and practices that are exchanged within the academic milieu (and how when) these messages and practices remain subtle, nebulous, and unnamed, they potentially harm the well-being, self-esteem, and academic success of those who do not share the norms of White culture. (Gusa, 2010, p. 471)

Our use of WIP as a theoretical framework to focus on aspects of White ascendency, monoculturalism, estrangement, and obfuscation not only provide us a lens to critically examine racism through a Whiteness studies lens, the framework provides us with ample opportunity to articulate the insidious nature of Whiteness often overlooked.

Research Design

The work of this study develops as a continuation of a larger research study carried out in 2016 at a large, PWI in the Southeast. In this larger study, we asked 22 self-identified Black faculty and staff to reflect on their varied experiences following an incident of student-led, race-centered campus activism. This display of campus activism manifested in a march throughout campus and sit-in both inside and outside a campus administrative building. The activism was sparked by a racist epithet, a perceived lack of administrative support for Students of Color, and the governing board's blocking of policies to rename campus monuments honoring known historical racists. This sit-in lasted more than a week and peaked with student arrests garnering local and national media attention. Though led by students, the combined demonstrations received support from students, faculty, and staff of various backgrounds. During interviews with us (a Black woman assistant professor and a White man doctoral student), we facilitated one-on-one conversations asking the participants to walk us through their experience with the campus protests and how the event related to their sense of belonging.

For the purposes of this study, we examined the narratives of three Black professionals in entry-level roles engaged in student affairs work. The three professionals represented in this study both witnessed and participated in the campus activism at varying levels from the respective positions on campus. We engaged interpretive phenomenological analysis (Smith, Larkin, & Flowers, 2009) to guide our study. Interpretive phenomenological analysis is a qualitative method that centers the particular and the collective to gain the essence of an experience while allowing researchers to be descriptive *and* interpretive (Smith, Larkin, & Flowers, 2009). Such flexibility allows researchers to not only share the stories of the individuals and how they survived and coped during the campus activism, but to highlight the similarities across small groups as well. Thus, we begin the findings section with a discussion of each professional within the study and move to the ways in which the three overlap in their experiences of navigating Whiteness at a PWI.

Data Analysis

Using Charmaz's (2006) coding scheme as an organizational strategy, we engaged in data analysis in five phases. In the first phase, we used initial coding to analyze all of the data line-by-line from each transcript noting our interpretations while comparing cases and revising ideas as we went along based on our conversations with each other. In the second phase, we discussed codes generated from the initial round and consolidated the codes for the next phase based on the frequent and information-rich codes generated from our researcher memos. These codes (e.g., anger, hope, isolation, activist identity, self-preservation, etc.) related mostly to participants' emotions following the sit-in (the narratives of how they coped emotionally during this period, and their discussions of the temporal, geographic, and institutional context tied to the event). For the third phase, we created a codebook and included large clusters of codes (i.e., activism, communication, racism at the university, determinants of belonging, and cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses to student activism). Following this third round of coding, we met to begin discussing emergent themes. We followed up with participants for a member check process that took the form of two focus groups; eight participants joined. We shared the emerging themes we identified and asked participants what they believed was missing or misinterpreted. Though we recognize not all participants were able to engage in this member check process, we believe this strategy for establishing the trustworthiness of the research allowed interested participants a chance to expound on their narratives and identify gaps they perceived. We used data from the focus groups to clarify and add detail to the themes we identified.

Lastly, to aid the present study, we re-read the transcripts for the three professionals, met to discuss overarching themes of surviving Whiteness and White institutional presence, and reached a consensus on the essence of how navigating Whiteness manifested for each participant from their standpoint. Below we include a general descriptive table to highlight the rank, primary division, tenure, and alumni status of each participant. Following the descriptive summary of each participant, we offer our findings – our interpretation of the essence of surviving Whiteness for each participant. Finally, we discuss our conclusions based on a CWS theoretical perspective and offer strategies for university leaders cultivating spaces for Black people in the academy.

Table 1

Name (pseudonym)	Division	Rank	Yrs. w/Institution	Alumni Status
Angela	Student Affairs	Unclassified, Entry	1-5	
Bernard	Student Affairs	Unclassified, Entry	1-5	
Natalie	Academic Affairs	Classified, Entry-Middle	11-15	Alum

Findings

Natalie: Compartmentalizing

As an alumnus of the university who earned two degrees from the institution (including her doctorate), Natalie said she had "drunken deeply from the … Kool-Aid" and loved the work she did in her role supervising and supporting students as an Associate Director of Undergraduate Studies. With an 11-year connection to the university and an inclination to "play the game" to succeed as a tokenized Black woman, Natalie explained the meaningfulness and responsibility of being present for students.

> And I've been performing for so long, that if somebody saw that, if somebody saw me break down, I wouldn't be able to handle it. There are students that I'm here for that need me not to sit and talk but I need to be visible, and to me that's what I think I offer this visibility; I'm here. I'm here. (Natalie, personal communication, July 11, 2016)

Through her experiences of feeling tokenized, isolated, and sometimes lumped in with other Black faculty and staff, in terms of her opinions about student activism, Natalie said she believed in compartmentalizing as a way to navigate the challenges of White institutional presence. Such compartmentalizing and boundary setting manifested in physical, emotional, and intellectual ways.

In recounting her experience about the student protest, Natalie shared that she employed distance as a strategy to avoid angry parent phone calls and uncomfortable conversations with her White colleagues during the campus protests. Natalie explained:

> I had to get off campus because of that environment, because of that negative energy, I just couldn't deal with [it] personally, and I wasn't going to try to deal with it 'cus I also came into a bind with the escalation of the events … I also needed to keep a level head to get through the end of the year. (Natalie, personal communication, July 11, 2016)

In addition to wanting to create physical distance from the situation to avoid difficult conversations, Natalie also engaged in motional compartmentalization by choosing apathy about the racist events happening on campus. She shared a powerful revelation she had during the interview with [second author's name] about not caring and said,

> There was just so much going on, just like there's so much going on. And I realize it doesn't have to be that way. I could totally put all these things to the side and focus in on it, but there's a part of me that just doesn't care that much. I think I just realized the truth. I don't care that much, and I can buy into something all day, I'll wear my [school colors] and I will go out there and smile and know that I am representing a lot of different things, not just [the] University. But at the end of the day, I think I can walk away from all of this. And feel pretty good about what I've done. Hope, and hope that [the University] gets it together. (Natalie, personal communication, July 11, 2016)

Within this narrative, Natalie describes the complexity of indifference and refusing to let racist incidents affect her emotionally; however, later in the interview Natalie discussed how alcohol was personally helpful in surviving the situation. Through these actions, Natalie discussed the intellectual compartmentalization of idealizing care and concern for the students engaged in campus activism while also challenging it. Natalie speculated about the utility of the student protest and the meaning behind students' involvement in a cause that, for some, seemed like a fad or an attempt to better affiliate with the Black student community.

> I don't know if they've actually experienced a lot of what others have experienced. So not to say that it's not true for them, but … they could be making a lot out of, making a mountain out of a molehill. (Natalie, personal communication, July 11, 2016)

The combined themes of physical, emotional, and intellectual compartmentalizing highlight Natalie's attempts to navigate and survive Whiteness and White institutional presence. Her narratives of experiencing the student protest as a professional with a strong identification with the institution speak to the dialect of wanting to support marginalized students on campus while attempting to simultaneously align and identify with the institution. However, Natalie simultaneously felt conflicted as a direct product (alum) of the same hegemony students were protesting at the university.

Angela: Connecting

Angela, a Housing Director at the University, described her experience of living through the student protest and subsequent conversations with her White colleagues as a time of feeling emotionally conflicted and exhausted. After learning about the student sit-in and ensuing student arrests, Angela recalled a Student Affairs division meeting. With many colleagues and administrators in the room expressing their thoughts about the chain of events, Angela said she began crying for multiple reasons: out of anger, sympathy for several other people crying in the meeting, and feeling hurt by the administration's decision to allow the students' arrest.

> I was like eh okay, I don't wanna (sic) go back to work now. And then the department came up to me and my co-worker and tried to console us and that, it was a bunch of [them], all of them were White [and] came up to say, "I'm sorry for like", but I just, it was like a really weird feeling. They were like, "I'm sorry for what just happened." Almost like saying I'm sorry on behalf of like White people. (Angela, personal communication, July 7, 2016)

Within this story Angela shared both the strangeness of being consoled by White colleagues who were apologizing for Whiteness and racism, and the exhaustion she experienced commiserating with people she felt authentically expressed concern. For Angela, surviving

Whiteness meant connecting with two major groups: colleagues and students. First, connecting came in the form informing colleagues, and her supervisor, about her experience as a Black staff member at the PWI. In her interview with [first author's name], Angela read aloud an email she crafted with a co-worker and sent to her supervisor. They wrote,

> We ask that there be more intentional conversations around what it's like to be Black at [the University] because we feel as if this environment can be extremely exhausting. We feel as if there have been plenty of opportunities to have discussions about what it's like to be a Person of Color on this campus but we usually discuss this amongst ourselves to better process feelings. We feel … we have to process on our own time due to lack of concern from the department on what it's like to be a Person of Color on this campus. In the future, intentional engagement about our experience would be helpful because we know that our Blackness is not an afterthought, especially when events like the [student protest] occurs. (Angela, personal communication, July 7, 2016)

In addition to connecting with colleagues to inform them about the importance of the situation and the necessity to open up lines of communication to learn about the experiences of marginalized communities at the university, Angela connected with students – particularly those engaged in campus activism at the time. Not only did she sit with students while they were protesting for more than a week, Angela said she gained a renewed sense of energy and vitality from talking with the protestors. She went on to share her commitment to the cause:

> I woulda (sic) got arrested with them. It is what it is. Like, because this issue is more important than being arrested or having something on my record, it's like, in my mind, I don't give a shit if I have something on my record … if it's something that I care about and if it's something that like I'm fighting for and I know is right. (Angela, personal communication, July 7, 2016)

Through an active response to the toxic White institutional presence, Angela survived Whiteness by educating her supervisor and other colleagues about her experience and needs while also self-actualizing via involvement with student activism.

Bernard: Cultivating Communities

As an outgoing Housing Director with a strong desire to build resources to increase institutional members' understanding and practice of social justice and inclusion, Bernard discussed how he tirelessly focused on cultivating inclusive communities at the University. Unfortunately, he explained, this work came at a cost.

> There's this formula of bringing in people who are passionate about things, usually related to social justice, diversity and inclusion, working them like a dog, burning them out, to the point where they're doing good work, but it's not to the point where it's actually substantially changing culture. It's enough to hang our hat on so we can talk about it so it looks like something is actually being done. It's also enough so that this person can handle it on their own and get burned out, and we can absolve our self from having any part of it, and I'm talking about majority White people. (Bernard, personal communication, July 6, 2016)

Aside from the labor of doing social justice and inclusion work without tangible support, Bernard said he also grew tired of feeling representationally alone and marginalized at a PWI in which few administrative leaders recognized or mentioned the series of national affronts

on Black people (i.e., police shootings and AME-Charleston 9 Shooting). "I remember being in that space not wanting to be there. And I left for about thirty minutes to go to the bathroom 'cus I needed to collect myself, 'cus I was not hearing anything that was being said" (Bernard, personal communication, July 6, 2016).

While feelings of isolation emerged across each of the three participants' stories, Bernard shared his experiences during the student protest and explained how he was able to survive White institutional presence by cultivating communities. We describe this cultivation as *personal community* and *institutional community*. *Personal community* manifested through Bernard's work to build relationships and seek out mentorship from faculty and other senior student affairs professionals at the University to support his own desire for belonging. *Institutional community* manifested through his efforts to build spaces to foster more supportive communities for students, staff, and faculty in the future beyond his tenure at the University. Although Bernard said the personal community he experienced was not intentional, it played a major role in his survival at the institution. Bernard talked about a faculty member he met:

> I think some of the relationships that I've been able to establish that have been structured have been wonderful. ... Those experiences led me more to believe that I was meant to be here and that I belong – in the like sense of purpose, perception of belonging. Because I see some of those experiences as being make-or-break and the fact that God placed those people in my life and I didn't seek them out, if that were not to be the case, I don't know if I would still be here right now. I don't know if I would have, although I'm very critical of [the University], I wouldn't change this experience for the world. I don't regret being here, I don't know, I would not do it again. (Bernard, personal communication, July 6, 2016)

Belonging to and working to develop communities emerged as driving forces in Bernard's experience as a Housing Director, coping with the numerous expressions of Whiteness and White institutional presence within the institution. Bernard, Angela, and Natalie's experiences of navigating, coping, and surviving in such a context have several meaningful implications for the higher education knowledge community.

While the professionals' stories highlight their ability to compartmentalize, connect with students and supervisors, and cultivate community on multiple levels, institutional leaders must acknowledge, name publicly, and actively counteract White institutional presence (Gusa, 2010) at work on their campuses. For example, White ascendancy carried out by a senior student affairs professional at the University operated to arrest students for their campus activism and silence their voices as they demanded equitable treatment and resources at the institution. Though none of the three participants used the language of White monoculturalism, each participant experienced the commanding power of the dominating cultural worldview of Whiteness, which influenced how they interacted with White colleagues (e.g., smiling and playing the game) and motivated them to avoid such interactions when times became too emotionally difficult. In this case, White monoculturalism was a support to White estrangement, which reinforces a culturally imposed segregation. Natalie, Bernard, and Angela shared stories about times when they had to withdraw and avoid their certain spaces and their campus roles because they did not always feel a sense of connection, belonging, or community within the larger campus environment. Finally, the obfuscation of Whiteness was most prominent in Angela and Bernard's narratives as Housing Directors as they observed a lack of racial-consciousness of those around them, which resulted in physical and emotional

taxation and obliviousness of supervisors when handling conversations pertaining to race and racism.

Limitations

While the narratives from Natalie, Bernard, and Angela provide insight into the experiences of Black, entry-level student affairs professionals navigating and surviving Whiteness and microaggressions from White people, two major limitations exist. First, the participants within this study all worked at the same institution within a similar cultural, geographical, and political context. Our analysis did not include participants from multiple PWIs across the U.S. Thus, readers must take into account their own institutional contexts as they work toward transferability of the findings. Second, because we collected the data from this study for a larger study exploring perceptions of belonging for Black faculty and staff after an incident of student activism fueled by a culmination of racist incidents, the professionals' narratives were likely influenced by the temporal context. More specifically, the professionals in this study may have shared different stories about their strategies for coping and navigation if interviewed at a different time. However, we surmise that given the ongoing affronts against Black people on national, local, and postsecondary levels, the narratives shared remain relevant and timely given the current sociopolitical climate.

Implications for Practice and Recommendations

Considering the three participants' abilities to compartmentalize, connect, and cultivate community speaks to a refined and well-exercised practice of resilience, which is frequently overlooked in the higher education literature though exemplary exceptions exist related to transgender and lesbian, gay, and bisexual college students' experiences (Nicolazzo, 2016; Woodford et al., 2018). The strategies of physically, emotionally, and intellectually distancing oneself from racism and oppressive spaces, people, and practices culminate in a powerful assemblage of tools student affairs professionals of color have had to use for years. However, when taken together with combined strategies of connecting (in the form of educating supervisors), getting involved in campus activism, and cultivating personal and institutional communities of inclusion, the resources for surviving and dismantling Whiteness are immense.

That said, these strategies exist as only one side of the weighty-coin that includes institutions and key change agents that operate within and as systems to maintain oppressive power structures. Though frequent discourses position systems of oppression as faceless, nameless, and disembodied, these systems have faces, names, and people attached to them; working oftentimes covertly within. These systems and structures are in fact *comprised* of people who maintain an imperialist White supremacist capitalist patriarchy (hooks, 2006), which manifests in multiple ways. Such ideologies held by institutional leaders (e.g., Senior Student Affairs Officers and more) reify oppressive systems by usurping power through physical relegation (e.g., student arrests and expulsive conduct punishments). These same ideologies center Whiteness in Westernized and Eurocentric academic curriculum and co-curriculum relegating critical, embodied, and multicultural perspectives and curriculum as ancillary. Such oppressive ideologies also show up through the artificial quantification of "achievement" for monetary motives to inequitably benefit a few (e.g., college rankings and aggregated enrollment statistics) and the constant privileging of cis-heterosexual men within the upper-echelons of university leadership roles (see the American College President Study [Gagliardi, Espinosa, Turk, & Taylor, 2017]). With a greater understanding of the laborious work People of Color engage in to navigate White institutional spaces (a consideration those with racial privilege may rarely consider), post-secondary institutional leaders can develop

missions, strategic plans, and resources that tangibly transform campus climates to foster more inclusive, anti-racist, and socially justice policies, practices, and pedagogies.

In much the same way we (the authors) believe the empirical literature on student sense of belonging is meaningful because of its insights on how institutions can support college students' success and well-being, we view our research as valuable for faculty and staff – the engine of the academy, particularly, Black faculty and staff. Our research is significant for three major groups: university leadership who possess the power to create campus climates that attract, retain, and build up staff and faculty, researchers dedicated to understanding the experiences of faculty and staff of color who can use and add details to the developed theory of faculty and staff belonging to expand the discourse, and faculty and staff of color in search of strategies to mobilize and use collective action to make their campuses more equitable and inclusive. The insights gained from this study are rendered more significant when historical and intersectional lenses are applied to critique pre-existing institutions and systems that act in oppressive ways contrary to their missions and visions.

In the interim, campus leaders can work to eliminate the experiences of isolation, tokenization, and discrimination of Black, entry-level student affairs professionals (and all racially marginalized professionals on campus) experience by listening to the stories of Natalie, Bernard, and Angela and working pre-emptively to address issues of racism on campus. Such work can happen on individual, institutional, and ideological levels. First, leaders can begin to dismantle White institutional presence within colleges and universities by reflecting on their own behaviors, communication, and policies and ask the following questions: Have I taken time to learn the experiences of those who are marginalized and minoritized at my institution? What are their experiences? How has my thinking and behavior (or lack of action) influenced these experiences? What can I do to prevent inequitable treatment of marginalized communities at the institution? What can I do to foster inclusion, equity, and justice for marginalized communities at the institution? These reflective questions can spur opportunities to further self-awareness while promoting listening behaviors crucial to learning the experiences of another.

On an institutional level, leaders can nurture spaces for marginalized communities to share their experiences, concerns, and needs while genuinely considering expressed viewpoints. Further, leaders can critically examine the spaces on campus. The following questions support change on an institutional level. What culturally based organizations exist for staff to be in community around shared identities? Which groups need additional financial support, encouragement, or resources (e.g., places to meet)? How does the volume and quality of resources to support dominant identity groups compare to the resources allocated for minoritized groups? How am I communicating a value to support and nurture spaces for affinity groups? Where are the physical and conceptual spaces (e.g., units, departments, colleges) on campus that pose barriers for marginalized communities at the institution?

Finally, and likely the most challenging level, leaders can dismantle White institutional presence and racism on an ideological level by challenging monocultural thinking, decentering Whiteness, and acknowledging racism. Institutional leaders can ask the following questions: Do the institution's values communicate and reflect pluralism in ways of knowing and value systems (e.g., collectivism, communities of practice, codependence, shared governance, etc.)? Does the curriculum (at multiple levels) include diverse pedagogies, texts/authors, and practices? How does the institution reward such efforts, if at all? How does the institution work to acknowledge its racist past and current inequitable practices that impact students, faculty, and staff?

Conclusion

Although the outlined areas of strategies for institutional leaders mirror myriad scholarly calls for the dismantling of oppressive systems in the academy, these suggestions are connected to the real stories of three student affairs professionals who feel oppression in concrete ways each day in their roles on predominantly White campuses. Institutional leaders know and understand the importance of engaging in such work; however, not all are willing to answer the call for fear of risks to their status, power, and authority. We hope that through our research more leaders will feel compelled to take a risk and begin with themselves. For the Black professionals engaging in work on college campuses, we hope our discussion of the strategies of connection, compartmentalization, and community offer some support though we know these tools are not a panacea for a long legacy of oppression.

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Transgender Students' Experiences in Postsecondary Education: A Literature Review

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Abstract

Despite transgenderism becoming more widely discussed in popular media, transgender undergraduate students largely remain a silent and invisible minority on college campuses across the United States. This minority status contributes to transgender students' negative experiences within the higher education system; specifically, these students regularly confront discrimination, harassment, and physical violence at higher rates than their cisgender peers (Case, Kanenberg, Erich, & Tittsworth, 2012; McKinney, 2005; Squire & Norris, 2014). These adverse experiences can have detrimental effects on transgender students' college experiences and development. Yet, this student subpopulation receives little support and inadequate services within higher education. This literature review includes an examination of the major challenges transgender students face while pursing postsecondary education. These challenges and their potentially grave effects are included to highlight the need for additional student affairs support, resources, and services to address the needs of this student population. To conclude, this piece focuses on campus services for transgender students, specifically within the functional area of residence life.

Keywords: higher education, residence life, student affairs, transgender students

Transgender, gender nonconforming, and gender fluid, undergraduate students are a minority on campuses across the United States (U.S.) with regards to their physical and numerical presence as well as the lack of attention they are given in the discourse and services of student affairs professionals. For the purpose of this literature review, I will be using the term transgender to discuss students who may identify as transgender, gender nonconforming, or gender fluid. Although each of these terms have different formal definitions and different meaning for individuals who identify in these ways, transgender appeared as the dominant, encompassing terminology for this student subpopulation in previous scholarly research. Transgender is a term associated with individuals whose identity is incongruent with the biological sex and gender they are assigned at birth (Moleiro & Pinto, 2015). The lack of visibility and attention transgender students receive in higher education has caused their college experiences to differ greatly from their cisgender peers. In contrast to transgender, cisgender is a term applied to people whom identify with the gender that has traditionally been assigned to the sexual organs they possess (Aultman, 2014; Freitas, 2017). In this literature review, I will begin by discussing the major challenges transgender students face. Then, I will explain how these major issues underscore the necessity of providing the transgender student population additional resources and services. To conclude, I offer literature focused on campus services for transgender student services; I focus on the current and past services provided by residence life departments that impact transgender students. I also suggest some future directions for residence life professionals.

Challenges Facing Transgender Students in Higher Education

Transgender students face numerous challenges in their pursuit of postsecondary education such as discrimination, harassment, inadequate services, and an overall lack of support on campus from faculty and staff members (Case et al., 2012; McKinney, 2005; Squire & Norris, 2014). In fact, transgender students are more likely than other populations to be harassed at their higher education institutions (Beemyn, Curtis, Davis, & Tubbs, 2005; Effrig, Bieschkle, & Locke, 2011; McKinney, 2005; Seelman, 2014). For example, in a study of over 500 transgender students across the U.S., Clements-Nolle, Marx, and Katz (2006) found, "62% of transgender respondents experienced gender discrimination…83% of the participants reported experiencing verbal gender victimization and 36% reported experiencing physical gender victimization" (p. 55). Despite the high percentage of transgender students experiencing harassment, higher education institutions are leaving transgender students procedurally unprotected. This lack of protection is evidenced by McKinney's (2005) study of 85 transgender students from 61 different institutions which exhibited that, "None of the students indicated that their college or university included gender identity or expression in its non-discrimination policy" (p. 67). Chen (2010) observed that only 300 or roughly 7% of U.S. colleges and universities have introduced gender identity or expression into their non-discrimination policies.

Multiple Forms of Harassment

Although transgender students have been legally protected against sex-based discrimination since 2016 through the "Dear Colleague Letter on Transgender Students," which highlighted that all educational institutions receiving federal funding must extend Title IX or sex-based discrimination protections to transgender students, these students continue to face extensive discrimination and harassment within the higher education system (Teut, 2017). The prejudice transgender students encounter is embodied in multiple forms, namely physical violence and forced closeting as a result of peer pressure, internalization of societal norms, and higher education's implicit support of the gender binary system, which is mentioned in nearly all of the literature examined for this piece. These prejudices are disproportionately levied against transgender students as a marginalized student subpopulation.

Violence. Students whose gender nonconformity is physically apparent leaves them susceptible to violence, such as sexual assault (Cahill, 2000; Effrig, et al., 2011; Krum, Davis, & Galupo, 2013). For instance, those who do not conform to socially acceptable gender roles are at a higher risk of rape (Cahill, 2000; Effrig et al., 2011). Over 50% of transgender individuals have experienced rape or sexual assault, with young adults making up the majority of those affected (Effrig et al., 2011; Kenagy, 2005; Lombardi, Wilchins, Priesing, & Malouf, 2001). Sexual violence, though dominant among the transgender student population, is not the only form of violence transgender students encounter on a regular basis. Other members of the campus community use violence such as psychological or physical bullying in an attempt to amend the behaviors they perceive as incorrect and to hold transgender students accountable for transgressing societal boundaries and norms (Seelman, 2014). Transgender students are also 1.5 times more likely than cisgender students to report experiencing controlling or abusive behavior (Effrig et al., 2011). Transgender students' outward transgressions of societally constructed gender norms put them at risk for "corrective" violence, namely physical and sexual assault, at the hands of their peers.

Forced Closeting. In contrast, transgender students who can pass as cisgendered often feel pressured to remain closeted in order to avoid persecution (Beemyn, 2003; Hill-Collins, 2004; Seelman, 2014). Although more recent studies (e.g. Cegler, 2012; Effrig et al., 2011)

have found that gay and lesbian students are coming out in higher numbers during their high school years, the same does not hold true for transgender students who tend to explore their gender identity early in their college years before identifying as transgender by their junior or senior years. Therefore, campus environments play a major role in the degree of comfort or hesitation transgender students may experience with regards to coming out and their identity development, which will be discussed more extensively later. The pressures students feel to remain closeted and pass as cisgender can add undue psychological stress (Effrig et al., 2011; Seelman, 2014). In addition, forcible closeting creates an invisible and silent minority on campus, which isolates transgender students from one another and from the greater Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, and other groups such as Asexual, Pansexual, or Intersex (LGBTQ+) community that could serve as a place of refuge, and act as a vehicle for transgender student advocacy and social justice change on-campus.

The forced closeting and alienation of transgender students from both the LGBTQ+ and general student body contributes to higher education's inability to accurately measure the size of this student subpopulation (Beemyn, 2005). The unknown number of transgender students within the U.S. higher education system allows the system and its professionals to operate without much thought or concern for these students. Students' remaining closeted also supports the gendered and heteronormative system that operates within higher education by allowing transgender students whom "pass" as cisgender to receive the same unearned privileges that suppress their "out" counterparts rather than subverting the system (Newhouse, 2013). Persecution can also present itself through seemingly inconsequential microaggressions, such as the usage of incorrect and pejorative gender terminology (Nadal, Skolnik, & Wong, 2012; Newhouse, 2013), which can have lasting negative effects on transgender students' college experiences and persistence.

Diminished Identity Development

The harassment and discrimination transgender students experience, whether implicit or explicit, increases their psychological distress and negatively impacts transgender students' identity development, making it increasingly difficult for these students to match their cisgender peers' developmental growth and success within postsecondary education (Effrig et al., 2011; McKinney, 2005; Squire & Norris, 2014). Although there is little available research on the college persistence and retention of LGBTQ+ students (Sanlo, 2004), transgender students were found to consider leaving their institutions at higher rates than their cisgender peers (Rankin, Weber, Blumenfeld, & Frazer, 2010). It is also generally accepted within higher education that a correlation exists between students' feelings of belonging, identity development, and retention (Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie, & Gonyea, 2008). Postsecondary education traditionally lends itself to students' identity development by allowing most students to physically and mentally distance themselves from parents for perhaps the first time in their lives (Beemyn, 2003; Freitas, 2017; Lees, 1998; Schneider, 2010). It would, therefore, follow that transgender students' feelings of marginality (Pusch, 2003; McKinney, 2005) within the current higher education system, which increases their psychological stress and hinders their identity development, would also decrease their likelihood to persist within the system.

Transgender student development is hindered by the additional levels of stress they face as members of a minority group on campus (Effrig et al., 2011; McKinney, 2005). Their minority status is exemplified by the use of gender exclusive language and policies on campus and a lack of supportive faculty and staff members (Case et al., 2012; Effrig et al., 2011; Freitas, 2017). Common examples of gender exclusivity that exist on the majority of college campuses include gender binary bathrooms, university documentation that has limited selection options

for gender or sex identification, the lack of formal name change procedures, and the limited availability of gender inclusive and appropriate housing and athletic facilities (Beemyn, 2003; Beemyn et al., 2005; Krum, Davis, Galupo, 2013; Seelman, 2014). These circumstances are particularly troubling as identity development is both a crucial component of students' college experiences and persistence, and an integral part of the mission of student affairs to cultivate the holistic wellbeing of students (Beemyn et al., 2005; Bilodeau, 2005). Despite this espoused mission of student affairs divisions, the transgender student subpopulation has largely been failed in this regard.

Transgender students feel continually unsupported by academic and student affairs because many higher education professionals not only uphold the binary system, as evidenced by the gender exclusive policies and practices mentioned above, but also demonstrate a lack of education concerning transgenderism and transgender students' experiences (Beemyn, 2003; McKinney, 2005). Transgender students surveyed by McKinney (2005) indicated it was a rarity to encounter faculty and staff members who were aware of transgender students' experiences. Those rare individuals were perceived as professionals who independently learned about transgenderism or those already working within LGBTQ+ campus services (McKinney, 2005). Unknowledgeable staff members can cause additional harm to the transgender student population; for example, Beemyn (2003), a non-binary higher education professional, found in their own work that student affairs programmatic initiatives often incorrectly conflate gender identity and sexual orientation, which further alienates transgender students. The conflation of gender and sex is also rampant in higher education and student affairs literature (Renn, 2010), which makes it more difficult for professionals to adequately educate themselves. Professionals' lack of knowledge and awareness can also be attributed, in part, to the overall dearth of literature on transgender students in higher education (Beemyn, 2003; Carter, 2000); however, regardless of the cause, professionals' ignorance toward the needs of transgender students perpetuates the hostile environment transgender students face on college campuses.

Severe Consequences for Transgender Students

A lack of acceptance and support on-campus in conjunction with the struggle transgender students face when formulating their identity was found to elevate the rates of suicidal ideation and self-harming behaviors amongst this student population (Effrig et al., 2011; Newhouse, 2013). The pressures transgender students face, such as rejection, physical and psychological violence, alienation, and the lack of support from higher education and student affairs professionals to mitigate these challenges have increased transgender students' susceptibility to severe depression, alcohol or drug abuse, posttraumatic stress disorder, suicide, and cutting behaviors (Rankin, 2003). For example, 42.6% of transgender students conveyed they have engaged in self-harming behaviors while over 50% have contemplated suicide (Effrig et al., 2011; Newhouse, 2013). These statistics exemplify the severe consequences that can develop when transgender students feel unwelcomed within higher education, which is often a result of institutionalized acceptance of societal norms, such as the rigid gender binary, a narrow view of appropriate gender expression and behaviors, and the privilege system (Agans, 2007; Case et al., 2012; Newhouse, 2013).

There is limited empirical research on the specific experiences of transgender college students when compared to the extensive amounts of literature on the general, read traditional, student population and experience. This limited availability is largely due to the forced closeting and, subsequent, invisibility of transgender students. Although there is some qualitative work or personal accounts on the negative postsecondary experiences of transgender students,

which contributes to transgender students' vulnerability, these accounts are not generalizable. Additionally, there appears to be only a few quantitative studies on transgender college students (e.g. Effrig et al., 2011; Seelman, 2014) and even less studies that examine the direct relationship between transgender students' college experience and psychological state (Effrig et al., 2011). However, the literature referenced throughout this piece utilized general findings that well-documented transgender individuals' higher likelihood of confronting harassment, depression, and suicidal ideation to justify that college students who identify as transgender confront similar challenges. For instance, 41% of over 7,000 transgender individuals surveyed, reported attempting suicide as compared to only 1.6% of the general U.S. population (Grant et al., 2010). The literature suggests these negative feelings, poor experiences, and, potentially, deadly consequences facing transgender individuals not only exist but are pervasive within higher education.

Higher education's acceptance of the gender binary, which assigns appearances and behaviors categorically as either masculine or feminine rather than viewing gender as fluid, normalizes and benefits gender conforming students while othering and disparaging students who do not adhere to the system (Beemyn, 2005; Burdge, 2007; Case et al., 2012). These factors, the lack of acceptance and support on-campus, and the struggle transgender students face in formulating their identity, create an inhospitable environment and elevate the rates of suicidal ideation and self-harming behaviors in this student population. The tendency of suicidal and self-harming behavior amongst transgender students (Effrig et al., 2011; Newhouse, 2013) highlights the need for increased attention and services for this student subpopulation.

Campus Services for Transgender Students

Of particular interest to transgender students would be improved on-campus housing options, which higher education has, historically, failed to provide this underrepresented demographic (Beemyn et al., 2005; McKinney, 2005). According to Seelman's (2014) study of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey, 19% of transgender students were denied access from gender-appropriate housing. Gender appropriate housing in this context means housing accommodations that are reflexive of the students' gender identity rather than their ascribed or legal sex status. Obtaining safe and welcoming housing on campus is of chief concern for this student subpopulation, considering their susceptibility to violence and discrimination (Krum, Davis, & Galupo, 2012; McKinney, 2005; Squire & Norris, 2014; Seelman, 2014). Transgender individuals, particularly adolescents, are more likely to face housing insecurity and instability than other populations (National Center for Transgender Equality, 2018), which contributed to the high number of suicide attempts amongst this population (Grant et al., 2010).

Student affairs professionals can attempt to change the narrative and mitigate transgender students' negative experiences by seeking further knowledge and providing additional services focused on the unique experiences and needs of transgender students, such as gender inclusive housing options and additional counseling services. Unfortunately, little research includes tangible recommendations for improving services for this marginalized subpopulation (Seelman, 2014). Below, information is included that focuses on housing services for transgender students as accessible, safe, and inclusive housing is fundamental to transgender students' needs.

Residence Life for Transgender Students

Residence life, the functional area responsible for student housing, historically created a barrier for transgender students by upholding the traditional gender binary through gendered bathrooms and prescribed roommate assignments (Krum, Davis, & Galupo,

2012; Seelman, 2014). While living in residential facilities on campus, transgender students have reported concerns such as, "being outed as transgender, having issues of transgender inclusion put to a majority vote among all residents, and having difficulty getting information about housing options that were open to people of all genders" (Seelman, 2014, p. 188). In Seelman's (2014) study of close to 300 transgender students, 19% were denied access to gender-appropriate housing and 23.9% were denied access to bathrooms and locker-room facilities. The gender binary system often remains unquestioned until transgender students request accommodations, such as gender-neutral housing and restrooms (Newhouse, 2013). Upon such requests, student affairs practitioners working in residence life find themselves in a reactionary rather than proactive position in providing adequate services for these students.

However, residence life has the potential to be a strong ally to this student population and has, in recent years, begun to introduce advancements to the services offered to transgender students (Seelman, 2014). Such improvements include: implementing gender-neutral bathrooms, single bedrooms, and gender inclusive housing (Seelman, 2014). The intervention of residence life professionals on behalf of transgender students has surged; for example, within one year the number of institutions that had gender-neutral housing options doubled (Gender Public Advocacy Coalition, 2008). Although offering single rooms and building gender-neutral or gender inclusive residential areas is a good start, these alternative housing accommodations are typically more expensive for both institutions and students than traditional housing options, which creates an additional barrier to transgender students accessing housing and can be interpreted as financially penalizing transgender students for their needs (Beemyn, 2005). Residence life departments across the U.S. have also created living-learning communities or population specific housing areas for transgender students and other students within the greater LGBTQ+ community (Beemyn, 2005). These types of communities can provide transgender students a safe place and counterspace on-campus, which reduces the threat of physical and psychological violence toward these students (Seelman, 2014). Yet, these communities can also further isolate transgender students from the general campus community (Beemyn, 2005).

To fully meet the needs of transgender students, residence life professionals need to take a more proactive and holistic approach. Residence life professionals could couple housing accommodations with a preemptive residential curriculum and programming model that educates the entire residential student population on inclusivity and allyship to mitigate discrimination against transgender students. Additionally, residence life departments can utilize their student staff or residence assistants (RAs) to facilitate community building through programming and conversations with residential students. These initiatives should increase students' sense of belonging, promote the development of peer relationships, and establish a deeper connection to the institution, which promote student persistence. Additionally, these techniques should allow residence life staff to recognize at-risk or concerning behaviors, such as increased alcohol usage and other signs of depression, which is particularly applicable to transgender student populations. These initiatives have the potential to improve the overall residential climate for transgender students without isolating them in segregated residential communities or inadvertently outing them for their specific needs. These proposed interventions are not the only means that residence life professionals could use to improve the experiences of transgender students; yet, they are viable options.

Residence life is one example of a student affairs functional area or department that has the capacity to positively impact transgender students' experiences; however, there are many other departments and services within higher education that should willingly participate in improving these students' experiences, namely health and counseling services. The creation

and offering of intentionally designed and well-informed services for transgender students would promote the process of healthy identity development and increased academic success (Beemyn et al., 2005). It follows that these services would also help to reduce the feelings of alienation and victimization that transgender students have reported experiencing on college campuses (Case et al., 2012); therefore, promoting greater student satisfaction and success among the transgender student population.

Conclusion

Higher education institutions and professionals have failed to fully combat the challenges transgender students face by upholding a gender segregated environment, lacking well-informed knowledge on transgenderism, providing inadequate housing services, and failing to cultivate an inclusive environment by educating the entire student population on transgenderism and acceptance. Despite some progress being made across the U.S. in recent years, particularly within residence life, the overwhelming majority of institutions have not addressed these concerns to the best of their abilities and have promulgated the current, negative climate transgender students face when entering and pursuing postsecondary education. This hostile environment and the negative experiences transgender students disproportionately face within higher education not only limits their ability to persist but also causes significant emotional, developmental, and psychological damage. It is the responsibility of higher education and student affairs professionals, who are often charged with caring for students' holistic needs, to rectify this disservice to transgender students and mitigate their trauma on-campus.

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Undocumented Students, Community Colleges, and the Urgent Call for Undocu-Competence

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Abstract

Undocumented students in the United States continue to face unique barriers to success in higher education. Across the country, undocumented students have to navigate ineligibility for federal financial aid and disparate in-state resident tuition policies. Additionally, the literature on undocumented college students demonstrates that, too often, campuses are ill-equipped to equitably serve this student population. The majority of undocumented students begin their higher education journey at a community college. Therefore, it is important to consider the undocumented student experience in the context of community colleges and how the aforementioned barriers compromise the historical open-access mission of these institutions. In addition to providing an overview of the relevant federal and state policy landscape for undocumented students and its important connection to community colleges, the literature on undocumented students' lived experiences on college campuses is reviewed. Finally, the literature's emerging and urgent call for undocu-competence – the capacity to serve, support, and advocate for undocumented students – is presented.

Keywords: undocumented students, student support, community colleges

Community colleges serve as the "primary gateway to higher education for undocumented students" (Valenzuela, Perez, Perez, Montiel, & Chaparro, 2015, p. 87). This is largely because community colleges remain grounded in their historical open-access mission and provide a low-cost pathway to higher education for many of our country's most marginalized students (Brown, 2012; Harbour, 2015; Oseguera, Flores, & Burciaga, 2010). Yet, incoherent, fluctuating state and federal policies in addition to campus-specific barriers compromise the access mission of community colleges for undocumented students. Additionally, the current political climate creates troubling, sometimes violent, conditions for undocumented immigrants in the United States. Arguably, more than ever before, institutions of higher education, particularly community colleges, must preserve their access mission by committing to undocu-competence. For the purposes of this paper, undocu-competence refers to the capacity to serve, support, and advocate for undocumented students.

Undocumented Students and the Community College Context

More than three million students graduate from high school every year. 65,000 of those graduates are undocumented students who live in the United States without citizenship, valid visas, or valid work permits (National Association of Secondary School Principals, n.d.; Passel & Cohn, 2010). To understand the unique, structural barriers undocumented immigrants face within higher education in the United States, one must be familiar with pertinent federal and state policies in addition to the relevant literature that examines undocumented students' lived experiences.

Federal Policy

There are three pieces of federal legislation that are foundational in understanding undocumented students in the context of education. First, the Higher Education Act of 1965 asserted that applicants of federal financial aid must be United States citizens (Drachman, 2008). This legislation specifically bans all undocumented students from applying for or receiving any form of federal aid. This includes the Pell Grant, a need-based grant program for students from low-income backgrounds (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). The Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) reported that Pell Grants are more important in the context of community colleges than in four-year institutions, because Pell Grants actually cover more expenses for community college students due to low tuition and fee costs; this reduces community college student borrowing to around 17% (Association of Community College Trustees, n.d.). Therefore, banning undocumented students from the opportunity to receive federal aid, such as the Pell Grant, is a major access issue. Second, the *Plyer v. Doe* (1982) case is a key Supreme Court decision for undocumented students. This case established a mandate that all children in the United States, including undocumented children, must have access to free K-12 education (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2015); however, this mandate did not extend to postsecondary education.

Finally, and most relevant to our current political context, is the uncertainty of the future of the Deferred Action on Childhood Arrivals (DACA) executive order issued in 2012 by President Obama. DACA gave eligible undocumented immigrants who arrived in the United States before the age of 16 a chance to stay in the United States to study or work. Those approved for DACA were protected from deportation for two years; those benefits could be renewed. Nearly 790,000 undocumented immigrants are able to work and/or pursue higher education without fear of deportation, due to DACA (Krogstad, 2017). Currently, the future of DACA is currently being litigated in the courts after the Department of Justice issued a wind down order in September of 2017 (National Immigration Law Center, 2018). If DACA were to end without a legislative replacement, there would be no guaranteed protection from deportation for undocumented students. This would be harmful for undocumented students' wellbeing as well as for the communities of which they are a part.

State Policy

State legislation granting undocumented students in-state resident tuition (ISRT) is "perhaps the most relevant immigrant college access-related policy of the last three decades" (Oseguera, Flores, & Burciaga, 2010, p. 38). One of the clearest barriers to access for undocumented students is the cost of attendance, particularly considering the ban on federal financial aid. This is an issue for community colleges, despite the fact that they consistently offer the lowest cost of attendance (American Association of Community Colleges, 2016). Currently, only 20 states and the District of Columbia have tuition equity laws or policies that assist with the cost of tuition, primarily granting undocumented students ISRT (National Immigration Law Center, 2018).

At the other end of the spectrum, there are three states who explicitly ban public colleges and universities from offering ISRT to undocumented students or ban undocumented students from attending public institutions, including community colleges (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2014). There are also many states who have no laws or policies related to undocumented students (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2014). The range of policies across the country is complex and ever-evolving. New pieces of legislation that either extend or deny tuition equity for undocumented students are introduced each legislative session in states across the country (Ali, 2017). This unstable policy landscape, which has

no signs of becoming more stable (Nienhusser, 2018), creates confusion and frustration for undocumented students across the country. Further, this creates misunderstandings among policy implementers, such as admissions counselors, financial aid staff, and student affairs professionals (Nienhusser, 2018). Considering this instability of state tuition equity policies, those who work on community college campuses must make an intentional and diligent effort to stay updated on their state's current policies as well as proposed legislative challenges to those policies.

Undocumented Students' Lived Experiences on Campus

Fortunately, the recent literature published on undocumented college students is making a shift away from deficit models of research and towards research that affirms the strength and success of undocumented students (Munoz & Maldonado, 2012). After all, "their stories are not those of defeat; they are stories of resilience and resistance" (Negrón-Gonzales, 2017, p. 109). Still, there are unique, structural barriers to account for when examining the lived experiences of this student population. These barriers must be understood in order to transform higher education practices to be more undocu-competent.

A central theme that shows up throughout the literature is the fear of disclosing undocumented status (Contreras, 2009; Nienhusser, 2014). In a study exploring the on-campus experiences of undocumented students, Munoz and Maldonado (2012) found that students had to find ways to strategically navigate institutional structures in ways that would ensure their protection. This strategic navigation is what Yosso (2005) called *navigational capital*, the skills of being able to successfully move through institutions, such as college campuses, that were not designed to ensure marginalized populations' success. Explained another way, the undocumented status can lead to *undocumented intelligence* which Chang (2016) described as the skills and intuition to be a "'good' non-citizen citizen" that approaches the educational experience with a savvy caution (p. 1165).

Too often, high school counselors are ill-equipped to assist undocumented students in their exploration for higher education options (Niehnusser, Vega, & Carquin, 2016). In some instances, undocumented students received incorrect or incomplete information about their college options (Niehnusser, Vega, & Carquin, 2016). Similarly, this theme shows up for higher education professionals (Contreras, 2009). Some undocumented students encountered microaggressions from offensive and insensitive staff members (Niehnusser, Vega, & Carquin, 2016; Valenzuela et al., 2015). Munoz and Maldonado (2012) found that undocumented students can have negative classroom experiences. For example, undocumented students described feeling isolated in the classroom, particularly when immigration discussions arose. In this same study, they also found that competent faculty or staff were hugely helpful in undocumented students' academic and social transition to campus (Munoz & Maldonado, 2012).

Importantly, we must consider intersectionality in research on undocumented students. Undocumented students are not a homogenous group and should not be treated as one in the literature. The dynamics of race, gender identity, socioeconomic status, ability status, and sexual orientation alongside immigration status must be considered in future research (Munoz & Maldonado, 2012). Additionally, "as the dominant anti-immigrant discourse in the U.S. intensifies, there is an increasing need for more counter-narratives recounting the lived experiences" of undocumented students (Castro-Salazar & Bagley, 2010, p. 35). Suárez-Orózco and colleagues (2015) worked to center the voices and experiences of a diverse sample of undocumented students in in their study. Using survey methods, their research solicited input from undocumented students on how their undergraduate experiences could have been

improved. The findings indicated a need for increased understanding of the unique experiences of undocumented students, increased services and resources for undocumented students, and increased public advocacy for undocumented students (Suárez-Orózco et al., 2015). This study indicates the importance of making space for and listening to the undocumented student voice. Additionally, these findings demonstrate that undocumented students often experience an institutional lack of understanding about their unique experiences, an absence of organized, well-resourced support mechanisms on campus, and insufficient advocacy from college administrators; all of these issues should be explicitly addressed as institutions strive to make efforts towards undocu-competence.

Finally, it must be noted that the majority of extant literature is situated in the four-year institution context (Negrón-Gonzales, 2017). However, it is necessary that we examine undocumented students at the community college level because, although we cannot know the exact number, it is widely surmised that the majority of undocumented students are studying at community colleges (Flores & Oseguera, 2009; Negrón-Gonzales, 2017; Szelényi & Chang, 2002). Castro-Salazar and Bagley (2010) reiterate this, explaining the importance of studying this population of students in the context of community colleges, particularly because of the unique financial barriers to higher education these students face.

Undocu-Competence

There is a growing and urgent call emerging in the literature for undocu-competence – the capacity to serve, support, and advocate for undocumented students – in higher education (Nienhusser & Espino, 2017; Valenzuela et al., 2015). This specific term was introduced by Valenzuela and colleagues in 2015 in their conceptual article that proposed Institutional Undocu-Competency (IUC) – an institutional capacity framework that community colleges can utilize to strengthen their support for undocumented students. Relying on social justice frameworks, IUC challenges institutions to actively reduce barriers and support the success of undocumented students in a variety of ways that include relevant training for faculty and staff, improving college outreach, creatively increasing financial aid opportunities, supporting undocumented student groups, providing adequate health and wellness programs, and publicly advocating for undocumented students in the education policy arena (Valenzuela et al., 2015).

At the individual level, Neinhusser and Espino (2017) examined the knowledge, awareness, and skills of community college institutional agents (e.g. financial aid administrators, admissions counselors, student services professionals, etc.). Their qualitative, exploratory study affirmed previous research and demonstrated that there were differences in the levels of comfort, ease, and understanding respective to serving the undocumented student population (Nienhusser & Espino, 2017). Therefore, the authors proposed the Undocumented/DACAmented Status Competency (UDSC) as a framework to inform higher education professionals' practice and better support undocumented students. A commitment to UDSC would mean a commitment to expanding one's existing awareness about issues facing undocumented students and gaining the skills needed to effectively and equitably serve this student population.

In order to increase competency, many institutions have developed trainings for faculty and staff in order to develop undocumented student allies. These trainings should be affirmative and demonstrate the value of undocumented students' contributions to the campus community (Valenzuela et al., 2015). Using survey data, Cisneros and Cadenas (2017) found that attendees of undocumented student ally training reported increased competency in serving and supporting undocumented students. This is an encouraging finding, as institutional allies to undocumented students can be essential in developing supportive policies and programs as

well as forming valuable partnerships with local community organizations (Chen & Rhoads, 2016).

Recommendations for Future Research on Undocu-Competence

It is encouraging that there is a growing body of scholarship focused on undocu-competence. Moreover, it is encouraging that this emerging scholarship has largely been situated at the community college context (Nienhusser & Espino, 2017; Valenzuela et al., 2015). However, there is still room for continued examination on undocu-competence as researchers assert that institutions are not doing enough to institutionalize support for undocumented students (Gildersleeve & Vigil, 2015). Given the ever-changing federal and state policy environment, researchers could explore how community colleges publicly respond to major policy decisions that directly impact undocumented students. Analysis of these types of responses could provide an additional layer to the current scholarship that has been unexplored. Another area of inquiry could be the empirical examination of DREAM Centers – spaces on college campuses organized to deliver information, services, and resources to undocumented students and the campus community. These emerging spaces are one example of how institutions are beginning to embody undocu-competence.

Conclusion

Undocumented students in the United States continue to face unique, structural barriers in higher education. Moreover, the rise in anti-immigrant sentiment and consequential policy enactments, such as the threatened end to DACA, creates harmful conditions for undocumented student success. The call for undocu-competence in higher education, especially at community colleges, must be met. The access mission of community colleges in the United States is critical. Yet, this mission is compromised when undocumented students are banned from federal financial aid or denied ISRT. To be clear, the importance of policies that affirm and protect undocumented students cannot be overstated. However, "the success and failure of the interplay between education and immigration policies is in the hands of not only policymakers but the practitioners most likely to encounter the realities of these students under debate" (Oseguera and colleagues, 2010, p. 42). Policies alone cannot transform higher education practices; this must happen alongside increased undocu-competence.

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Build the Pyramid: A Best Practices Literature Review for Living-Learning Communities

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Abstract

In the last decade, living-learning communities (LLCs) have evolved as the higher education environment has shifted and scholars have identified empirical best practices for optimum, modern living-learning programs. The Best Practices Building Blocks for Living-Learning Programs model created by Inkelas, Garvey, & Robbins (2012) is discussed in detail as its components comprise the empirically-based model for modern LLC programs (Inkelas, Jessup-Anger, Benjamin, & Wawrzynski, 2018). The model's four levels; infrastructure, academic environment, co-curricular environment, and intentional integration, with assessment as the mortar that cements these levels together, create an operational and symbolic basis for developing cohesive and effective living-learning programs. Findings of this literature review indicate substantial support for the Best Practices Building Blocks for Living-Learning Programs model as an appropriate framework for the development of contemporary residential living-learning programs. Using these findings and the Best Practices Building Blocks for Living-Learning Programs model as an analytical lens, this review presents a multi-level analysis of LLC program best practices and considerations for future research and practice are discussed.

Keywords: academic affairs, higher education, high-impact practices, living-learning communities, living-learning program, residential life, student affairs

Living-learning communities (LLCs), also called living-learning programs (LLPs), are commonplace programs within residence halls across colleges and universities in the United States and exist as different arrangements and assemblies. Inkelas, Szelenyi, and Soldner (2007) defined LLCs/LLPs as "programs in which undergraduate students live together in a discrete portion of a residence hall (or the entire hall) and participate in academic and/ or extra-curricular programming designed especially for them" (p. I-2). According to the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (2015), LLCs "should create more integrated experiences for first-year students by connecting faculty, students, disciplines, and co-curricular experiences" (p. 42). Indeed, LLCs should seek opportunities to maximize the learning and development of student participants in the shared experience the programs provide. Within the last decade, growing literature on LLC best practices has identified such opportunities for ensuring optimum effectiveness. The purpose of this literature review is to explore recent literature on purely residential living-learning programs that validates each level of the *Best Practices Building Blocks for Living Learning Programs* model (Inkelas, Garvey, & Robbins, 2012). The results of this review are intended to help LLC professionals create and develop stronger programs by understanding this modern best practices framework.

<div align="center">**Review of the Literature**</div>

This review synthesized literature on LLCs from the last two decades, but with primary emphasis placed on scholarly and peer-reviewed journal articles published within the last 10 years and literature focused on discussing purely residential LLCs. Included in this review are the following topics: (a) general benefits of living-learning communities, (b) the *Best Practices Building Blocks for Living Learning Programs* model, and (c) literature supporting the components of this model. The article concludes with considerations for practice and future research.

### General Benefits of Living-Learning Communities

LLCs have numerous benefits that are well documented by the literature. Most significantly, participation in LLCs has been associated with stronger student success compared to non-LLC residents. Some of these key outcomes include: (a) academic performance (Arensdorf & Naylor-Tincknell, 2016; Barefoot, 2000; Inkelas, Szelenyi, & Soldner, 2007; Inkelas & Weisman, 2003; Pasque & Murphy, 2005; Sriram, Glanzer, & Allen, 2018; Stassen, 2003); (b) ease of transition and socialization into the college environment (Arensdorf & Naylor-Tincknell, 2016; Buell, Love, & Yao, 2017; Ericksen & Walker, 2015; Inkelas, Szelenyi, & Soldner, 2007; Inkelas, Daver, Vogt, & Leonard, 2007; Stassen, 2003; Strayhorn, 2008); and (c) increased persistence (Arensdorf & Naylor-Tincknell, 2016; Buell, Love, & Yao, 2017; Edwards & McKelfresh, 2002; Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2006; Stassen, 2003; Tinto, 2003; Wardell, Draper, & Yarrish, 2008). LLCs have also been found to increase interactions with peers and faculty in and out of the classroom (Arensdorf & Naylor-Tincknell, 2016; Buell, Love, & Yao, 2017; Kuh, et al., 2006; Inkelas, Szelenyi, & Soldner, 2007; Shuskok & Sriram, 2010; Wardell, Draper, & Yarrish, 2008; Wawrzynski, & Jessup-Angur, 2010).

These interactions in the shared learning environments of LLCs produce additional benefits for students and faculty, including: (a) increased exposure to diversity (Inkelas et al., 2007; Inkelas et al., 2012; Inkelas & Weisman, 2003; Pike, Kuh, & McCormick, 2009), higher levels of campus and community engagement (Inkelas et al., 2007; Inkelas et al., 2012; Weiss & Fosnacht, 2018), and professional development for faculty (Buell, Love, & Yao, 2017; Inkelas, Soldner, & Leonard, 2008). Because of these substantial outcomes, LLCs have been nationally recognized as a high-impact practice in higher education and a strong example of interventions that enhance student learning and development (Brower & Inkelas, 2010; Keup, 2013; Potter, Berson, Engelkemeyer, Oliaro, Terenzini, & Walker-Johnson, 1998). Per Kuh (2008), high-impact practices are teaching and learning practices shown to increase retention and student engagement and have validated benefits for students of many backgrounds.

Best Practices Building Blocks for Living Learning Programs Model

LLCs have been constantly evolving over the past decade and empirically-based best practices have been developed based on the wealth of knowledge provided by national studies and recent scholarly research. Inkelas, Garvey, and Robbins (2012) constructed a theoretical best practices model called *Best Practices Building Blocks for Living-Learning Programs*, which is shown in Figure 1. This model is pyramidal and includes the following four levels (progressing from bottom to top): infrastructure, academic environment, co-curricular environment, and intentional integration. A fifth component, assessment, is interwoven into all the levels. The pyramid structure serves as both operational and symbolic; if the foundational facets of the program are not solid, the higher levels cannot be effective.

As the foundation of the pyramid, the infrastructure level consists of the core programmatic aspects that allow the higher-level aspects to exist and function (Inkelas et al., 2012). Per Inkelas et al. (2012), the elements of Infrastructure are: (a) clear goals and objectives that
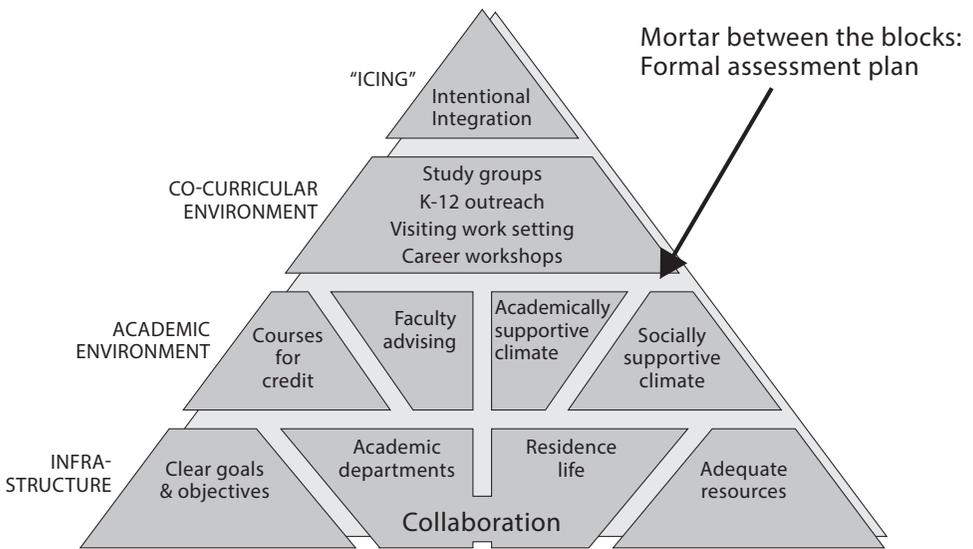
Figure 1. Best Practices Building Blocks

relate directly to the program's theme, (b) adequate human and financial resources to operate the program and (c) effective collaboration between student affairs and academic affairs. Progressing up the pyramid, Inkelas et al. (2012) identified three core best practices in the academic environment level: (a) courses for credit linked with the LLC, (b) academic advisement by faculty involved in the program, and (c) creating a residence hall environment that is both academically and socially supportive. The third level, co-curricular environment, relates to the "formal, out-of-class activities that supplement and fortify the academic goals" of the program (Inkelas et al., 2012, p. 33). LLCs must equally value the learning both inside and outside the classroom (Inkelas et al., 2012). The highest level of the best practices pyramid is intentional integration, which is defined as "the extent to which all of the other blocks in the pyramid are in alignment with the LLP's goals and objectives and integrated with one another" (Inkelas et al., 2012, p. 33). This pinnacle involves confirming that each of the lower levels align while appropriately and effectively supporting the overall learning process in the program. The final aspect of the model, assessment, is described as "the mortar between the blocks that holds together the rest of the pyramid" (Inkelas et al., 2012, p. 34). Inkelas et al. (2012) explained that LLC professionals assess their programs by three main criteria: (a) effectiveness of the discrete elements (e.g. linked courses, staff), (b) the extent to which the program aligns with stated goals and objectives, and (c) the level of integration between each element of the program.

Literature Supporting the Best Practices Building Blocks Model Components

As advocated by Inkelas, Jessup-Anger, Benjamin, and Wawrzynski (2018), the Best Practices Building Blocks model is the empirically-based, best practices model for modern LLCs and shall be the framework for this literature review henceforth. While there is little research that explicitly compares the different types of LLCs, Inkelas, Soldner, and Leonard (2008) stated: "while the thematic focus of L/L [LLC] programs may differ from program to program, the ways in which they are organized and maintained can be largely comparable" (p. 508). Therefore, the best practices discussed are applied to LLC programs overall. A limitation to the total generalizability of these findings is the wide diversity of LLC forms and functions across

many institution types (Inkelas et al., 2012; Inkelas, Soldner, & Leonard, 2008). Although the utility of these findings will vary, LLC professionals can use this model as a practical, empirically-based framework for program development within their institutional contexts.

Infrastructure. Pasque & Murphy (2005) stated that every living-learning program should evaluate their current goals and missions to ensure those statements align with desired outcomes, especially academic achievement and intellectual engagement. Furthermore, there must be a positive predictive relationship between the program's goals and student outcomes to be effective in producing desired student development (Pasque & Murphy, 2005). Succeeding this partnership, human and financial resources are fundamental, yet progressively challenging, characteristics of LLCs. Institutions must be fully cognizant of the amount of resources they have to support their LLC programs and living-learning program budgets must be sustainable, especially if they are considering expansion via student implementation and advancement (Inkelas, Soldner, & Leonard, 2008; Brower & Inkelas, 2010). However, LLC programs have Academic Affairs as a chief resource collaborator, and this partnership is becoming increasingly important considering the limited budgets all colleges and universities must negotiate (Inkelas et al., 2012).

A strong partnership between student affairs and academic affairs is essential to the success of living-learning programs (Brower & Inkelas, 2010; Brower, Inkelas, Hobgood, Beckett, & Seyforth, n.d.; Inkelas et al., 2012; Tinto, 1999). Successful LLC programs are characterized by both divisions having regular communication, a collaborative relationship, a strong academic focus for LLCs, resource-sharing practices, and well-defined roles for each division's staff to create a more cohesive learning environment. However, per Inkelas et al. (2012), there is more than one successful form of a student/academic affairs partnership. Thus, the partnership should align with a shared understanding of institutional contexts and resources. Having a strong partnership does not necessarily mean that both divisions should be involved in all aspects regarding living-learning programs. Some institutions have the resources to have closely integrated partnerships, whereas others may do best with a "parallel partnership" (Inkelas et al., 2012, p. 36) in which both divisions separate responsibilities based on resources, competencies, and administrative strengths. The nature of the partnership is at the discretion of the professionals, but both divisions must have some kind of cooperative relationship to successfully execute living-learning programs.

Academic environment. First, several scholars have championed integrating linked courses into LLCs to promote student success in all types of living-learning programs (Brower & Inkelas, 2010; Brower et al., n.d.; Wawrzynski & Jessup-Angur, 2010). This research indicates that providing students with built-in courses related to the program's theme gives them opportunities to enhance their learning through easier access to course faculty, additional co-curricular opportunities, increased peer interaction inside and outside the classroom, and a shared intellectual experience. Next, Brower and Inkelas (2010) and Inkelas et al. (2012) have determined that the most common roles LLC-participating faculty facilitated were teaching courses and advising students; students responded by consulting with faculty on course-specific and advisement matters. Increasing the value of these findings, faculty involvement is a crucial attribute of successful living-learning programs, especially in these dual roles for LLC students (Arensdorf & Naylor-Tincknell, 2016; Buell, Love, & Yao, 2017; Ericksen & Walker, 2015; Inkelas et al., 2012; Inkelas, Soldner & Leonard, 2008; Shusok & Sriaram, 2010, Tinto, 2003; Wardell et al., 2008). Since LLCs typically have mostly first-year students, Inkelas et al. (2012) emphasized that ideal interactions between students and faculty are those regarding coursework and academic advisement, the goal being able to develop trust and mentoring relationships in the future. Lastly, positive student perceptions of the peer climate

and living environment is one of the most influential aspects of LLC outcomes (Buell, Love, & Yao, 2017; Inkelas et al., 2012; Inkelas & Weisman, 2003; Rowan-Kenyon, Soldner, & Inkelas, 2007). Interestingly, Inkelas, Szelenyi, and Soldner (2007) suggested that positive perceptions also have a ripple effect to non-LLC students living in the same residence hall. According to their research, "traditional residence hall participants perceived their residential climate as more socially supportive and were more likely to report positive diversity interactions with their peers than traditional residence hall students living in buildings with no L/L programs" (p. I-10).

Overall, scholars endorse the establishment of an inclusive and collaborative learning environment to maximize student success and learning (Inkelas & Weisman, 2003; Jessup-Anger, 2012; Wawrzynski & Jessup-Angur, 2010). Constructing such cooperative learning environments are created through structuring co-curricular activities (e.g. service learning), as well as quality peer and cross-cultural interaction into the programming utilizing a strong academic focus to provide students opportunities to engage in an enriched educational environment. Jessup-Angur (2012) encouraged LLC professionals and faculty to supplement this accommodating environment by challenging students to continually strive for excellence. This involves encouraging them to take ownership of their education while providing necessary support along the way (Jessup-Angur, 2012). With these methods established, emphasizing collaborative environments can yield important benefits including increased retention, increased tolerance for diversity, improved academic performance, and a stronger sense of belonging at the institution for students (Inkelas & Weisman, 2003; Roksa & Whitley, 2017; Wawrzynski & Jessup-Angur, 2010).

Co-curricular environment. Co-curricular programming must be very intentional, and is paramount when the activities are: (a) aligned with the LLC's theme, (b) in environments where there is a healthy amount of academically-based activities (e.g. study groups), (c) students have opportunities to learn about and appreciate inherent differences (e.g. cultural programs/discussions), and (d) are spaces containing activities that strengthen community and engage emotions to influence deeper learning (Inkelas et al., 2012; Brower & Inkelas, 2010; Smith, 2015; Nanna, Skillman, & Zgela, 2011). Like the academic environment, peer interaction and social-oriented activities (both formal and informal) are influential on the experience of LLC students and their cognitive and personal development (Brower et al. n.d.; Smith, 2015; Inkelas & Weisman, 2003; Wawrzynski & Jessup-Angur, 2010). Inkelas et al. (2012) identified the four activities associated with the strongest positive outcomes in LLC programs: (a) participating in study groups, (b) outreach to K-12 schools through buddy/peer-mentoring, (c) visits to professional work settings (e.g. businesses, labs, organizations), and (d) career workshops. Inkelas et al. (2012) also identified other successful required and optional programming activities conducted by living-learning programs. The most popular required activities were group projects and team building challenges and the most popular optional activities were: (a) cultural outings, (b) multicultural programming, and (c) study groups. Collectively, effective LLC co-curricular programming must encourage peer-to-peer interaction while closely aligning with its theme, academic goals, and learning outcomes.

Intentional integration. Per Brower et al. (n.d.), successful living-learning programs primarily focus on developing structures and procedures to ensure integration of stakeholders into the execution of the program and its activities. Likewise, LLC professionals must be intentional in this process and capitalize on partnerships and community-building to ensure learning everywhere it occurs. As Brower and Inkelas (2010) described living-learning programs as "microcosms of what our colleges and universities can and should be" (para. 22), which are environments that maximize student learning and promote the development of

important skills that allow them to become productive citizens and future leaders. However, Inkelas, Soldner, and Leonard (2008) warn, when it comes to LLCs, "'bigger' may not necessarily always be 'better'" (p. 508). While LLCs can provide many important benefits, professionals must be fully cognizant of their resources and emphasize intentionality, high engagement, and quality structure throughout all levels of their living-learning programs.

Assessment. Inkelas et al. (2012) argued "the next generation of research on LLPs should include measurements and analysis of the various constructs in our model, and should investigate if or how these constructs relate to key student outcomes, such as academic achievement, persistence, and learning" (p. 35). In addition to alignment of assessment with the program's goals, Iowa State University (2015) stated that LLC professionals should develop cognitive outcomes based on achievement, affective outcomes related to student development, and social outcomes that create a supportive learning environment. Wawrzynski & Jessup-Angur (2010) also emphasized gathering information regarding LLC students' expectations of being in an LLC, as this can be a predictor for behavior and outcomes of the program. In terms of execution, some scholars recommend that assessment is conducted throughout the operational cycle of the program to identify any challenges or deficiencies, receive feedback on programming, and ascertain how learning outcomes are being met (Smith, 2015; Wardell et al., 2008). Assessment should also be conducted in qualitative ways such as focus groups, student interviews, and student reflections to gain a deeper understanding of how the LLC experience is impacting students (Iowa State University, 2015).

Discussion and Implications

Living-learning communities are strong assets to residential life in higher education. With the *Best Practices Building Blocks for Living-Learning Programs* model, LLC professionals are now equipped with research-based guidance to successfully adapt programs in the modern environment. Taking actions to align program practices with the model yields the ability to more effectively achieve desired goals and learning outcomes of LLCs. Through these actions, intentionality must be emphasized at all levels to develop stronger programs and create an academic-social environment where student learning and development can thrive.

Moreover, living-learning communities are revered high-impact practices that exhibit numerous beneficial outcomes for student learning and development and have evolved significantly in the last decade as the higher education environment has shifted. The comprehensive best practices model for modern living-learning programs created by Inkelas, Garvey, and Robbins (2012) serves as an empirically-based model for successful living-learning programs within modern higher education. Using this model, LLC programs can continually improve for future practice. Most notably, scholars contend that LLC professionals should conduct a critical self-assessment (such as Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education) of the current mission, goals, overall structure, and assessment practices of their programs and their partnership with academic affairs regularly to certify promotion of academic achievement, student success, and social integration outcomes while identifying strengths and areas for improvement (Inkelas et al. 2012; Jessup-Angur, 2012; Pasque & Murphy, 2005). Assessment is crucial for LLC programs to determine needs, opportunities for improvement, and required adjustments in their communities and practices to maximize outcomes. As LLC programs continue to develop, exploring opportunities to integrate quantitative, qualitative, and structural assessment methods discussed in this literature review will help build stronger assessment plan, wherever deemed appropriate and beneficial.

This literature review did not discuss other notable research findings regarding living-learning programs such as: (a) student development theory applications, (b) unique challenges faced by

LLCs, and (c) the impact these programs have on students from underrepresented populations (e.g., first-generation students, students of color). These topics individually warrant thorough discussion. Thus, in future literature reviews, these three topics should be addressed in the context of the *Best Practices Building Blocks for Living-Learning Programs* model. While the work of Inkelas et al. (2003; 2007; 2008; 2012; 2018) is the foundation of this literature review, future research on LLCs should continue to include supplementary and critical perspectives, which can strengthen this model and provide more valuable insight to further assist LLC professionals in facilitating success for all student participants.

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To Study Abroad or Not to Study Abroad: That Is the STEM Question

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Abstract

As more science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) students consider studying abroad, it is critical for researchers and student affairs educators to know more about how students engage with the study abroad process and make decisions about whether to participate or not. This qualitative study examined the decision-making process in which STEM students engaged regarding study abroad at a STEM liberal arts college. An organizational culture lens was utilized to make meaning of the formal study abroad decision-making process within a deeply-entrenched institutional bubble that permeates all college facets and stakeholders. Focus groups engaged both participants who studied abroad and those who ultimately chose not to, yielding five overarching themes: decision-making process, motivations to study abroad, college bubble, rigor, and academic issues. This study provides critical insight into understanding STEM study abroad decision-making in a unique institutional culture. Moreover, it offers student affairs educators meaningful knowledge to help support STEM students navigating the study abroad process and sheds light on the ways in which deeply-entrenched institutional cultures can impact decision-making processes.

Keywords: liberal arts colleges, organizational culture, STEM, study abroad

Historically, undergraduate students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) majors have not partaken in study abroad (SA) programs to the same degree as students in social science, business, and humanities fields (Klahr, 1998). Recent evidence demonstrates that STEM students in some fields have slowly garnered a larger portion of the SA pie among majors. Table 1 (below) shows a steady, notable rise in physical/life science

Table 1. *Percentage of the Total Study Abroad Population by Respective STEM Field, National and Welsh College (selected years)*

	Physical/Life Sciences	Engineering	Mathematics/Computer Science
1996-1997	6.8%	1.9%	1.6%
2006-2007	7.3%	3.1%	1.5%
2009-2010	7.5%	3.9%	1.5%
2010-2011	7.9%	3.5%	1.8%
2011-2012	8.6%	3.9%	1.7%
2012-2013	8.8%	4.1%	1.9%
2013-2014	8.0%	4.6%	2.1%

Source: Open Doors, 2008, 2012, & 2013.

students' participation in SA, and double the number of engineering students between 1996-1997 and 2011-2012. While these percentages are small, the data shows an overall trend toward more STEM students making the decision to study abroad.

Salisbury, Umbach, Paulsen and Pascarella (2009) argued STEM students are no less interested than other students in studying abroad. They asserted that curricular issues impeding SA opportunities should be examined. However, Phillips (2014) contrasted this by implying that recruitment efforts of STEM students does not seem to be making a large difference in their decision-making process. While the literature on SA for STEM students is minimal, available data suggests that STEM students study abroad at lower levels (Shirley, 2006; Stroud, 2015) in part because of how structured some STEM academic programs are within their specific curricula (Loberg, 2012). For example, Stroud (2010) found in a study on intent to study abroad that there was a significant difference in the SA participation rates between students in social sciences and those in engineering. Interestingly, though, there was no significant difference between those in social sciences and those in biological and physical sciences. Additionally, Stroud (2015) found that while the number of STEM majors studying abroad doubled across the U.S. between 2000-2001 and 2012-2013, the number of STEM majors tripled during this time period, and as such, the number of SA participants within STEM majors was proportionally decreased. In summary, STEM SA is under-studied in general, and there is a considerable lack of knowledge regarding students' decision-making processes and how institutional cultures support or recruit STEM majors to study abroad.

Purpose

This study occurred at a STEM liberal arts college (referred to as Welsh College) where SA is greatly impacted by the institutional culture. Since there is only a small amount of literature on STEM SA students, this study offers a window into the SA student decision-making process as a byproduct of Welsh's unique institutional culture. As a STEM liberal arts college with very high-achieving students, Welsh College is known for its deeply-entrenched sense of institutional culture. Students often refer to the *Welsh bubble*, a safe-haven to explore academic and social interests. Within this safe haven, students and other stakeholders have developed an entrenched culture about academic and social pursuits that have implications for the academic decisions students make in the Welsh College context. The purpose of this study was to explore how students at Welsh make SA decisions within the institutional context and culture of this bubble. We wanted to know how students who engaged in the formal institutional process (both those who chose to SA and those who ultimately elected not to) of investigating SA ultimately made their decision within the institutional context. Therefore, the research question guiding this study is: how does the institutional bubble impact the decision-making process of students formally considering study abroad opportunities at a STEM liberal arts college?

Theoretical Framework

Toma (2005) argued that higher education institutions are always working on strengthening the culture of their organization and that culture matters, while Niemann (2010) posited that it is multifaceted (and we would add, quite nuanced). This could not be more aptly illustrative of Welsh College, where the organizational culture is embedded deeply across and among institutional stakeholders. Since the Welsh bubble can constrain students' academic and social decisions, this study explores students' SA decision-making through an organizational culture lens. This lens becomes quite meaningful for examining the guiding research question because it helps make meaning of shared understandings including symbolic beliefs and notions (Heracleous, 2001). This study utilized a non-traditional organizational

culture framework because this type of perspective views individuals as affected by various influences and constraints while also receiving information from multiple constituencies emanating from various directions (Love, 1990). In this case, students received information regarding SA from a variety of institutional constituencies within the bubble including but not limited to professors, advisors, peers, student affairs educators, institutional history, and other factors.

This study specifically employed Love's (1990) conceptualization of organizational symbolism because of the shared values and assumptions proffered by the Welsh bubble. Love (1990) noted that within mini-societies, such as Welsh College, there are common ways of constructing and construing meaning about academic and social contexts. Furthermore, Toma (2005) and Niemann (2010) indicated that different components of organizational culture, including symbols, foster understanding and shared values. As a result, this can influence decision-making within the organizational context. We argue that these may include language and distinct, idealized badges of honor, in figurative and literal senses, or even edifices and photographs that become mythologized to some degree, as Metcalfe (2012) pointed out. In this study, that decision-making relates to deciding whether or not to study abroad. Tying this back to Love's (1990) framework, it provides a meaningful lens to explore SA decision-making for this study because "[t]he focus of this form of organizational analysis is on how individuals interpret and understand their experience and how these interpretations and understandings relate to action" (Smircich, 1983, p. 351). Geertz (1973) interpreted culture through the lens of organizational symbolism as a "framework of beliefs, and values in terms of which individuals define their world, express their feelings and make judgments" (p. 144-145). This lens adapts well to this institution, because students at Welsh College often define their experience through the institutional bubble. Their interpretations and self-reflections regarding SA are informed through their engagement within the bubble which leads to action in the form of a decision. Finally, the use of this framework can be further substantiated because we worked at the institution and therefore have a deep understanding of the college's culture.

Methodology

Selection of Focus Group Participants

Office of Institutional Research (OIR) collaborated with the Office of Study Abroad (OSA) to identify currently enrolled students who either participated in a Study Abroad program (SA), or formally considered studying abroad but chose not to (No-SA). Criteria for SA study participants included: a) independently contacting OSA to express interest, b) attending SA information sessions and workshops, c) selecting a specific program and completing its required paperwork and application, d) gaining institutional approval for SA, and e) participating in a program. No-SA student criteria included: a) contacting OSA to express SA program interests, b) attending information sessions and workshops, and c) ultimately deciding not to SA. OSA sent qualifying students emails, inviting their participation in the study. Those interested in participating were asked to directly contact OIR. Separate focus groups were held for SA (3) and non-SA students (2). The study yielded 22 SA and six non-SA students. All No-SA students who participated in the focus groups were female; of the students who studied abroad and participated in the study, 11 were male and 11 were female. Three international students were part of the 22 who studied abroad.

Focus Group Protocols and Topics

A set of protocols ensured consistency across focus groups. Before discussions started, participants signed informed consent forms. They were then asked to complete a brief questionnaire containing four Likert scale items for SA students and two for No-SA. This

was followed by two open-ended questions for all participants. Each session was moderated by the researchers. The lead moderator facilitated the discussion while the co-moderator served as note-taker and co-facilitator. Focus groups commenced with a brief discussion of the purpose and reminders of the conversation's confidential nature. Discussions were guided by seven questions for SA students and five No-SA students (with the two opening questions being the same for each).

Data Analysis

The research that applied the framework analysis used for this study was developed in the United Kingdom in the 1980s by the National Centre for Social Research. This method is often used to analyze and code qualitative data gathered in focus groups (QSR International, 2012). Ritchie and Spencer (2002) noted that while framework analysis requires the implementation of five highly interconnected steps, it also "relies on the creative and conceptual ability of the analyst to determine meaning, salience, and connections" (p. 310). As Witenstein (2015) noted, the five steps – familiarization, identifying a thematic framework, indexing, charting, and mapping and interpretation – are iterative, offering opportunities to return to previous steps while also being highly systematic.

Results

Five overarching themes emerged: decision-making process, motivations to study abroad, college bubble, rigor, and, academic issues. For the purposes of this portion of the study, data supporting these themes from nine of the focus group questions are shared.

What intrigued or piqued your interest the most about the SA program as a potential component of your college education?

One driving force was the opportunity to take classes at different universities not offered at Welsh. Two additional factors that were mentioned included students wanting to immerse themselves in cultural exchange and to take a break from Welsh's academic rigor. For example, Hugh (personal communication, January 30, 2013) acknowledged the College's strategic goal of understanding the impact one's studies and research can have on society by stating, "the global society aspect [of study abroad] added a component to my education by [enabling me to] look at the cultural exchange and understand how people in different countries live, act and operate." Expanding on this, Sue revealed life at Welsh can be isolating:

> Being in the [college] bubble makes it hard to know what is going on in the world. They say that we should know what is going on in the world, but I am not sure that this mission is really engaged at the school (personal communication, January 30, 2013).

No-SA students were concerned the education abroad would not be of similar quality or that it might not align with their academic interests. Roberta (personal communication, January 28, 2013) exemplified this by sharing "The way study abroad is portrayed at [Welsh] was made to sound like a nice 'vacation' for upperclassmen. I thought, 'why take a break from this college if I am paying all this money?'"

What key factors and individuals helped you to make your final decision to SA? How did the OSA process help you make your final decision?

While the student participants described the skepticism with which the idea of SA is met at Welsh, they also praised the college's director of the Office of Study Abroad. This full-time staff member oversees the SA office and works with all Welsh College students who express an interest in SA opportunities. Many student participants – both SA and No-SA – praised

the Director's enthusiasm and support that guided them toward an affirmative decision. Mentioned almost as frequently in this vein were Welsh faculty, yet when it came to academic department support, there was more of a mix in support levels.

In contrast, students frequently mentioned that their peers were generally unsupportive about leaving campus for a semester. "While my professor thought it was a good idea, my friends thought it was a bad idea," reported Eugene (personal communication, January 28, 2013). Beth (personal communication, January 20, 2013) added, "there is a general sentiment that students [at Welsh] who do not study abroad just like being here a lot." Furthermore, SA students shared peers' discouragement because they believed it would be difficult to catch up on one's studies upon returning. In response, SA participants imparted that careful academic planning before and after SA was essential to ensuring on-time credit completion.

It is interesting to note that some participants identified SA as a pathway to completing coursework, particularly for those students who intentionally studied a modern language. For instance, a student who took French her first year was inspired to study in France while another revealed one of her academic majors was Spanish and chose to study in Spain to improve fluency.

What did you hope to gain from taking part in SA? What did you anticipate would be the most important contribution of SA to your college education?

The challenge of learning in and navigating a foreign education system was intriguing to many SA students. Whitney (personal communication, January 29, 2013) said, "I felt completely on my own in part because the university was so large. It made me appreciate being at a small college." Jerry (personal communication, January 28, 2013) revealed he purposefully wanted to explore the United Kingdom's education system. "It was a really cool experience to have that different learning style," he said. "There was more in-depth learning, so while I learned fewer things in the broad sense, what I learned was more in-depth and focused."

As students discussed opportunities to take a break from Welsh, Hugh (personal communication, January 30, 2013) admitted, "I am a stressed-out guy, and wanted to leave America for a more laid-back environment ... a place to let go and to reflect on life. That was so valuable." Other students noted their SA experience offered opportunities to explore non-STEM interests. For example, one student enrolled only in Humanities class while an international Welsh student studied music exclusively. Similarly, several credited STEM-related courses not available at their home college as an advantage. When considering growth opportunities and independence, Lisa shared:

> Being in new situations is challenging for me, and I thought [SA] would be a great step to get over that. Here at home, I am not responsible for mundane tasks, like taking out the trash, but in Berlin, I had to do everything on my own (personal communication, January 29, 2013).

How do you see the study abroad experience enhancing your educational experiences versus those students in STEM programs who do not have this experience?

SA students credited the experience with personal growth across many areas. For example, Ellen (personal communication, January 29, 2013) "…found my time away from my college helpful as it enabled me to reflect on what I am doing in college and why." Further supporting this idea, the following two statements exemplified students' revelations about this opportunity helping reevaluate priorities and goals:

> We all take the same courses and get the same education at this college. Being in this same environment is not necessarily that healthy. When you

> are away, you realize that you learn that there is more to life than doing problem sets and all of the stress that comes with our college education (Eugene, personal communication, January 29, 2013).

> Knowing the impact of what it's like abroad and how it impacts your life [is essential]. I was more relaxed when I returned to college, and the rate at which I live my life now is much slower than it is for other students here (Carl, personal communication, January 30, 2013).

Several students remarked that college students remaining isolated on their campus are truly missing out on opportunities to experience the world from new perspectives. For instance, Carl shared:

> I saw people who are happy with what they have in Europe. Seeing how others lead their lives abroad makes you understand a bit better how to lead your own life. Students [at this college] don't have that opportunity if they don't study abroad (personal communication, January 30, 2013).

Experiences abroad, whether in or outside the classroom helped students "learn how to survive in another environment" (Stephanie, personal communication, January 28, 2013). In sum, studying abroad enhanced students' growth academically and socially which essentially supported their career and personal growth.

How could your SA experience help influence other STEM students – at this college or in other STEM programs – to consider studying abroad?

All SA students noted that they talked about their experiences quite frequently upon their return, yet their peers often grew tired of listening. Overwhelmingly, participants were passionate that SA programs would provide more benefit than detriment to Welsh peers. One of the most valuable lessons they learned from their experiences was that time, effort and motivation made it possible to study abroad and complete their Welch education in a timely fashion. As noted earlier, students indicated that some academic departments at Welsh were more supportive of SA than others. "I keep hearing students say, 'I can't study abroad because I'm in [a particular major]', but it's totally doable if you prepare a bit more" (Lisa, personal communication, January 29, 2013).

SA students frequently discussed the institutionally pervasive notion that an education elsewhere would not contain the quality or rigor at Welsh. Since students take pride in saying their class schedules are more difficult or rigorous than others, "that mentality makes it hard for students to understand…they can do SA" (Whitney, personal communication January 29, 2013) Whitney continued, "you just have to tell students here about SA earlier and hook them into it early in their college education." Ultimately, Scott (personal communication, January 30, 2013) remarked that morphing the institutional culture by, "getting rid of the idea that 'it's not as good as an education [here]…'" could change STEM students' attitudes about SA.

Why did you decide to not SA?

No-SA students raised two major issues prompting their decision to remain at Welsh: the potential negative impact on their academic work, and the difficulty of planning and scheduling remaining classes. "I felt like my education would be compromised," Darla (personal communication, April 4, 2013) revealed. "I am here to get a [specific] education, so why leave for a semester?" For instance, one No-SA student believed that choosing SA would eliminate participation in potentially meaningful practical research experiences like the program called Research Experiences for Undergraduates that occurs at U.S.-based universities. Moreover, Mikela (personal communication, January 31, 2013) planned to

go abroad over the summer months, adding "I began to think that maybe I just don't want to be away from [this] college one semester out of eight."

The requirement to plan academic schedules was a highly stressful consideration for No-SA students. For instance, Diane disclosed that "the risk that study abroad would make me have to take an extra semester or increase my workload or compromise my grades was not worth it" (Personal communication, January 31, 2013). Overwhelmingly, No-SA students concluded "the idea of having a perfectly matched schedule when I returned home seemed really not feasible" (Darla, personal communication, April 4, 2013).

What factors played into your final decision to not formally apply to participate in SA?

No-SA students emphasized leeriness regarding their academic work at Welsh being compromised by SA. For instance, one student shared that a course she wanted to take at the Welsh was offered only once every two years. Studying abroad would impede her ability to take it. "My career path was headed toward that class, and I had to make a decision" (Lesley, personal communication, January 31, 2013). Having to take last-minute classes senior year made her nervous, as did the uncertainty of what courses from abroad would yield the required academic credit at Welsh College.

Were there particular elements of your college education that you felt would be hindered or not as developed if you had studied abroad?

No-SA students consistently speculated that any STEM education received abroad would not measure up to Welsh's academic caliber and rigor. Lesley (personal communication, January 31, 2013) summarized it well, saying "You hear how great [Welsh College's] classes are, and I worried that I would not get that at other places. Some people go abroad for a break, but I was sure I'd miss the education." She added, "The cultural exchange would have been nice, but it was not worth it."

How did the notion of the *college bubble* impact your decision to not study abroad? To what extent do you think this *bubble* steers students to or from the SA program?

No-SA students often characterized the bubble that defines campus life at Welsh College as "addictive." For many of these students, the tenor of the social and academic climate is safe, nurturing, and comprised of like-minded students and faculty to such a degree that students often feel reluctant to venture far from its protective confines. "Many people who think about it as freshmen and sophomores decided that they don't want to leave their friends" (Bella, personal communication, April 4, 2013). While one No-SA student indicated that the notion of the bubble was heavily contemplated when considering SA, this student ultimately remained in the close-knit, insular Welsh community. Several students revealed their decision to attend college far from home was a way in which they emerged from an earlier less-congruent bubble. Lillian (personal communication, January 31, 2013) shared "[Welsh] is such a good fit for me … I feel I kind of got out of a bubble by leaving my home state. The bubble at this college is much more diverse than the one I came from!"

Given this, it is not surprising that No-SA students frequently mentioned this "addictive" nature of the Welsh environment. "Many people who think about it as freshmen and sophomores decided that they don't want to leave their friends" (Bella, personal communication, April 4, 2013). Darla (personal communication, April 4, 2013) noted "once you become a junior or senior at this college you become jaded… [and] the bubble here is predominately a 'white' bubble; we don't get much diversity here." Bella (personal communication, April 4, 2013) concluded "More students should be encouraged to go abroad because it's a valuable

experience. It relates to the mission statement, speaking to the understanding of the impact of our work on society. It is really important."

Ultimately, students confirmed that the institutionalized, negative stigma attached to SA at Welsh was the real deterrent, which could only be changed with the advent of a significant cultural shift. No-SA students suggested that Welsh College should modify the academic program so that SA would not be perceived as a break. This could help to ensure their college curricula matched with or complemented programs abroad more seamlessly. It is important to note that No-SA students did not mention financial burdens as a primary factor or negative influence on their final decision regarding SA opportunities.

Conclusions and Implications

The students interviewed in this study enumerated many common themes that impacted their individual decision to study abroad while enrolled at Welsh College. These themes included the allure of remaining within the Welsh College bubble, challenges in ensuring the completion of their undergraduate program within four years, inconsistent faculty and academic department support, and both the pressures and encouragement of peers and family. The themes discussed in this study define not only ways in which institutional culture can impact STEM SA decision-making but also methods for and pathways with which student affairs educators, faculty and academic departments could consider adapting SA to better match the needs of STEM students, particularly those in institutional cultures that highly impact individual decision-making patterns. This is in line with Ziglar's (2018) astute observation regarding how college presidents must develop a sense of the institution's "inner soul" upon arrival to inform their decision-making processes so that they are aligned with the organizational culture (and therefore its symbols). This notion can be transferred to other institutional stakeholders, particularly to students and student affairs educators.

While many previous studies have focused solely on students who choose to study abroad, this study distinctively includes SA and No-SA students who went through the formal information-seeking stage. Within the guise of this sample, the latter group is vital to include because STEM students often have additional barriers. These barriers include highly-structured and rigid academic programs and opportunities in comparison to non-STEM students that may complicate their decisions (Klahr, 1998; Parkinson, 2007).

The literature regarding the practice of study abroad among STEM students is limited. As such, this study that focused on the culture of this practice on one STEM liberal arts campus is important because it expands and adds to the small body of literature on STEM students' study abroad experiences. In addition, this study advanced STEM SA decision-making processes through a specific organizational culture lens: a STEM liberal arts college.

This study adds to Parkinson's (2007) engineering-focused SA work that revealed the importance of strong SA support from the upper administration at the institution. Invoking Hartley and Morphew's (2008) important observation that colleges with deeply-entrenched institution-level purposes may be resistant to altering them, it is quite evident that strong support needs to emerge from diverse constituents in the bubble to encourage affirmative SA decision-making. Hence, as suggested by Niemann (2010), it should be the "co-responsibility" of not only leaders and staff, but also students and other institutional stakeholders to devise mechanisms for supporting SA decision-making processes. Nevertheless, one might conclude that SA staff and other student affairs educators may need to consider ways in which to monitor the institutional culture regarding SA to better match students' programmatic and support-level/decision-making needs.

This study's outcomes can be useful to a variety of stakeholders who impact STEM student SA decision-making including: STEM institutions or respective STEM departments on college campuses, SA and student affairs educators, STEM professors, researchers and practitioners in the field of SA. Similarly to Netz's (2013) work, this study revealed the importance of constituents aiding students through the decision-making threshold. In particular, those working in SA offices and other student affairs offices can consider ways to gauge and tap into the culture of the institution to better understand how to best support, respond, and adapt practices to students' SA interest-level, questions and aspirations. It may also lead student affairs educators to be more keenly aware of the symbols (in various forms) that signify the organizational culture and possibly even subcultures within the college. Perhaps, this study may even enhance interest in student affairs educators engaging across stakeholder groups within their institutions to better gauge co-curricular involvement interest occurring through their work areas.

This study's theoretical framing, based on Love's (1990) notion of organizational symbolism, can be used as an illustration for others doing student affairs-based research on institutional culture. It can be particularly useful when making meaning of deeply entrenched organizations with shared values and assumptions that impact decisions made by stakeholders within the institution. Furthermore, future research on the impacts of institutional culture on SA (and other areas of student affairs) could benefit the ways in which STEM students are impacted and supported through decision-making processes. Finally, studies that focus more acutely on other constituents' reasons for supporting/not supporting STEM SA may further inform SA program officers and other student affairs educators on how to develop SA programs that these constituents can support.

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Appendix 1. Study Abroad Questionnaire: Participating Students

What Study Abroad program/university did you attend?

What is your major?   What is your gender?

Questions: Please circle the number that corresponds with your answer

1. Applying to colleges with strong Study Abroad programs was an important consideration in my college application process.

   Strongly Disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly Agree

2. The courses at the university I studied at were as strong as the ones at HMC.

   Strongly Disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly Agree

3. My HMC degree is highly valued in the global marketplace.

   Strongly Disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly Agree

4. The study abroad experience increased self-confidence in my capabilities as a successful future STEM professional.

   Strongly Disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly Agree

5. How did the OSA study abroad process help you make your final decision?

6. Please share the step-by-step process you engaged in when choosing whether or not to study abroad. Please use a separate line to outline each step. (Please use as many steps you feel necessary. Feel free to add more if your process involved more than 10 steps.)

1	**6**
2	**7**
3	**8**
4	**9**
5	**10**

Appendix 2. Study Abroad Questionnaire: Non-Participating Students

What is your major?   What is your gender?

Questions: Please circle the number that corresponds with your answer

1. Applying to colleges with strong Study Abroad programs was an important consideration in my college application process.

    Strongly Disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly Agree

2. My HMC degree is highly valued in the global marketplace.

    Strongly Disagree   1   2   3   4   5   Strongly Agree

3. How did the OSA study abroad process help you make your final decision?

4. Please share the step-by-step process you engaged in when choosing whether or not to study abroad. Please use a separate line to outline each step. (Please use as many steps you feel necessary. Feel free to add more if your process involved more than 10 steps.)

1   **6**

2   **7**

3   **8**

4   **9**

5   **10**

Class of 2019 – Spring Graduates

Stephanie Cuevas

Lucy Delgado

Alejandro Diaz

Alexis Gomez

Genesis Gongora Balam

Lorenda Holston

Curtis Johnson

Olivia Kail

Tiantian Li

Colleen McDonald

Elizabeth Morales

Carolina Mozee

Alexis Opper

Holly Osborne

Samantha Ralston

Patrick Ramirez

Marisela Rodriguez-Gutierrez

Carly Shuman

Mike Sun

Madigan Turnquist

Isabel Villalobos-Galeana

Kayla Wong

Class of 2019 – Summer Graduate

Kaitlyn O'Konis

Colorado State University *Journal of Student Affairs* Guidelines for Manuscript Preparation

Purpose:

Manuscripts should be written for the Student Affairs generalist who has broad responsibility for educational leadership, policy, staff development, and management. Articles with specialized topics, such as harassment, should be written to provide the generalist with an understanding of the importance of the topic to Student Affairs. Such an article should not take the form of one program specialist writing to another program specialist.

The Editorial Board invites submissions of the following types of articles

- Quantitative, Qualitative, or Emancipatory Research Articles
- Editorial Articles
- Historical Articles
- Opinion/Position Pieces
- Book Reviews

Research articles for the Journal should stress the underlying issues or problem that stimulated the research. Explain the methodology in a concise manner, and offer a full discussion of the results, implications, and conclusions.

Procedure

Literature Review manuscripts should not exceed 3,000 words (approximately 12 pages of double-spaced, typewritten copy, including references, tables, and figures) and should not be fewer than 1,000 words (approximately four pages). Exceptions should be discussed with the editors at the time of submission.

Original Research manuscripts should not exceed 6,000 words (approximately 24 pages of double-spaced, typewritten copy, including references, tables, and figures) and should not be fewer than 3,000 words (approximately 12 pages). Exceptions should be discussed with the editors at the time of submission.

Guidelines for Writing

1. Prepare the manuscript, including title page and reference page, in accordance with the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, Sixth Edition.

2. Include an article abstract and brief description of the author, including professional title and institutional affiliation. The abstract should clearly state the purpose of the article and be concise and specific, ranging from 150-250 words; refer to page 25 of the *Publication Manual* for assistance.

3. Double-space all portions of the manuscript, including references, tables, and figures.

4. Avoid bias in language; refer to page 70 of the *Publication Manual* for assistance.

5. Do not use footnotes; incorporate the information into the text.

6. Use the active voice as much as possible.

7. Check subject/verb agreement.

8. Use verb tense appropriately: past tense for the literature review and description of procedures and present tense for the results and discussion.

9. Proofread and double-check all references and citations before submitting your draft.

10. Use Microsoft Word (2000) or higher so that editors may utilize the "insert comment" function.

11. Never submit manuscripts under consideration by another publication.

12. Lengthy quotations (a total of 300 or more words from one source) require written permission from the copyright holder for reproduction. Adaptation of tables and figures also requires such approval. The author is responsible for securing such permission. A copy of the publisher's written permission must be provided to the editors immediately upon acceptance of the article for publication.

13. Authors are responsible for the accuracy of references, quotations, tables, and figures. Authors should make sure these are complete and correct.

* Adapted from the *Journal of College Student Development's* "Submission Instructions"

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☐ A matching gift form is enclosed.

For more information, please contact:

    Colorado State University
    Dr. David A. McKelfresh
    201 Administration
    Fort Collins, CO 80523-8004

    E-mail: david.mckelfresh@colostate.edu
    Phone: (970) 491-4722

Please return this form with your gift to:
CSU Foundation, P.O. Box 1870, Fort Collins, CO 80522-1870

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