Rooting for Everybody Black: Exploring the Need for Mentorship for Black First-Generation Students at Predominantly White Institutions

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Higher Education Policy and Student Affairs

THESIS

Rooting for Everybody Black:
Exploring the Need for Mentorship for Black First-Generation Students at Predominantly White Institutions

Layshan Gilliard

May 2020
Rooting for Everybody Black: Exploring the Need for Mentorship for Black First-Generation Students at Predominantly White Institutions

A Thesis
Presented to the Faculty of the
Department of Educational Foundations & Policy Studies
West Chester University
West Chester, Pennsylvania

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of
Master of Science

By
Layshan Gilliard
May 2020

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Dedication

To the brown skin girl, with deep brown eyes in the far left of the classroom in 2014...

To the broken girl in 2018...

To the resilient master’s degree recipient...

This is for you.
Acknowledgements

A simple acknowledgement doesn’t seem large enough to thank the individuals that have supported this journey. You all have helped me get to the finish line and I will be forever grateful.

To Jackie, Orkideh and Jason, the dream team. You three have been the greatest teachers and mentors through this journey, thank you for editing and encouraging me from the beginning.

Dasia, my ride or die, you support me in everything I do. Every moment of doubt I’ve had in myself and in my work, you’ve soothed with your never-ending faith in me. Thank you for meeting me at our kitchen table every day of the last two months, holding me accountable, and celebrating the completion of every section and chapter.

Kenzie, I could never deny the part you’ve played in my support system over the last two years. You’ve been there for me on my good and bad days, challenged me, and celebrated every milestone of this process. Thank you for your continued belief in my success.

Finally, to the intelligent Black women of HEPSA Cohort 2. Thank you for zooming with me, peer editing, and always checking in. We did this together and I’m so grateful for your friendship.
Abstract

This thesis addresses how mentorship can enhance the experience and success of Black first-generation college students at predominantly white institutions. More specifically, I explore why first-generation Black students need guided support that comes with mentorship, what that support should entail and how and when it should be delivered to them. I used the methodology of critical action research to analyze the structures of power that affect the education received by these students, while also utilizing my personal experience. I propose a mentoring program that promotes Black excellence. The program, SOUL (Students Overcoming Uniting and Learning), will provide students with the necessary tools and guidance from faculty and student affairs professionals to ensure they feel welcomed and supported on campus. This is an important topic to consider because it addresses the long-standing issue of racial inequalities in the education sector in the country. Black students are not receiving the quality of education that promotes their success and flourishing into society, and this needs to be urgently addressed.

Keywords: Mentoring, Black students, College success, First-generation
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Chapter 1

There were key moments in my life that I believe brought me to the conclusion of my thesis topic, mentorship for Black\(^1\) first-generation students at predominately white institutions. In this chapter, I discuss those moments. I first talk about my family and upbringing, as well as my educational journey. Then, I speak on my high school experience because as a Black first-generation student myself this is where I get my first taste of mentorship. Next, I dive into my undergraduate career and explain how I navigated that time as a Black first-generation student. This helps bring attention to some of the barriers that Black students are facing as they pursue their degree. Then I share what I learned from these experiences and how I shared them through mentorship as an undergraduate and finally, I disclose my thesis topic and why it is important.

“West Philadelphia Born and Raised”\(^2\)

I’m originally from West Philadelphia, where I lived with my Mom and my three younger sisters. Growing up I was always told that college comes after high school, “that’s just how things go.” In hindsight, I can’t think of any other path I wanted to take, however, my family was extremely supportive of my quest to enroll in higher education. I was breaking a generational curse by being the first to attend college instead of getting pregnant straight out of high school. Historically the women in my family have gotten pregnant, not by choice, at the age of 18 or younger. On my 19\(^{th}\) birthday it appears the “curse” was broken because I was headed down a different path. While following the road less traveled, I

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\(^1\) Within my work, I capitalize “Black” but not "white" as a political statement. Historically Black people have been belittled, enslaved, and oppressed, and my capitalization of the B is a small act towards showing the respect and the redistribution of power that we deserve.

encountered a few barriers that put things in perspective. There was a reason why other members of my family had not trodden this path before me. Trying to obtain this type of success as a Black woman, in a society that isn’t built to support you, created some significant battles, many of which I faced and overcame.

The first battle was graduating from the Philadelphia school district. I attended Northeast High School and the 2013-2014 school year was probably one of the worst times to be a senior at a Philadelphia high school. I say this because in May of 2013 the Philadelphia School District put a doomsday budget cut into effect and nearly 4,000 staff members lost their job (Hurdle, 2014). Pink slips, notifying employment dismissal, were distributed generously and several of them were sent to our guidance counselors. Those are the people that were supposed to mentor and guide us in our search for higher education. The budget cuts in addition to the students enrolled in Northeast High School, the most populated school in Philadelphia, didn’t mesh well; there were thousands of students in need and just not enough qualified people to help. At one point my biology teacher served as my college counselor, while also demonstrating a frog dissection in 4th period.

I was fortunate enough to be part of an outside program, Agatston Urban Nutrition Initiative (UNI), that provided a college and career readiness program for its members. UNI is a non-profit organization that focuses on food access. Most of the program is centered around healthy eating and agriculture. In addition, students attended college and career readiness prep (CACR). During CACR we went on college tours, wrote college essays and received one-on-one mentoring from students at the University of Pennsylvania. We were given the information and tools needed to help us through the overwhelming journey. This type of aid was extremely important to all the teens involved in the program because we were
all first-generation college students. With non-existent guidance counselors and our parents not having the necessary education to help, we have to credit our ability to enroll in college to programs like these.

Once it was time to pick an institution I began looking for a school that I thought would give me an experience seen in movies. However, when my actual college research began it dawned on me that choosing a huge movie worthy institution wasn’t in my budget. I began to look at the most cost-efficient universities and ended up attending Kutztown University of Pennsylvania, a real change from the streets of West Philadelphia.

“Cash Rules Everything Around Me, C.R.E.A.M”

Kutztown University of Pennsylvania is a predominantly white institution (PWI) in rural Pennsylvania. On the drive to Kutztown, you’ll be welcomed by cornfields, an occasional cow, and the smell of manure intruding your nostrils. All these things were almost foreign to me as a city girl. As a wide-eyed first year student, the smell of manure was my only worry. I had no idea what challenges awaited me as I pursued my college career. I didn’t know that I was entering into a new culture or that the color of my skin would shape my experience more than anything else. This would be my second battle. Attending a PWI as a Black first-generation student was truly a learning experience.

During my first week there I cried because there wasn’t any public transportation in the small town, I instantly felt trapped. I looked around me and there was a casual horse and buggy in the road and maybe one Black person to every 20 white people I saw. It was a complete culture shock and I kept thinking to myself, “This is what you get for choosing

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your college based on what was cheapest.” As a result, during my freshman year, I did nothing but eat, sleep, go to class and watch Netflix.

Choosing to attend a college based on cost isn’t a foreign concept to many Black students. The financial burden that follows them as they try to pursue a degree plays a huge role in the overall college experience from beginning to end. I believed that by choosing the cheapest institution available to me I wouldn’t have many worries. Debt was the primary barrier my family warned me about, because that’s all they knew. No one in my family had the knowledge to warn me about struggles beyond money, such as being the only Black person in several of my courses.

“Brown Skin Girl”4

On the first day of classes I was usually running through the maze of the buildings trying to find my classroom -- headphones blasting, on a mission. Once I found the room with about three minutes to spare, I located the perfect seat available. It’s usually somewhere in the front but on the far end of the row. When I’m finally seated, I scan the room. I look at every face, searching and hoping to hit a pair of deep brown eyes with a shade of melanin that resembles my own. Calmly scanning for another Black person and if I find one a feeling of comfort washes over me. I’d probably never utter a word to them for the entire semester but knowing that they’re there comforts me.

Because I attended a PWI, I was not always successful in my search. If I can’t find a reflection of me in class I think that all eyes are on me. I imagine a rainbow of irises glaring in my direction and questioning my presence at the university. In turn I get nervous to answer

questions, fearing that people are judging my answers. Please forbid that politics or race become the topic of discussion because at that moment I feel like I must be the spokesperson for all Black people, and if I don’t speak up then I’m doing an injustice to my community. I was hit by an enormous amount of culture shock. Navigating white spaces was a battle I didn’t prepare for, but it was one I would face every day of my undergraduate career.

Navigating white spaces was a physical and psychological struggle. While I was only focused on money, I was ignorant to the fact that I was purposefully throwing myself into a culture that was not always welcoming. I learned about structural racism and intersectionality and experienced first-hand examples. The most challenging part of all this is that I had to figure it out alone. My friends were going through the same issues simultaneously, and thus, they didn’t have advice for me. My family at home didn’t understand what I was going through; they were still naive to some of my experiences. I felt alone and nervous to talk to any of my white professors or advisors, I thought “How could they possibly help me?”

I made it through all four years. Through those years, I purposely took courses to broaden my knowledge. I took courses like “Psychology of the Black Experience” and “Women and Rhetoric.” These classes were awkward at times because, for the most part, there was a white woman explaining to me why and how I’m oppressed as a person of color. However, once I got a taste of education not diluted by white men and women, I made it my mission to take as many courses as possible. I didn’t know it at the time but the education I received was preparing me to guide and mentor young people in similar positions.
“No Role Modelz”⁵

To share the knowledge, I became a mentor for the Next Steps AmeriCorps program at Kutztown. As a mentor, I was tasked with guiding two first year students from Philadelphia. Through this opportunity I was able to help their transition run smoother than mine had. I knew what it felt like to enter this new environment and have these life altering experiences on top of the normal stress of being a college student. Having a coach and a cheerleader to help you develop your dreams as well as reassure you when you begin to doubt your legitimacy at a PWI is extremely important. As their mentor, I was able to do that as well as explain, thanks to the courses mentioned prior, that systematic oppression is one of the reasons why the white student sitting next to them already learned the course curriculum in high school. Explaining these things beforehand didn’t change the facts, however talking things out with someone who’s been there before could alter any feelings of impostor syndrome. Instead of feeling less-than, my students were able to frame it in a way that made them want to work harder. I believe that they better understood the forces that were doubting them and lining up the hurdles to tire them out. Instead of giving society the satisfaction of knocking them down my students utilized the resources and knowledge given to them and graduated college.

This experience deepened my love for mentoring. Not having a mentor and then being able to provide that experience for two other individuals really opened my mind to the possibilities. Today as a graduate student, I truly believe that mentorship for students of color at a PWI is necessary. This stance was solidified because of an interaction with a student

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during my graduate assistantship. The student and I were having a conversation about his plans for graduation. He was currently ending his fifth year at the institution. I was under the impression that he was graduating this coming May, however he clarified that he had to complete an additional year. This additional year was not due to a major change or anything of the sort. It was due to missed courses and confusion of requirements -- things that are meant to be discussed with your advisor. There was so much wrong with this scenario, but the part that frustrated me the most was the nonchalant persona of the student. It was as if he didn’t realize the amount of time, energy, and money that was being wasted. I was disheartened by the lack of guidance he received during such a pivotal time in his life.

Unfortunately, I reached the student too late in the game, he finished the current semester however he did not return to finish his degree due to financial constraints. His situation speaks to the heart of my thesis. The proper guidance and support from the moment he attended the institution may have made a huge difference in this students’ life and he could have walked across that stage in May.

These battles made me realize that mentorship for students of color at a PWI is almost essential. It’s necessary for the success of the students, not just academically but also socially and internally.

**Thematic Concern**

This thesis explores the need for mentorship for Black first-generation students at PWIs. Specifically, I talk about students of the African diaspora, including immigrants of African descent (Africa, Caribbean and other locales) and the descendants of unlawfully captured slaves, who identify as low income and first-generation. This topic is important because a first-generation student of color entering a PWI is bombarded with insecurities and
confusion. It’s a whole new world, not only do they have the average pressure of a college student, such as navigating the campus, learning studying techniques, getting acquainted with dorms, making friends, etc., but there’s an additional list for first-generation college students of color, including culture shock, racism, not feeling comfortable going to the people who are there to support you, constant judgment, and second-guessing.

On top of that there are a lot of first-generation students, like me, who don’t have that unconditional support at home. This can be the case for several reasons, there are some parents or guardians that would love to support, mentor, and assist their child through all four years however, they may have never attended college themselves therefore they lack the appropriate knowledge to do so. There are also cultural factors that come into play. In most households of color, once you turn 18 years old, you are considered as an adult. Parents no longer believe that it’s their job to provide that parental support and guidance. You just have to figure things out the same way that they did. I lay this foundation to point out how alone most of these students must feel, and that loneliness, fear, and lack of support can truly hinder the experience of college.

These facts should concern the higher education community because they have a direct correlation with the graduation and retention rates of Black students at PWIs. As society progresses the population will begin to evolve, and more Black students will enroll in these institutions. We must be prepared to serve their unique needs. This thesis explores ways in which we can aid Black first-generation students in a system that wasn’t designed to serve them and create new and improved opportunities for success.

**Content Preview**

Chapter 2 will provide a guide to my thesis. Within this chapter, I reintroduce my
thematic concern: the need for mentorship of Black first-generation students at PWIs. I also give an overview of critical action research, define key terms, and share the ACPA/NASPA competencies that apply to my work. Next, Chapter 3 consists of several key topics: my philosophy of education, the history and context of my thematic concern, a brief review of current literature surrounding the topic, a discussion of how power and privilege play a role, and what I learned in my graduate internships. This chapter is the heart of my thesis as it covers in depth material that support my claim. In Chapter 4, I introduce my intervention program, SOUL (Students Overcoming Uniting and Learning). SOUL is a mentoring program the provides a holistic approach to mentoring Black first-generation students in PWIs. A key element of the program is the three-day summer orientation where students undergo a series of workshops that are meant to prepare them for challenges they may face as a Black student at a PWI, build community with students who share a similar identity, and much more. Lastly, in Chapter 5, I explain the importance of leadership in higher education and student affairs and how it connects to my thematic concern. To that end, I will share how and where leadership shapes my intervention, SOUL, and my plans for assessment and evaluation.
Chapter 2

This critical action research thesis examines the need for mentorship for Black first-generation students at PWIs. Within the text, I look into why Black students require a guided experience and the benefits associated with said guidance. My vision of mentorship for Black first-generation students at these types of institutions emerged from my experiences growing up in West Philadelphia, attending a PWI as an undergrad, and the various student interactions I have had as a graduate student. As I navigated these stages of life with brown skin, in majority white spaces, I looked to people around me to help guide my choices. I will be using critical action research (CAR) to analyze these experiences to better understand the power and systems that cause Black students to have similar experiences. My end objective is to provide students with a better understanding of the systems in place, aid in their success, and improve graduation and retention rates. To do this, I have created programming that allows Black first-generation students to receive mentorship, academic support, and build community at their institution.

Conceptual Framework

Critical action research is a form of research that combines theory and practice (Brydon-Miller, 2003). CAR allows the researcher to go directly into the field of study in order to acquire the knowledge and experience to make real change. CAR must be participatory, which means the subject of the study should involve the community in which it is situated, and the people living and working in that locale (Brydon-Miller, 2003). Reason and Bradbury (2001) define action research as a “democratic process,” it brings in the knowledge and actions of various actors and resources to determine a shared understanding of the issues at hand. Engaging in action research entails a commitment to improving social
practice and aiming for democratic social change (Reason & Bradbury, 2001). It takes into consideration that knowledge can come from everywhere, not just from trained academics, so-called “experts,” and hierarchical powers. This form of research supports my thesis because it focuses on the current conditions of our societal climate, how these affect this issue, and involves the input of students. I will be using CAR as I examine the need for mentorship and how to do it successfully while focusing on intersectionality.

**Definition of Terms**

In this work, I use a variety of terms and concepts. Below, I will list each term and provide a definition of each, using either literature from the field of higher education and student affairs or using common understandings of core concepts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Black</strong></th>
<th>People of the African Diaspora, including African Americans and Immigrants of African descent (Africa, Caribbean and other locales).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Campus Climate</strong></td>
<td>The current attitudes, behaviors and standards of faculty, staff, administrators and students concerning the level of respect for individual needs, abilities and potential (Rankin &amp; Reason, 2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Critical Action Research</strong></td>
<td>A combination of critical theory and action research where research is done directly in the field (Reason, 2001).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural Identity</strong></td>
<td>Ethnic identity is defined as a sense of belonging based on one's ancestry, cultural heritage, values, traditions, rituals, and often language and religion. (Green et al., 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnic Identity</strong></td>
<td>Ethnic identity is defined as a sense of belonging based on one's ancestry, cultural heritage, values, traditions, rituals, and often language and religion (Green et al., 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>First-Generation Student</strong></td>
<td>Implies the possibility that a student may lack the critical cultural capital necessary for college success because their parents did not attend college. (NASPA, 2017).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Graduation</strong></td>
<td>Successful completion of a degree program.</td>
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</table>
Ideology | A specific idea or ideals that form a notion of being. (Althusser, 1970)
---|---
Ideological State Apparatus | A structure within the state apparatus that teaches the ideologies of the state apparatus. (Althusser, 1970)
Institutional Racism | The ways in which racist beliefs or values have been built into the operations of social institutions in such a way as to discriminate against, control and oppress various minority groups. (McConnochie et al., 1998)
Intersectionality | A theory developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw that states that intersecting identities carried by individuals, such as race, class and gender, interact with different systems creating overlapping forms of oppression. (Crenshaw, 1991)
Mentoring | An intentional process involving interaction between two or more individuals that nurtures and fosters the growth and development of the protégé. (Thomas Shandley, 1989)
Predominately white Institution | Institutions of higher learning in which Whites account for 50% or greater of the student enrollment (Brown & Dancy, 2010)
Racial Identity | A sense of collective identity that is based on a perceived common heritage with a racial group (Helms, 1995)
Repressive State Apparatus | A structure within the state apparatus that enforces the ideologies of the state apparatus. (Althusser, 1970)
Student Retention | The progression of students advancing from one year to the next (Burke, 2019).
TRIO | A federal grant funded program that is intended to aid low income, first-generation students through academic assistance and mentoring (Wallace & Ropers-Huilman, 2000)

**ACPA/NASPA Professional Competencies**

The table below describes the ACPA/NASPA Professional Competencies that apply to my thematic concern and the programmatic intervention proposed in this work. I describe the learning outcomes associated with each competency that relate directly to my program as
they are listed in the *ACPA/NASPA Professional Competencies Rubric*. These outcomes will need to be understood and practiced entirely for my intervention program to be carried out correctly and efficiently.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Competency</th>
<th>Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Advising & Supporting   | **Interpersonal Skills**  
 Know theory and techniques for advising and supporting others from various cultures and identities. Ability to help others set goals and achieve them; to evaluate what students need to succeed. Dispositions to support others, foster trust, and respect the identities, views, and choices of others.  
 **Partnering with Others**  
 Know how to connect with local and external resources; to design and promote programs. Ability to identify, assess, and promote referral services; mentor others; create interventions in response to student needs. Disposition to promote the growth and health of others | Interpersonal Skills  
 The intervention program within my thesis calls faculty and staff to assume the role as mentors. As mentors they are expected to build a relationship of trust that brings about support and success. All students involved in the program will be Black while some mentors may be of a different race. This difference calls on the use of interpersonal skills to understand and respect culture differences.  
 **Partnering with Others**  
 Students associated with my thematic concern have several needs in addition to the average student at a PWI. Anyone employed with my program must be able to partner with other to connect students to the resource most beneficial to their every growing need. |
| Leadership              | **Teamwork and Interpersonal Skills**  
 Know how to identify one’s strengths and challenges as a leader and seek opportunities to develop skills. Ability to create, nurture, and advance an inclusive, cohesive team. Disposition to identify and develop skills of self and others.  
 **Change Management and Innovation** | Teamwork and Interpersonal Skills  
 The purpose of my thematic concern is to aid in the success of Black students. Success includes helping them realize and act on their potential as leaders. As a mentor or a person of power within the program you must be able to identify qualities of the students the show potential for leadership and nurture said potential. This could mean recommending |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Justice &amp; Inclusion</th>
<th>Understanding of Self and Navigating Systems of Power Understanding</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge of concepts of power and privilege in relation to identities, intersectionality and equity. Ability to operationalize methods to respond to social dynamics in an equitable manner. Dispositions to be flexible in practice, to account for differences, and advocate for more equitable practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engage in Socially-Just Practice</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Knowledge of behaviors and practices that promote inclusion. Ability to incorporate knowledge of inequities, social justice frameworks, and social trends through daily interactions, behaviors, and work products. Disposition to dismantle bias, engage in consciousness raising and lead by example in a way that allows for learning and progress.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Change Management and Innovation</th>
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<tr>
<td>A large part of my thematic concern is knowing about the climate that calls for the need of mentorship. This includes the cultural, political, and social climate of the campus. Understanding how this impacts the experiences of Black students and advocating for change is important.</td>
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<th>Student Development</th>
<th>Understanding Theory</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Know student development theories and models that facilitate holistic development. Ability to articulate how theoretical constructs influence development; recognize how one’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Understanding Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wholistic development is a key element of the mentoring experience within the intervention, the job of the mentor is to help the student navigate every stage of their development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
own development can bias one’s perspective. Disposition to think abstractly about lived experience; to reflect on one’s identity, learning, and practice.

**Design and Application**

Know theory-to-practice models and implementation steps. Ability to utilize learning goals to create intentional learning strategies and opportunities. Disposition to be intentional in using theory in the design and implementation of learning opportunities. This includes identity, academics etc. Knowing and understanding theory will allow mentors to gauge what stage of development their mentees have accomplished or surpassed so that they may guide them accordingly.

**Design and Application**

Knowing the models and implementation steps will be beneficial during mentoring interactions as well as programming throughout the academic year. Based off feedback received from mentors we will be able to assess stages and provide meaningful opportunities for our students.
Chapter 3

In this chapter, I first declare my philosophy of education about the purposes of higher education. Next, I discuss the historical context of my thematic concern and its current state. I then examine its unique factors, including a discussion of power and privilege. Finally, I explore how my internship experiences helped expand my perspective on mentorship for Black first-generation students at PWIs.

Philosophy of Education

To the uneducated, education is seen as the key to every door blocking your way. Growing up in my household, it was taught that once you receive an education, you would never have to face the problems that generations before you have had to undergo. My mom instilled the importance of education in me. I wasn’t allowed to bring home anything less than excellent. The idea that education would erase current and future problems followed me into college. Support came flowing in. Family members that I hadn’t spoken to in years were telling me how proud they were. In their opinion, I was on my way to get the golden ticket – a degree. This degree should allow me to grasp onto financial security and a path different than what they knew. I also held the same outlook growing up and well into my first two years of college. Many people of color hold these same ideas, pass them onto their children, and go into a dangerous amount of debt trying to secure that golden ticket.

My philosophy has changed, thankfully. I now know that the purpose of education is not to provide me with my golden ticket. I now see that the purpose of education is to provide you with the opportunity for higher learning, about yourself and other ideas that you would not be exposed to if you did not enroll in a place that is surrounded by people on a
quest for intellectual expansion. Education is for you to develop and expand into a more knowledgeable and updated version of yourself.

**A Good Education**

A good education is good for the development of the whole individual, a good education is one that magnifies existing strengths in a person and creates the foundation for new ones. We are well beyond education just meaning math and reading. Providing an individual with a good education allows them to mature in all areas of their life, academic, social, and mental. The expansion of these compartments’ further maturity and in turn, competence. While pursuing a good education an individual should be exposed and challenged in these areas to begin the growth and development of new strengths. A bad education does neither of these things. A person who receives a bad education walks off feeling unaccomplished, unchanged, and hasn’t been enlightened in any way.

**The Role of Student Affairs**

The role of student affairs and higher education in fulfilling this purpose is to provide a space that supports all its students as they strive for enlightenment and growth. I believe that Higher Education should challenge students in and outside the classroom. It should provide a space where students are able to make mistakes and learn from them. It should help guide students, but not force a certain mold onto them. Higher Education should be a free-flowing space with the intention to help learners become a more knowledgeable and enhanced version of themselves. Lastly, Higher Education should have a faculty, staff, and curriculum that is representative of the diverse world in which we live.

However, who Higher Education is for and who it should be for are where the problem lies. Higher Education was created with the intention to educate straight white males
(Labaree, 2017), to provide a space where they can enrich and grow as individuals. Since this space was created for them, provided from a system built by them, in a system that benefits them, there is pushback, intentional or not, when non-straight white males try to acquire the benefits of Higher Education (Labaree, 2017). In a just world, Higher Education would be for everyone and cater to their individual needs. All ages, race, gender, and sexualities should be able to expand their minds and can grow through learning (Freire, 1972). In a just world, the privilege of education would be bestowed upon everyone, and the type of education would be far from the white washed material that’s been taught since elementary school. It would be just as colorful as the society that it exists in.

For Higher Education to achieve these goals, the field must look at its students individually; it must cater to the diversity of its student body. Diversity means more than just the acknowledgment of differences (Hooks, 1994). It means accepting those differences and catering to them accordingly to ensure success so that students may flourish completely. By flourishing, I mean accomplishing the quest of higher learning and self-actualization that comes to you once you’ve completed college.

Students of color attending predominantly white institutions have several worries as they enter a new stage of their life. As mentioned before, some of these worries include pressure from family, doubts of academic preparedness compared to others who have had better schooling opportunities, social acceptance, and so much more. The command thread within these worries is race (Kelly, 2016) and it’s hard to ignore that commonality when you’re surrounded with reminders that the institution you worked so hard to get into isn’t meant for you.
Guests in Someone Else’s House

Turner (1994) describes the experience students of color feel as they inhabit the university. Turner quotes a student of color that summarizes why such students are so uncomfortable: “we feel that we’re a guest in someone else’s house, that we can never relax and put our feet up on the table” (p. 356). In its accuracy, the word “guest” carries more metaphors than the obvious. Turner elaborates on some of the metaphors and makes us think about what it really means to be a guest. For example, while visiting this home as a guest, you have to follow the rules set in place without question. Mistakes aren't tolerated. You can’t roam into certain rooms. You have to remain on your best behavior, and guests have no history in the house; there are no images or reflections of their culture. Students of color, who are guests to the system of higher education, are outsiders in a place that is supposed to be home for them for 4 years.

If students of color continue to feel like guests in their own home, it develops an amount of hesitance when it comes to authority figures on campus and that affects the overall college experience. They are more hesitant to confide in our professors which means that students aren’t visiting office hours, aren't asking for help or suggestions and everything becomes much harder than it already was. The hesitancy comes with a price, and that is that students of color don’t get the same recommendations, advice, and assistance that they would if they felt like the people in power related to what they were feeling. The intended purpose of Higher Education isn’t being fulfilled.

Historical Context

From the beginning, the United States was built on the backs of Black people with no intentions in serving them (Feagan, 2016). The system that operates America was created to
uplift white people and fuel the idea of the American dream (Feagan, 2016). One of the key components to obtaining said dream is a proper education, a quality education, one that was reserved for white America. A key marker in the long struggle for educational access for Black American was the desegregation of schools granted by the Supreme Court ruling in Brown vs Board of Education (1954).

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka was a supreme court case that agreed “separate but equal” was in violation of the 4th amendment. “Separate but equal” gave schools the right to segregation if the quality of education provided by both schools was of the same value. In a unanimous vote, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of Brown, a huge step in the civil rights movement of the 1960’s. Though it was a step in the direction the civil rights activist worked for, the real work had just begun. Many strong and brave individuals faced unspeakable things courtesy of the racist people who were against desegregation.

While the civil rights movement was gaining momentum, corresponding protest could be seen across college campuses. Altbach and Peterson (1971) explain that during the 1960’s, “student movements of the post war period placed little emphasis on university-related issues” (p. 84). Instead, students rallied behind more social movements like civil rights. This theme of activism is still pouring out across campuses, fighting for things like a right to quality education for all. Even though Brown v. Board called for the desegregation of schools, it simultaneously caused a ripple of issues that still play out today, 2019, almost 70 years later such as matriculation of Black students at predominantly white institutions.

**Separate but Equal**

By federal law, segregation in schools is now prohibited. However, it can still be seen today and has substantial effects on Black students pursuing and obtaining college degrees at
PWIs. When desegregation was first mandated, white people began to run from urban areas and swarm the suburbs to prevent integration. This action, which is coined as “white flight,” (Renzulli & Evans, 2005) perpetuated “separate but equal.” Once massive numbers of white people moved to the suburbs, it continued disproportionate funding of public schools. Schools in urban areas, which would become proximately Black, would then be underfunded and diminish in quality yet again. White flight began years ago but its results are still seen across America (Renzulli & Evans, 2005). Urban areas are still predominantly Black and still lacking funding to provide proper, if not the same, education being received by the kids in the white neighborhoods. The quality of education you receive through k-12th grade heavily prepares you for college. Once a Black student attends their first course at a PWI it becomes evident immediately that they did not have the same educational experience as their white classmates. This realization stirs up a plethora of feelings and sometimes mental barriers that could hinder the performance and success of Black students academically and socially.

White flight not only affected the funding that schools received but also it created a trend of unequal students in school districts through the years. Many school districts, usually the poorer ones, are heavily populated with minority students. While non-city areas and private schools were filled with white students. This theme of separation maintained the idea of fear of the unknown and other forms of racism. Because the districts were so unequal in their diversity some students go their whole lives without interacting with people of a different race. This ignorance is what keeps racism alive, clears the space for microaggressions, discrimination, and any many other ignorant actions.

Currently, “the six-year graduation rate for the Black first-time full-time students remains one of the lowest among the different racial subgroups” (Ndemanu, 2017, p. 220).
The effects of situation like white flight have left Black students feeling unprepared and unsupported as they purse their degrees. About 85% of Black undergraduate students attend PWIs (as opposed to historically Black or other types of “minority-serving” institutions), however less than half of them graduate and obtain their degrees. There is an overwhelming amount of historical context that explains why these numbers are so disproportionate. The fight of nearly 70 years ago – the fight for equal educational opportunities – is unfortunately very much still the fight of today. In this work, and particularly in Chapter 4, I provide an interim solution in the form of my programmatic intervention focused on mentorship for first-generation Black students at PWIs.

Current State

In this section, I discuss a review of literature that focuses on three core factors: first-generation students, intersectionality, and campus climate. These three areas are important because they have a direct impact on the experiences of Black first-generation students at PWIs. This section first investigates what it means to be a first-generation student and what barriers arise because of the status. Next, I consider intersectionality and what intersecting factors play a role in the college experience of Black first-generation students. Campus climate is the last factor I explore. Specifically, I investigate what effects the campus climate of PWIs have on Black students and their college progression.

First-Generation Students

The criteria that needs to be met to be considered a first-generation student varies across institutions. In terms of this paper, I will be using the definition created by NASPA’s Center for First-generation Student Success. They state that being a first-generation student “implies the possibility that a student may lack the critical cultural capital necessary for
college success because their parents did not attend college” (NASPA, 2017). I focus specifically on this category of students within my thesis because this population has certain barriers they must overcome that are different than their classmates. Pascarella et al. (2004) point out the fact that there are several barriers standing in the way of first-gen student success:

the weight of evidence from this research indicates that, compared to their peers, first-generation college students tend to be at a disadvantage with respect to basic knowledge about postsecondary education (e.g., cost and application process), level of family income and support, educational degree expectations and plans, and academic preparation in high school. (p. 250)

In addition to the challenges listed above, first-generation students have to also combat the normal worries of the average college student. They experience culture shock, anxiety, and their experiences often involve substantial cultural as well as social and academic transitions (Pascarella et al., 2004). This relates to my topic of mentorship for Black first-generation students because many of these students don’t have people at home that are able to help them navigate this very new experience. The additional barriers make their experience more difficult and I believe that mentors would be able to fill some of the gaps centered around academic preparation, transition to post-secondary education and progression toward degree attainment. First-generation students are facing traditional challenges with added pressures and they would be addressed within a mentor-mentee relationship. Issues like financial aid and academic characteristics for a first-generation college student may seem foreign. If their parents lack the knowledge to help tackle these issues or send them to the right office, it can become overwhelming and contribute to the lack of retention.
Intersectionality

Intersectionality, a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991), states that the identities carried by individuals, such as race, class, and gender, interact with different systems creating overlapping forms of oppression. I use an intersectional lens to guide my work to address the intersecting factors that affect the success of Black first-generation students at predominantly white institutions; Linder and Rodriguez (2012) suggest “using an intersectional lens to understand the lived experience of the study participants is essential because it highlights the need to explore identities as interactive rather than additive” (p. 385). A Black student who may be struggling at a PWI for several reasons not just because they are a person of color. Some issues that arise may come about in addition to being Black in a majority white space. Some of these combinations may include race & class and race & gender.

In a study conducted by Terell Strayhorn (2013), some of his student participants provided testimonial that revealed that “their own economic background and prior experiences, particularly as it related to precollege exposure to diverse versus segregated schooling and neighborhood environments impacted their sense of belonging on the larger campus environment” (p.187). Another testimonial referred to race and gender and how for a Black woman on campus, the standards of beauty had a direct impact on her experience at a PWI (Strayhorn, 2013). These are just some of the ways in which intersectionality could play out as students venture through their college experience.

Black first-generation students face some of the same issues as white students, however with significant added pressure and obstacles, and yet, they are expected to birth the same results. Barriers that are specific to being a Black student at a PWI listed in Lett and
Wright’s (2003) research are: Alienation, Isolation, Discrimination, Racism, Intimidation and problems acquiring financial aid. These barriers affect Black students on and off campus because of the multiple identities they hold, and ultimately play a role in their academic path and success.

In addition to the evidence concerning intersecting obstacles Black college students go through these issues have psychosocial and cognitive effects on the students (Lett & Wright, 2003). The effects show up in the graduation and retention numbers of Black students (Lett & Wright, 2003). Most first-generation students who commit to attend at PWI are not aware of that they will face additional challenges beyond the average college student. My intervention program is meant to provide mentors to help these students realize the multitude of their identity and support them as they face some of these hurdles.

**Campus Climate**

Campus climate refers to “the current attitudes, behaviors and standards of faculty, staff, administrators and students concerning the level of respect for individual needs, abilities and potential” (Rankin & Reason, 2008). I include campus climate as one of my areas of focus in this section because the campus climate at PWIs have had a negative impact on the success of Black students. Greyerbiel notes that “African American students at PWIs have continued to report having inadequate social lives having less than satisfactory relationships with faculty members feeling left out of the curriculum and dealing with racial issues that permeate the campus climate” (para. 3). Historically, and even today, Black students have carried the burden of creating their own environment within the university that uplifts them and aids in their success.
In the 1960’s and 1970’s, Black students advocated for themselves through social justice movements, the recurring themes of racism and oppression outside of the university during those times were mirrored within higher education institutions (Williamson, 1999). To combat that Black students began to protest and advocate for the recognition needed to thrive at PWI’s. Their efforts birthed academic success support, Black studies departments and Black centers. Students realized what was missing from these institutions and made it their mission to create the resources themselves.

While the efforts are admirable, having this type of responsibility and pressure can truly take away from the educational experience. This relates to my thematic concern because my intervention program is meant to help create community for the Black students on campus as realize that the campus climate is hindering their success. Within this community they will receive mentorship that will help them process their experiences, understand why they are happening, and have allies in faculty and student staff professionals that will assist in creating better spaces and opportunities that Black students have fought for in the past.

**Power & Privilege**

In this section, I discuss power & privilege in Higher Education as a unique factor that effects my thematic concern. To cover this complex topic, I use Louis Althusser’s (1970) work on ideology and ideological state apparatuses. I choose this approach because I believe that a large component of the definition of power is the belief in the ideals of those who are in positions of power. To further this claim, I first discuss how I believe power itself should be used and analyze why Higher Education has power. Next, I cover who within the university holds power and why I have chosen them to be mentors within SOUL. Finally, I deliberate the way in which power and privilege wielded by the university effects Black, low
income, first-generation students. This is important to my thesis because the way in which power and privilege is used and distributed at a PWI disproportionately effects the experiences of minority students.

“With Great Power Comes Great Responsibility”

I believe those who hold power, whether it be a super hero or a white person in America, should be charged with using that power for the good of others. The setting may change, however power and those who wield it should always move with the intentions of lifting those who do not have power, not to control them. The Higher Education system and the universities that make up that system hold a great deal of power in today’s society.

One reason why post-secondary institutions have power is because of the way ideologies are spread within them. Backer (2018) quotes Althusser’s claim that “the school replaced the church as the most effective ideological state apparatus” (p. 3). This means that the school is now the most beneficial way to spread the ideologies of those in power. Institutions of learning took the place of the churches and surpassed families. According to Althusser (1970), people are way more susceptible to internalizing the ideals taught to them in these spaces and holding them as truth.

A Black student interpolating the ideologies of those in power at a PWI can be dangerous because the ideals in this setting tend to have a Eurocentric view which consequently diminishes the Black students view of self. An example of this may be a Black student believing that the way they speak implies a certain level of intelligence because those who hold power have taught them so. Therefore, these students begin to change who they are to fit the mold of “white is right.” This is why universities have power, because it was
discovered that ideologies could be taught here to build the “perfect person,” the one who falls into formation and believes the “Beautiful Lie” (Althusser, 1970).

The “Beautiful Lie” refers to the ideologies that govern our existence that are recited to us so alluringly that we do not realize they are oppressing us; it is attractive deception. Althusser (1970) draws on Plato’s idea in mentioning beautiful lies. Althusser (1970) says “Plato knew that the ‘people’ had to be taught, from childhood, the ‘Beautiful Lies’ that would make it go all by itself and that those beautiful lies had to be taught to the ‘people’ in such a way that the people believe in them, so that they would ‘go’” (p.180).

Schools, specifically post-secondary institutions, are structured in a way that we believe that without it we will fail as beings. So much so that many parents encourage a college education as the main path of success. It's so engraved into society's mind that receiving a college degree is the key to success that it really is the perfect place to spread ‘Beautiful Lies’ and that is why it has power.

“I’ve Got the Power”

Next, I will investigate who has power within universities. Following the ideas of Althusser, “the State Apparatus contains two bodies: the body of the institution which represents the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) on the one hand, and the body of institutions which represent the body of Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA)” (Althusser, 1970, p. 70). The university is an example of the ISA. The university is composed of

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individuals who are essential to maintaining power and spreading the ideologies of the state apparatus, those individuals also have power themselves; mostly as white men and women.

The ISA teaches the way things must be, not how they are. In the university setting, members of the ISA can be anyone in a position of authority, starting with the beings that fund the university and working its way down to staff. The people that hold these positions have the power to dictate when, where and what is taught and accepted from the students. An example of members of the ISA include faculty and student affairs professionals. Within my intervention program, SOUL, I task members of the ISA, faculty and student affairs professional to mentor Black first-generation students. Having these individuals serve as mentors I believe will accomplish two goals. The first being by employing them as mentors of SOUL they are making a commitment to advocate for these students and use the power they hold to influence change with the input of Black students. The second is to have these specific members counteract the dominate ideologies that oppress Black students. My hope is that these handpicked ISA members will be against the “Beautiful Lie” and spread the truth to ensure the lies do not become their reality and govern their life moving forward.

When the actions of the students do not correspond with the teachings of the ISA then the RSA is sent in to maintain order with force; public is an example of the RSA. The history of the RSA and Black students has not been cohesive, there is a history of racial profiling and discrimination on campuses, and social movements such as Black Lives Matter that demand better treatment. SOUL speaks on the oppressive demonstrations of the RSA, so that students are prepared for the possibility that they may encounter a member of the RSA trying to halt their growth and success.
“You Have to Work Twice as Hard”

To reiterate, I believe power should be used for the good of others. The University unfortunately is a business, power is used in the university to make, maintain and reproduce money, making its first priority, money. Money is the driving force of the Higher Education system, it decides who attends, curriculum, what programs are available to the students and who is hired. Every function of the university has a capitalist agenda and where capitalism resides privilege is sure to follow. Jana Kasperkevic (2014) supports this claim as she lays out the business structure of higher education:

The competition among these institutions of higher learning has had an adverse effect on those they are supposed to serve. From less rigorous curriculums to higher tuition prices, the universities have changed the way Americans think of educations. Students are now consumers and university presidents are CEOs overseeing multiplexes of the college experience. To pay for that experience, students are taking out an average of about $30,000 in student loans. The overall student debt in the US has now surpassed $1tn. (para.7)

The university uses its power helps the rich stay rich and influences the idea that if you don't have money you aren't successful. It puts people in such tremendous debt that it is almost impossible to reach their standard of success. This is not a responsible use of power.

This power structure affects those who do not have the privilege of money. This includes, Black, low income, first generation college students who are attending universities to obtain the golden ticket, the degree that should open doors that weren't available to their parents, as mentioned previously in this chapter. Once the students have accumulated enough debt to finally attend the university they enter a place that is not representative of their skin
or culture. The programs available to them do not cover the culture shock they are experiencing, silent struggles concerning academics, or being the only student of color in their classroom. Sara Goldrick-Rab (2016) found that in “American higher education, a vicious cycle of exclusion and adaptation in which resources are unequally distributed in ways that preserve privilege helps to ensure that people from lower-class backgrounds stay behind” (p.20). Eventually these students drop out, with thousands of dollars of debt under their belt and nothing to show for it; however, the university got paid.

SOUL is meant to aid this issue and influence a shift in power. It will be a place where the focus is on the good of the students and the transformation of power as we employ director members of the state apparatus to, faculty and staff, to shift the spread of ideologies and power alike.

**Internship**

I’ve had a variety of experiences within my master’s program that have added to my knowledge of the university and what it provides to is Black student population. I was sure to be intentional in where I dedicated my internship hours. Locations included the Leadership & Development office at a large public university, a Peer Mentoring program provided by the multicultural center at a public university and finally a Youth Empowerment & Urban Studies program at that same institution. Each location acted as resource for Black first-generation students at PWIs. The one that is most relevant to this topic is the Youth Empowerment program.

The youth empowerment program is an 18-credit minor that is meant to educate students on the history and systems in place that have directly impacted urban communities. Students who enroll in the composed courses receive an in depth understanding of the
oppressive history of urban communities and how youth can create valuable change in their communities. Students learn how they can be active change makers and then take their teachings to the communities, interning at schools and youth organizations in Philadelphia. My role was to help place the students at their site, monitor their progress, and provide academic support. Most of the students enrolled in the minor are students of color, so while completing my internship I was able to mentor students of color which eventually shaped my thesis into what it is. The experience that shaped my thematic concern the most was described it at length in Chapter 1 above, the student who unfortunately did not receive the guidance needed to complete his degree in 4 years and eventually drops out due to the financial burden.

The main lesson I learned is that spaces like the Youth Empowerment & Urban Studies minor are viable not just to the students of color but for everyone attending. A handful of students who were minors were white students pursuing social work or education degrees, taking yes courses gave them an important social justice component needed to rightfully serve the communities of color they would potentially serve. The social justice aspect of the program can be seen lightly within my intervention program SOUL.

While it is an amazing program offered to the students at the university a gap that I noticed was the lack of community within the program. Since the program was majority students of color I think that having more opportunity for community would have been a beneficial aspect of the program. Building community would have made the students more inclined to receive some of the academic services provided by our office because they would have been more familiar with the faculty and staff. I think it would have also increased the number of students who enrolled of the minor. Students who found the material interesting
and important and felt as though it was a space that supported them, not just academically
would have been more inclined to recruit their friends. This gap I noticed within the program
can be seen reflected within my intervention, which is outlined in detail in Chapter 4 below.
Chapter 4

In this chapter, I present the design and implementation of my intervention program, SOUL (Students Overcoming Uniting and Learning). First, I will introduce the key aspects of my thematic concern. Next, I will discuss the purpose and goals of SOUL. Then I will reveal the program proposal and theoretical framework that guide my work. Finally, I discuss implementation and any issues that may arise.

SOUL (Students Overcoming Uniting and Learning)

As discussed in detail in Chapter 3, I believe that the university is a place of development. Within the university, students have the opportunity to figure out who they are in relation to the rest of the world. The knowledge does not always appear in the clearest way nor is it always comforting. For Black students of traditional college age (18-24) it can be a heartbreaking realization of how their bodies are perceived and treated by others. Most Black students are unprepared for this reality. They did not expect it and their ideas of higher education and their college experience are often challenged. Black students pursuing degrees at institutions of higher learning are bombarded with internal questions about their multiple identities, the lack of power and privilege they carry, and the inequality that governs their existence. To explore all these intersecting factors while still trying to achieve the same success as white students is an unfair reality.

I argue that there is an immense and critical need for mentorship of Black first-generation college students at Predominantly white Institutions (PWI). I believe having a mentor to help guide students through these realizations and strengthen their claim of their identity is extremely important. Mentors will be the support system that helps them recognize their place in the world, in a healthy way, and provide the tools to change it. My intervention
program, SOUL, is meant to provide a blueprint to help aid in the recognition of identity politics and many psychological affects that arise. With support and recognition, students will be more prepared to take part in dismantling the systems that are stacked against them.

**Purpose**

SOUL is intended to aid in the success of Black first-generation college students before they start their college career and during their four-year undergraduate experience. Students involved in the program will receive three full days of programming, prior to the start of the semester and geared towards preparation for the coming academic year. They will also be assigned a faculty member or student affairs professional as a mentor to help guide them through the school year.

SOUL is designed to prepare Black students entering the a PWI for the new experience, help create a bond between other students, and provide academic and social support. Essentially, this intervention will provide the tools needed to thrive at a PWI as a person of color. Summer programming will begin three days prior to the first-year student move in day. Once this program is completed students will be assigned a mentor and be able to engage in monthly programming until graduation. They can opt out of the program after the first year but ideally, they will continue until graduation. The overall goal of the program is to assist Black students through this new journey through the support of a mentor. Ideally, this program will improve graduation and retention rates and educate students on what it means to be Black at a PWI including but not limited to the financial hardships, institutional racism, and importance of community. One of the learning outcomes for students who participate in SOUL is for them to be able to define the structural inequality in higher education and to identify ways to begin to address these inequalities.
**Mentorship**

Thomas Shandley (1989) defines mentoring within higher education as an intentional process involving interaction between two or more individuals that nurtures and fosters the growth and development of the protégé. During this interaction, wisdom of the mentor is acquired and applied by the protégé in a supportive and protective manner. Shandley (1989) believes that a mentor can “serve as an important guide or reality checker and introduces the mentee to the environment he or she is preparing to enter.” The benefits of mentoring are not foreign to the world of higher education. One of the primary templates for my intervention program, TRIO, is offered at institutions across the country. TRIO is a federal grant funded program that is intended to aid low income, first-generation students through academic assistance and mentoring (Wallace & Ropers-Huilman, 2000). The proper assistance from mentors is meant to improve student retention, academic success and graduation rates.

The way in which a mentor handles the delicate relationship with their “protégé” has a direct effect on what benefits are gained. Phillps (2005) describes an ideal example, he states that

Mentoring has been highly recommended for helping develop relationships. These relationships however must go beyond eating lunch on occasion. The mentoring relationship should be one that involves engaging students with faculty members in research projects, presentations for conferences, and summer internship programs” (para. 17)

When mentoring Black first-generation students at PWIs the mentor must understand that there are several interpersonal skills that must be taken into consideration. Dahlvig (2010) notes that traditionally, higher education was designed and appointed to white people. It was
only until the 1960’s that people of color were allowed into institutions of higher education. From that point on, African American students have had to integrate themselves into a world that was meant to exclude them. This fact is shown in statistics such as the graduation rate, which according to the article is about 45% of black students compared to the 66% of white students that graduate (Dahlvig, 2010). Attending a PWI creates a mental duality for Black students. The duality consists of African American culture and the culture of the institution in which the student is attending. The mentor who guides these students must understanding what this internal and external battle looks like, therefore the person entrusted should meet a certain criterion. One of the requirements ideally would be that the mentor was also a person of color. However, the Dahlvig (2010) points out the lack of faculty of color at PWIs. If the ideal mentor-mentee relationship is of the same race it causes problems because the number of faculty of color is already low. It creates a cycle, Black students are not finishing college and becoming educators and therefore the ratio of Black students to Black faculty will remain low.

While the mentors granted to Black students will not always be representative of them, because of that the proper diversity education needs to be given to non-Black individuals who are mentors. Alvarez (2009) names essential components of diversity education. According to the authors, to have a successful mentor-mentee relationship with students of color, diversity education is one of the top requirements to be met by aspiring mentors. SOUL mentors will go through an interview and screening process so that we may gauge their readiness and diversity education knowledge before allowing them to guide our students.
**Financing Education**

Money is a top source of power, and unfortunately many of the students I am focusing on within my intervention are of low income. Being of low income affects every aspect of their life, starting with the education they received as children. This inequity sets the groundwork for their entire educational experience and well into adulthood. The Debt Collective (2016) lays out how income affects the lives of these students in comparison to their white classmates:

Today, the children of the wealthy, who are disproportionately white, have the freedom to develop themselves and to explore the liberal arts and sciences on name-brand campuses while still looking forward to professional careers and lives of economic security. The prestigious and high-cost campuses they attend track them into a sheltered job market set aside for graduates of the most elite colleges. Children of the poor and working classes, on the other hand, are overwhelmingly tracked into overpriced and under-resourced colleges with narrow curricula geared to low-income occupations. (p. 3)

This reality is not always clear for Black students as they enter higher education institutions. Many of them were raised by very strong and resilient Black women who hid their struggles and instilled in them that if they just work hard they can live a better life (Taylor, 2017). These same women are being shut out by the system that they want their children to thrive in. According to Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor (2017), in “…80 percent of Black families, Black women are either the sole provider or the main provider” (p.3). This fact is important because Black women make the least amount of money of all demographics. They are the ones who
are expected to support their child financially as they venture off to obtain their own degrees despite their economic hardships.

SOUL will not only “shine a light” on this inequality but it will also provide students with the resources they need to move forward to the next four years as economically stable as possible. This includes scholarship and financial literacy education for both the students and the parents. Black students accumulate the most debt out of all other demographics and take the longest to pay them off; this is a result of the facts set in place above. With the knowledge and resources given, the hope is that it removes a barrier so that the students can focus more on creating change.

**Institutional Racism**

Another barrier my program intends to tackle is the “sea of whiteness” (Ahmed, 2012). Many Black students attending PWIs grow up in all Black neighborhoods where the only white faces they see are the teachers in schools. Attending college in the "sea of whiteness" affects Black students socially, academically, and psychologically. It makes them question how they show up in spaces, and if that is the correct way of being. Within the text Ahmed (2012) points out that many Black individuals choose to attempt to blend into the “sea of whiteness.” The way they do this is by trying not to draw attention to the fact that they are not white by assimilating to the dominant culture. That means changing the way they speak, dress, wear their hair, etc. However, as the text also describes, “If we get used to whiteness (it can be a survival strategy to learn not to see it, to learn not to see how you are not reflected back by what is around), it does not mean whiteness does not still affect us” (Ahmed, 2012, p.35). Trying not to stand out has its effects on the mentality of Black students. It creates an internal battle, the struggle with the duality of their identity. The “sea
of whiteness” creates waves of racism and discrimination and if Black students are trying to blend in with the sea it may distract from the bigger picture. Ahmed (2012) points this out by saying “The struggle to recognize institutional racism can be understood as part of a wider struggle to recognize that all forms of power, privilege, inequality and domination are systemic rather than individual.” (p.44)

I want to instill in the students that they should show up and be proud of who they are. Without this sense of pride there is no way they will be able to be a part of the change that needs to occur. “To inhabit whiteness as a non-white body can mean trying not to appear at all” (Ahmed, 2012, p 41), and if you do not appear how are you supposed to be heard?

While recognition politics are not the “end all”, they are still important in this right. To navigate to the next stage of redistribution of power, Black people must be confident in their identity and ability to “swim in the sea of whiteness”.

**Community**

By inviting all Black first-generation college students to participate in this three-day program I am enacting a very important part of any movement, community. Community is very important in Black culture and our history of change. According to Fairfax (2017) Community practice was developed by social reformers after Black people created communities after enslavement. Given America’s apartheid system of segregation, Black social leaders, also referred to as social reformers, were creating institutions and systems that not only attended to human needs but also affirmed culture, family, and traditions. (p. 73) A sense of community can become lost amongst Black students at a predominantly white institution. Most universities offer identity centers such as the Multicultural center and while this center is very important it still is not enough; there are some students who may never
step foot in the center or know that it exists. SOUL will provide students with opportunities to get to know each other, as well as other Black faculty and staff around campus. Building this community will strengthen the presence and pride of Black individuals at the institution as well as spread the word about resources such as identity centers. As stated before, the “sea of whiteness” often threatens non-white culture causing minorities on campus to fade in the background. Building this community, it creates a space for recognition and it fuels the drive for organizing change. Black students will realize that they are not alone in their stories and struggles and they will have the support they need to succeed.

**Theoretical Framework**

My philosophical position states that the purpose of education is to provide students with the opportunity for higher learning, about oneself and other ideas. A good education is good for the development of the whole individual. A good education is one that magnifies existing strengths in a person and creates the foundation for new ones. For higher education to achieve these goals it must look at its students individually. Higher education must cater to the diversity of its student body to accomplish these goals. To accomplish these goals, we must do more than just the acknowledge difference, we must accept those differences and cater to them accordingly to ensure success. The offerings of SOUL reflect my philosophical position. SOUL provides specific programing to students based on the needs of their multiple identities. This intervention is intended to serve Black students in multiple ways including academic and identity development so that they may build on existing strengths and graduate from college feeling transformed.

Specific social identity development theories reflected in SOUL include Phinney’s model of Ethnic Identity Development (1989) and Atkinson, Morten and Sue’s Racial
Identity Development (1979, 1989, 1993, 1998) All these theories have stages that may be common to Black first-generation students at PWIs. Each consist of stages where a student may question their own identity in relation to the opposing ones they are surrounded by.

**Jean Phinney’s Ethnic Identity Theory**

Jean Phinney (1993) developed a three-stage model of ethnic identity development that explores the process of ethnic identity information. The three stages of this model are Unexamined Ethnic Identity, Ethnic Identity Search, and finally Ethnic Identity Achievement. There are elements of SOUL that reflect and attend to each of stage found in Phinney’s model.

**Stage 1.** Once a Black student arrives to a PWI they may begin to acknowledge their Blackness in a way they may not have noticed before. If they grew up in a predominantly Black area the acknowledgement of the fact that they are Black, and the culture associated with it may seem counterintuitive. They would not have had to question things that are considered normal such as the way they speak, all things that may be different than dominant culture on campus. This relates to stage 1 of Phinney’s model of Ethnic Identity Development, “Unexamined Ethnic Identity”. According to the text individuals in this stage “have not explored feelings and attitudes regarding their own ethnicity” (Patton et al., p.135). SOUL helps students begin to explore these feelings as they arise. One of the workshops of the program titled “The Black Experience” will bring attention to some of the facts about Black culture and identity and how they will impact their experiences while attending a PWI.

**Stage 2.** “Ethnic Identity Search” according to the text this is where “students become increasingly aware of ethnicity issues as they face situations moving them into exploration”
(Patton et al., p.137). This may happen as students start to fully submerge themselves into campus, attending classes, getting involved, and building relationships outside of their race. New found friendships may create a form of curiosity that students are not used to. People may begin to question the way they wear their hair and the meaning of certain words they use, basic aspects of their everyday life. Stage 2 could also come about in more hurtful ways, due to ignorant encounters. There could be moments of hatred and intentional racism that drive students to find safety and security in who they are. Moments such as these could result in Black students looking more into who they are and their place, not only at the institution, but in society. SOUL focuses on this stage in two specific ways the first being addressing the possibility that this stage can come about in an innocent way between friends or through a racist encounter. During summer programming this stage will be addressed, and students will have time with their counselors to express any concerns or fears they have. The next way SOUL focuses on this stage is through mentorship. A SOUL mentor is meant to support its student in every way including the counsel of situations as such and providing the student with the appropriate resources to submit official claims of any racist encounters. As faculty/ staff members they will have the appropriate knowledge to walk the student through the reporting process.

**Stage 3.** Stage 3, “Ethnic Identity Achievement”, individuals have a clear and confident understanding of their own cultural identity. This is the stage where individuals come to terms with cultural differences between one’s ethnic group and the majority culture (Phinney, 1993). SOUL wants to be for their students as they reach this final stage and help them process. Reaching this stage could cause for celebration if the students come to terms with the cultural difference and embrace their Blackness in every way. However, it could
also call for counsel if they come to these terms and dive into a mental battle realizing that the cultural differences that make them special are inferior attributes in the eyes of white people.

**Atkinson, Morten and Sue’s Racial and Cultural Identity Development**

Atkinson, Morten, and Sue’s Racial and Cultural Identity Development (1979, 1989, 1993, 1998) model consist of five stages: Conformity, Dissonance, Resistance and Immersion, Introspection, and finally Synergistic Articulation and Awareness. “Atkinson et al.’s model conceptualizes the basic progressions an individual goes through when defining his or her racial identity” (Robinson, n.d). SOUL is designed to help Black first-generation students navigate and process these stages. We are aware that some students may not go through each one and not all students will reach the final stage of Synergistic Articulation and Awareness. However, this model will help mentors and counselors better understand our students, build relationships, and provide resources. An example of this maybe a student who is experiencing a form of double consciousness (Dubois, 1903) during Introspection. At this stage “individuals grapple with finding balance between the dominant culture and their own cultural heritage and the role of both shaping their identity” (Patton et al., p. 95). A mentor of SOUL may help the student better understand that grappling between the two identities, one being that of the dominant culture, is something that many Black people go through. As a resource they may suggest that the student utilizes some of their free electives to take courses to better to learn more about what they’re experiencing. This way they could learn directly about double consciousness from the words of Dubois himself and the role it was playing throughout their undergraduate experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conformity</td>
<td>One identifies with white culture, learns and assumes stereotypes and has no inking to identify or learn about their own racial or ethnic heritage.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dissonance</td>
<td>Encounter is the catalyst for one to question white culture and begin an interest in one’s own racial or ethnic group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resistance and Immersion</td>
<td>Individual withdraws from white culture to delve into his or her own racial or ethnic exploration in the effort to define a new identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introspection</td>
<td>Individual actively seeks to integrate the redefined identity into the dominant culture without compromising aspects of his or her own racial or ethnic identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synergistic Articulation and Awareness.</td>
<td>Optimum identity; Individual is able to identity as he or she wishes, appreciate other cultures including the dominant culture and balance all aspects of his or her heritage.</td>
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</table>

Program Proposal

SOUL is a two-part program. There is a three-day summer orientation that is centered around building community while gaining knowledge about basic higher education functions and the complexity of Blackness. This program must be completed before being matched with a mentor and participating in any SOUL programming throughout the year. The purpose of the design is to cultivate a strong relationship between staff, faculty and students before
the academic year begins. I believe that starting a mentor/mentee relationship with a strong foundation will aid in trust and willingness of the student to use the resources provided.

**Summer Overview**

SOUL will be advertised to students who have fully committed to attending the university in the fall. Students will receive invitations through email and physical letters mailed to their home. They will be invited to move in on campus three days early and the cost of room and board for those three days will be covered by the program. The summer orientation schedule can be found in Appendix A.

Upper class undergraduate students will serve as “camp counselors” for those three days and will be compensated with a stipend for their work. Counselors will host bonding programs each night to help students get to know each other and debrief from the day’s events. During this time there will be programming including guest speakers. The guest speaker will be a successful person of color who can share their college experience, provide tips and words of wisdom. At the end of the summer program students will be given the option to be matched with faculty/staff to serve as their mentor.

**Day 1: “Welcome to The Party”**

**Welcome/Move in Day.** The first day is where students will get settled in their new homes and get to know the program, staff, and each other. The day starts out with a traditional move in day; students will move in and get settled before attending scheduled events. During this time there will be a staff member to make sure all appropriate documents are signed, and keys are distributed properly. Students will have time to arrange their belongings and say goodbye to their family members before starting the day. Parents will be

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offered the opportunity to attend a financial literacy workshop that is beyond the scope of this paper. The workshop will cover financial aid, scholarships, etc. before leaving campus. Our “Welcome to The Party” kick off will introduce our students to the purpose of the program. They will hear more about the agenda for the following days, meet some of the faculty and staff that are present and get excited for what is to come.

**Meet Your Counselors.** Counselors have three main roles in the summer program: (a) to serve as good company (Baxter-Magolda, 2002); (b) to foster relationships through team building exercises and icebreakers; and (c) to provide counsel to help process any feelings that arrive from events throughout the day or from being in a new environment in general. The hope is that the relationship between the student and upper-class students will be an added resource as the school year begins. During this scheduled meeting time students will be able to meet the counselors who will oversee their specific group. Students will be able to introduce themselves, share why they decided to participate in the program and what they hope to gain from it. Counselors will also facilitate mini icebreakers and get to know you activities at this time.

**Meet the Faculty & Staff.** This will be one of the key opportunities for faculty, staff and students to bond naturally. This event will be during a scheduled dinner between all members of SOUL. The key purpose is for students to engage in a more natural setting, rather than workshops, classrooms, or offices. The hope is that this encounter will allow everyone to network and help organizers understand the best mentor/mentee matches.

**SOULchella.** When Black students attend a PWI one of their fears is that they will not get the Black experience they see on television. They may not get the chance to join one of divine nine Black fraternity and sororities or swag surf with their friends. Beyoncé paid
homage to the historically black college and university experience in her 2018 Coachella performance, respectfully known as BEYchella. This event will follow that theme. It will give the students a chance to build community and witness the creativity of the Black community that might be overshadowed once the semester is up and fully running. This outdoor event will emulate a mini Coachella. There will be music, games, food, Instagram photo ops, swag giveaways, and a “Divine 9” Meet the Greeks showcase. The Meet the Greeks showcase is included in this event because of the importance of community and connection Black Greek letter fraternities and sororities created for the Black Community. These organizations were created to give Black college students a voice, support, and community of shared identity.

Day 2: Down to Business

Keynote Speaker. The purpose of having a keynote speaker of color is to show the students what they can become after obtaining their degree and securing a career. The keynote will speak on their upbringing, college experience, barriers they overcame and any other teachings they would like to share. This event is intended to create hope for the future and get the students thinking about what it means to not only be Black at a PWI but Black in America.

Workshop 1: The Black Experience. The intention of this workshop/discussion is to introduce what it means to be a Black Student at a PWI. During this time the students will have a very real conversation of what systems are in place that hinder their success, structural racism, and how to navigate white spaces. The hope is that having this conversation before they begin their first year will help to prepare them to understand the system, make it easier to talk about the issues and hopefully inspire the students to want to create change. The
objective of this workshop is to lay out the issues but also provide knowledge and resources to combat them. Resources include offices meant to serve Black students such as the Multicultural Center, Office of Diversity & Inclusion, courses that teach the work, etc.

**Workshop 2: “Mo Money”**\(^8\). One of the goals of the program is to educate about financial hardships and debunk some of the misconceptions of financial aid. In this session I want to explain where their money is going, what refund checks are—why sending them home or spending them on unnecessary things are not always the best options. While giving this information I also want them to know how and where to find jobs on campus and which jobs will provide the most compensation. Having a job campus can sometimes be better for your wellbeing and your wallet because they understand that you are a student first. Other things that could be covered include other resources that aren’t usually advertised are book awards, scholarships, and study abroad.

**“Check On It”: A Counselor Event**\(^9\). Each counselor event will have a theme that supports the overall goal of the program. The topic of this event will be a debriefing from the Black Experience workshop. Having an additional opportunity to process such heavy information is essential to the well-being of the students. It also gives them a chance to share common fears and worries with their peers and hear about experiences from their counselors. This discussion will also help to reassure the students that they have value and that their voices can and will be heard. Counselors will also host icebreakers and team-builders during this time followed by an optional bonding event that could range from a game to movie night.

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Day 3: We Got Us

“Check On It”: A Counselor Event. The theme for this counselor event is mental health. Students will learn about the importance of mental health, coping skills tips and how attending a PWI can affect the psychology of Black students. This topic is important and relates to the program goal because the intersecting identities of a Black student can cause several issues within the psyche. An example of this is not being a part of the dominant culture and losing part of your Blackness trying to assimilate. This event will cover topics as such in addition to the basic troubles as a college student, burn out, work life balance and self-care. All counselor events include icebreakers and team builders.

Workshop 1: Who All Gon Be There. The purpose of this event is to stress the importance of getting involved. In this session facilitators will stress the importance of leadership, community, and representation, and using one’s resources. The students will learn about organizations and offices on campus of all genres with specific highlights on Black organizations and identity centers. In addition, facilitators will explain the importance of exploring leadership opportunities that are comprised of predominantly white students such as student government or activities counsel to ensure their voice is heard and decisions affecting the student body considers everyone.

Workshop 2: Me, Myself & My Mentor. The last workshop of the program is focused on mentoring. During this time students will learn why mentorship is the heart of SOUL. We will share the key benefits of mentoring. During this time, we will be able to share what the academic year will look like, this includes the mentor/mentee relationship,

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programming and academic offerings. Lastly, this time will be an opportunity to network and bond with the faculty/staff who are a part of SOUL.

**Formation: Mentor/Mentee Reveal/Dinner Party.**¹¹ The closing event will be in the form of a dinner party. During this event students will celebrate completing the first part of the program and joining the SOUL family. The main purpose of this event will be the mentor mentee reveal. Students will find out who their faculty/staff mentor is and have the opportunity to bond further over dinner. Though it is the program’s intention for the students and faculty to meet each other throughout the three days it is clear that students cannot meet everyone. Therefore, students, faculty and staff will be provided with a “script” or prompts to aid in conversation, an example can be found in Appendix B. After dinner is completed the event will transition into a dance party to continue the celebration and community building before the start of the semester and the work begins.

**Academic Year Overview**

During the academic year the role of the program is to provide mentoring, academic support, and programming that will benefit students throughout the year. Mentors will maintain constant communication with their mentees. Program offerings will evolve as the students do offering material such as job searching, life skills, and preparation for life after college. Students will have the option to opt out or reduce services at any time.

**Mentor Recruitment.** Since the position of a SOUL mentor is voluntary the way in which we recruit them is essential to the success of our new students. We must be intentional with who we allow to assume these roles given the impact to others. Before a physical recruitment process starts we will conduct research in different offices, courses and

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committees that we believe aligns with the goals and values of SOUL. These will be our first stops for recruitment, folks in these spaces will receive personalized invitations to apply to become a mentor. Other forms of recruitment will include word of mouth, presentations at committee meetings, and physical letters of invitation sent to faculty and staff. Once candidates fill out the application they will go through a screening process that will consist of a meeting to gauge interest, personality, and readiness to mentor Black first-generation students. Recruitment will take place during the academic year before summer programming.

**Mentors.** Mentor roles are held by both faculty and student affairs professionals. It is the hope that students will remain in SOUL until graduation, because of the longevity of that commitment we want the mentor mentee relationship to last all four to six years. This commitment might not be realistic if graduate students assumed those positions. During this time the purpose and goals of SOUL will be upheld through mentorship. Each mentor will be assigned at least one mentee. Responsibilities of the role include attending two of the three-day summer programing. During the academic year; contact at least once a week of any form (virtual, face to face, text, email) and in person bi weekly. In person meetings will be logged for evaluation. Mentors are meant to serve as a resource for mentees in all capacities not just academic. The intention is that they are people in leadership that students develop a relationship with and feel comfortable enough to talk about classes, struggles, receive advice and feedback. This type of support will aid the student’s success. The SOUL mentor job expectations can be found in Appendix C.

**Programming.** Programming throughout the academic year serves multiple purposes. It continues the theme of community, hosting programming throughout the year gives everyone who participates in SOUL to reunite, share experiences and learn new material.
Topics of these programs will be based on the needs of the students. This aspect of the program is made for creativity, it could be a social event, a guest speaker, or just a symposium to debrief any experience some of the students have encountered. These programs are meant to evolve with our students and serve their current needs. There will be one program a month per semester.

**Implementation**

**Timeline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall Semester/Winter 2020</th>
<th>Fall Semester 2020 will be a prime planning time for the SOUL committee. At this time SOUL will focus on the following:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recruitment of faculty and student affairs professionals as mentors</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Conduct screening and interviews for mentor positions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Search for and solidify potential departmental collaborations</td>
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<td>• Conduct a search and contact potential keynote speakers</td>
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<tr>
<th>Spring Semester 2021</th>
<th>During this time SOUL will focus on counselors, advertisement, and planning for orientation. This includes the following:</th>
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<td>• Developing and distributing advertisement for undergraduate counselors</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Conducting interviews for counselor positions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Solidifying mentors and counselors</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Distributing invitations to students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planning for three-day orientation (Room and Board, Giveaways, Conference Services, Keynote Speakers, Outside Materials, ex. DJ)</td>
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<td><strong>Summer 2021 (June-August)</strong></td>
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<td>Summer planning will be the busiest time for SOUL. Tasks include:</td>
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<td>• Get final count of students</td>
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<td>• Ordering materials, confirm plans for Room and board</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Orientation for student counselors</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Commencement of three-day orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pilot Academic Year (Fall 2021-May 2022)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Students start their first year and SOUL’s first academic year. At this time mentor/mentee relationships begin and academic programming.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Mentors will meet with their mentees bi-weekly and submit reports</td>
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<tr>
<td>• SOUL will offer monthly programing in both the fall and spring semester</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Evaluation and planning for the following academic year will begin</td>
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**Budget**

Funding a program like this is an expensive adventure. Considering the population of students, I created SOUL are of low income I want to provide the three-day orientation to them at no expense. We may be able to cover the cost by fundraising and partnering across departments. It would be my wish that housing and res life would be able to provide lodging for our students, allowing them to move into their residence halls for the academic year 3
days early. Another substantial cost would be meals, aside from the two catered meals provided by SOUL, during the welcome lunch and mentor/mentee dinner party there would be 6 meals that I would hope to receive an in-kind contribution from campus dinning. With this support the SOUL budget is estimated at $40,000. For an itemized budget, see Appendix C.

**Potential Challenges**

A challenge that may arise is the attendance of the students. Though I will try in every way to make this a fun, accessible, and educational opportunity for them there may be elements out of the control of the program, for example they might not be able to commit to arriving early because of family or financial constraints. Another challenge may be finding the money fund orientation. A large cost of the three-day experience is lodging and food, we would need to be sure that residence life and dinning are able and willing to make an in-kind contribution.

Faculty and staff participation are also a challenge SOUL must prepare for, mentoring can be a very demanding responsibility and through many Faculty and staff members may understand the importance and want to make a difference they may not have the time. Something also concerning about making the faculty and staff at a PWI apart of a mentoring program specifically for Black students is the lack of Black and faculty and staff present. There will be some white mentors and we must ensure they are fully prepared to support our students. The last challenge I will mention is the fact that SOUL fully intends to unveil the campus climate to the Black first year, first-generation students that enter the university. This fact may cause push back from certain areas of the university and it may very well overwhelm some of the students. It is the duty of the Mentors and staff of SOUL to
soothe the worries of the students and provide them with the support needed to ensure their success and completion of their degree.
Chapter 5

In this chapter, I discuss effective leadership in higher education and student affairs and how that will appear in my program, SOUL. I then review why assessment and evaluation are a critical piece of programming and development. Next, I detail my assessment and evaluation plan, as I intend to evaluate these specific areas: summer orientation, mentorship quality, and student success. In addition, I will review some of the limitations of SOUL, what specific aspects are beyond the scope of this paper, and what SOUL would look like if it was implemented within a different institution type. Finally, I close out my thesis and share my plans for the future.

Leadership in Higher Education and Student Affairs

When most individuals think of leadership, I believe an image of someone in a high position comes to their mind first. However, I think an important thing to note about leadership, especially within student affairs, is that leadership can take root at any level. The philosophy of grassroots leadership embodies my vision of effective leadership. John Wilson (1973) defines grassroots leadership as “the stimulation of social change or the challenge of the status quo by those who lack formal authority, delegated power or institutionalized methods for doing so” (p. 32). Effective leadership in higher education and student affairs is one that employs the model that leading can happen in all places and that everyone has a responsibility in its success.

People from the Black community have been historically neglected and dehumanized by people in power (see Chapter 3 for fuller discussion). Decisions have been made for them by people in power without any input or recognition of their needs and wants. Patton and Haynes (2018) make a point that people in power should look to the bottom for input as
“looking to the bottom ensures greater likelihood that persistent educational norms and traditions that maintain oppression and systemic inequity in higher education will be redressed” (p. 5). An effective leader in higher education who follows the grassroots model will be intentional and turn to Black students and other minority populations on campus to be sure that they are serving their needs and respecting their differences when decisions are made.

**Leadership and SOUL**

SOUL has several areas where leaders can emerge. Mentors and student counselors are just a few of the leadership roles offered by the program. The goal of the individuals who assume those roles is to create more leaders from the group of students who participate in SOUL. To ensure the creation of effective leaders, I will need to help the SOUL team create a shared belief and vision of what the Black first-generation students in the program need to be successful at a PWI.

**Leadership Style**

A transformational leadership style would work best when trying to initiate these changes. A transformational leader is one who, according to Northouse (2004):

engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower. This type of leader is attentive to the needs and motives of followers and tries to help followers reach their fullest potential.

(p. 170)

By employing this style of leadership while implementing SOUL, I would be able to spark a level of inspiration and motivation that is difficult to achieve. Creating that resilience will be important in this line of work. Since SOUL is ultimately designed to create change and
educate students on socially unjust systems, there may be push back from administrators and uninformed individuals. As the leader, it would be my responsibility to make sure the team understood the “big picture” and why the work we are doing is important and integral to the mission of the institution.

In addition to the transformational leadership style, using the Social Change Model of Leadership Development would also benefit SOUL. According to Helen and Alexander Astin (1996), the social change model of leadership “attempts to integrate already established leadership development concepts and provides for leaders who may not hold traditional roles of leadership, but rather want to make positive change” (para.1). The model is rooted in collaboration and community, and for SOUL to reach its full potential, there would be a great deal of relational work that needs to happen. This relational work includes departmental partnerships, faculty and student affairs professional input, and blended committees across campus. The social change model looks at the individual, the group, and the community (Astin & Astin, 1996). For the SOUL program, we would look at who we bring on our team as mentors, how can we create a program that benefits all parties involved, and lastly what change are we creating within the community and how is it benefiting our students. By combining a transformational leadership style and the Social Change Model, I think that SOUL will create individualized and community-based positive change.

Assessment & Evaluation

Online Assessment Tool defines assessment as “a systematic process of documenting and using data to measure knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs” (EasyLMS, n.d, para. 1). The evaluation of the data that is collected through this process is a critical aspect of program development. The data collected using assessment and evaluation tactics will
influence decisions made for future programs and improve the content and material provided by the program. By analyzing the data gathered through qualitative and quantitative methods, facilitators will be able to assess their budget and planning. This information provides what offerings were not necessary and which were in extremely high demand. Evaluating the data received through assessment lays the foundation for successful program development.

In higher education, and specifically in student affairs, assessment and evaluation are important for budgeting and implementation, but more importantly, they help give a voice to the students. Student affairs professionals may be able to review their assessment data and compute student learning, satisfaction, retention and success (Personal Communication, Hodes, 2020). Using assessment and evaluation for this purpose demonstrates several aspects of CAR Sagor (2000) suggests that action research “is a disciplined process of inquiry conducted by and for those taking the action. The primary reason for engaging in action research is to assist the ‘actor’ in improving and/or refining his or her actions” (para.1). Gathering the voices of the students to create change in programming is a key example of critical action research. This ensures that future programs specifically cater to the needs of the students rather than what those who are in power assume them to be.

My Vision

To evaluate the impact and success of SOUL, I believe that the focus should be on the student’s development. In my vision, success includes matriculation at a PWI as a Black first-generation student, academic achievement, identity acceptance, involvement on campus and overall wellbeing. This information could be collected by using an indirect measure of assessment of the student’s perception, attitude, feelings about and of their learning
(personal communication, Hodes, 2020). Through this measure, SOUL will be able to evaluate if students are making valuable connections with staff and faculty and if they feel more prepared as they continue to pursue their degree. Regarding the success of SOUL, direct measures of learning also matter; this includes quantitative data received from grades, test scores, and GPA. Measuring and assessing both these aspects of the student’s college experience will provide SOUL with the needed data to assess if the offering of the program is having a positive effect on their experience at a PWI.

**Assessment & Evaluation of SOUL**

For the assessment and evaluation of my program, I am proposing a mixed method form, combining both qualitative and quantitative data. I will be assessing three areas of the SOUL program. These areas include summer orientation, mentorship quality, and student success. To assess these areas, I have included a post-orientation survey, mentoring report document, mentor/mentee evaluations and finally an end of the year survey.

**Post Orientation.** To evaluate the satisfaction and learning outcomes of the three-day orientation there will be a post-orientation survey given to the students. This survey will be used to assess aspects of the program such as the efficiency of the check-in process, quality of food and entertainment, and satisfaction with workshops and much more. Distributing a post-orientation will let us know if there are parts of the orientation that students resonated with more than others, if our food selection were not the best and if they learned the material during workshops and if their perspective of college at PWI changed at all. Because the summer orientation is the largest piece of the SOUL program, assessment and evaluation would also be very useful for budget renewal. An example of the post orientation assessment can be found in Appendix E.
**Mentor Reports.** One of the responsibilities of a SOUL mentor is to submit bi-weekly mentoring reports. The purpose of the reports is so that both the mentor and SOUL staff can keep track of the quality of the meetings, topics that were covered, and any progress that was made from previous meetings and goal settings. This data will be collected using a qualitative assessment. Evaluation of the information collected will provide formative data of the student’s development and help mentors recap and plan for future meetings. An example of the mentor report can be found in Appendix F.

**Mentor/Mentee Evaluation.** SOUL will provide both the mentor and mentees with evaluation forms that will be conducted during the fall and spring semester. The “mentor evaluation” will be completed by the mentees and provide the SOUL staff with a detailed understanding of the following areas: relationship building, communication, academic support and personal/identity development. Each category has a series of statements to gauge the quality of support they are receiving from their mentor. Evaluating this information will allow for improvement for the corresponding year. The “mentee evaluation,” completed by the mentors, will provide context in the academic achievements, communication, college experience, and other topics surrounding the students’ progress at the institution. Evaluating these areas from one semester to another will help SOUL determine what programming needs to happen throughout the academic year, if the student needs additional support and resources etc. An example of the evaluations can be found in Appendix G.

**End of The Year.** At the end of the academic year, SOUL will distribute a mixed methods survey to the students. The purpose of this survey will be to gather the logistical data of the students’ academic year. This data will provide the information needed for us to
evaluate the student’s progress. When and if a student decides to discontinue their participation in SOUL, we will be able to visit their GPA and compare it to those who persisted in the program. End of the year surveys will need to be distributed after the completion of the first year, if they leave the program and once they graduation from the institution. This evaluation will support claims that students who participate in our program long term may produce better grades and perform better academically. Along with the logistical data this survey will provide information on the student’s feelings and attitudes in relation to the overall makeup of the program, offerings, and if and when they employed any lessons the learned from SOUL. An example of the end of the year survey can be found in Appendix H.

**Limitations**

The main focus of the SOUL program is helping Black first-generation students succeed at PWIs. Throughout my proposal, I am very intentional with the group of Black students who may not be as familiar with white culture and having to adjust to the new environment at a PWI. However, I do not mention much about Black students who may be coming from a predominantly white environment, Black students who are not first generation, or other people of color who may need the guidance as they enter PWIs.

Moving forward, expanding the program to all students of color and catering to their intersectional needs requires more research. Students of color have overlapping needs; however, I believe that a successful transformational program will not just focus on those overlapping needs but rather have intentional programming and resources that address the whole student.
The implementation of SOUL may change depending on the institutional type that offers it. If the program is delivered by a small private institution they may be able to offer it to all Black students rather than a select population like first-generation. Another change may be if the program was provided by a historically black college or university (HBCU). The material may not be as in depth and heavily centered on navigating white spaces, but rather a focus on students embracing their Blackness and their success.

Looking Ahead

At this very moment, the world is in crisis, as a nationwide pandemic continues to rip apart our idea of normal. There is uncertainty in almost every aspect of our normalcy including the future of higher education. With that in mind, I have gotten up every day and worked on this project. At some point, students will return to their institution and new students will gleefully move into their residence halls. As they pursue their degree, my hope is that having a program like SOUL, that is intended to aid in their experience and build a strong community, will help with their transition into the new normal.

This thesis is something that I will always hold close. I was able to take some of the most pivotal experiences of my life and develop a program that will help people that look like me succeed in spaces that are not designed for them.

As for the future of SOUL, I have essentially designed my dream job. I hope to implement this program in some form in the future. There are bridge programs all over the nation that offer academic support to Black students, however the point of SOUL is to be intentional in creating opportunities for Black students’ success and addressing the barriers that stand in the way. I hope to present my ideas at conferences and share the possibilities of
this program. I am grateful for whatever the future holds. No matter what, I will continue to root for everybody Black.
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Appendix A

Schedule

REGISTRATION & MOVE IN

OPENING REMARKS
Lunch Provided

SOULCHELLA

DAY TWO
Keynote/Breakfast
Workshop: The Black Experience
Lunch
Workshop: Mo Money
Check on It: A Counselor Event

BREAK

DAY THREE
Breakfast
Check on It: A Counselor Event
Workshop: Who All Gon Be There
Lunch
Workshop: Me, Myself, and My Mentor

A DINNER PARTY: MEET YOUR MENTOR
Appendix B

Tell Me Everything

MENTEE
What are you looking forward to the most this year?

MENTOR
What’s your favorite memory from your undergraduate experience?

JUST FOR FUN
What’s the last song you listened to?

JUST FOR FUN
If you could be a character from any TV show who would you be?

It’s Getting Awkward

MENTEE
What are 3 qualities that your ideal mentor would have?

MENTOR
If you could go back in time what advice would you give yourself during your first year of college?

JUST FOR FUN
Who would play you in a movie?

MENTEE
Who was your biggest influence up until this point?

MENTOR
What immediate advice can you give your mentee to have a successful academic year?

JUST FOR FUN
What’s your silliest fear?
Appendix C

SOUL Mentor

General Description

SOUL is a mentoring program for Black first-generation students attending predominantly white institutions (PWI). This program was created to aid in the success of Black first-generation college students before the start of their college career and during their four-year undergraduate experience. The overall goal of the program is to assist Black students through this new journey through the support of mentorship to improve graduation and retention rates and educate students on what it means to be Black at a PWI including but not limited to the financial hardships, institutional racism, and importance of community. SOUL will provide the tools needed to thrive at a PWI as a person of color.

The purpose of a SOUL mentor is to serve as a resource for mentees in all capacities not just academic. SOUL mentors have the responsibility of creating a meaningful relationship with the students they are mentoring. This way students have a safe space within the university and they may feel comfortable enough to talk about classes, struggles, receive advice and feedback from an experienced leader on campus. This type of support will aid in the student’s success and development.

Specific Responsibilities

- Develop a positive relationship with the student you are mentoring.
- Be a supportive role model
• Support the academic and personal transition of the student

• Facilitate bi-weekly, in person, meetings with your mentees

• Keep constant communication. Mentors are expected to contact their mentees at least once a week in any form (virtual, face to face, text, email)

• Submit bi-weekly reports about mentoring

• Attend two days of the three-day summer orientation

• Communicate with the SOUL program director

  **Minimum Qualifications**

• Must be a current faculty member or student affairs professional of the university

• Must be willing to commit to a long-term mentoring relationship

• Understands the challenges of being a Black student at an PWI
Appendix D

Estimated Program Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estimated Expenses</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. PERSONNEL</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed and Compensated by the University</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Workers</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 student workers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500/student</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Assistant</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full time GA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal (Personnel)</strong></td>
<td>$22,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Operating Expenses</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lodging</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In kind contribution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catering</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Catered meals (Welcome Lunch and Mentor Reveal Dinner)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meals</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In kind contribution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giveaways</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-shirts, laptop stickers, notebooks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>$5,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 speaker (non-WCU affiliated)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 DJ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the academic year SOUL will host monthly programming, programs will vary month to month, but the host of the program will have the option to provide food for the students, have a guest speaker, or provide swag and giveaways.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal (Operating Expenses)</strong></td>
<td>$13,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Project Amount</strong></td>
<td>$40,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E

SOUL: Post-Orientation Survey

Start of Block: Default Question Block

Q1 How would you rate your check-in experience?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very Dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Check-In Staff</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room Cleanliness</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency of Check-In</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q2 If you were dissatisfied with any aspect of "Move in Day" please express your concerns below.

________________________________________________________________

Q3 What did you think of SOULchella? Please rate the following aspects:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>30</th>
<th>40</th>
<th>50</th>
<th>60</th>
<th>70</th>
<th>80</th>
<th>90</th>
<th>100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Food Quality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q4 Please let us know any suggestions or feedback you have regarding your SOULchella experience.

---

Q5 Please rate each statement regarding Keynote Speaker: Beyoncé Knowles-Carter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The speaker was interesting/inspirational</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The speaker talked about something I didn't know already</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The speaker provided information that will help me be successful in my first-year of undergrad</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The speaker should be invited back to a SOUL orientation</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q6 Please rate each workshop.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop 1: The Black Experience</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very Dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workshop 2: &quot;Mo Money&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop 3: Who All Gone Be There</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop 4: Me, Myself &amp; My Mentor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q7 If you were dissatisfied with any workshop please express your concerns below. If you really enjoyed a workshop let us know that as well!

Q8 Please rate each counselor event.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;Check On It&quot;: The Black Experience Debrief</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very Dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Check On It&quot;: Mental Health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q9 If you were dissatisfied with any counselor event please express your concerns below. If you have any good things to say about your counselor or one of the events they hosted let us know that as well!


Q10 How was the Mentorship Dinner? Please rate these aspects of your experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very Dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentor Reveal</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Quality</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event Set up</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q11 If you were dissatisfied with any aspect of the Mentorship Dinner please express your concerns below.
Q12 On a scale from 0-10, how likely are you to recommend SOUL to a friend?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

Q13 How has your perspective of college changed after attending SOUL orientation?
Q14 Do you feel like you've built a community?

- Definitely yes
- Probably yes
- Might or might not
- Probably not
- Definitely not

---

Q15 Do you feel like you have more support as you enter your first year?

- Definitely yes
- Probably yes
- Might or might not
- Probably not
- Definitely not

---

Q16 Were there any topics or content that you felt were unnecessary?

________________________________________________________________

---

Q17 Were there any topics or content that you feel should be added to future SOUL orientations?

________________________________________________________________
Q18 Do you have any other comments or feedback about SOUL orientation that you would like to share?

________________________________________________________________
Appendix F

SOUL: Bi-Weekly Mentor Report

Start of Block: Default Question Block

Q1 Enter your First and Last Name

________________________________________________________________

Q2 Enter the First and Last Name of your mentee.

________________________________________________________________

Q3 What progress has been achieved by you and or your mentee since your last meeting?

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________
Q4 Please outline topics that were covered during this meeting.

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

Q5 List any goals you and your mentee have for the next meeting.

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

Q6 Please list any comments, concerns, or good news!

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________
# Appendix G

## SOUL: Mentor Evaluation

### Q1 Relationship Building

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel supported by my mentor</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel comfortable around my mentor</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentor listens to me</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can reach out to my mentor when I am overwhelmed</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
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<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel supported with my academics by my mentor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can reach out to my mentor for assistance with my courses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentor recommends resources on campus to help with my courses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a mentor has made a difference in my productivity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentor and I set academic goals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My sessions with my mentor are beneficial to my academic success</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Q3 Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My mentor and I only communicate once a week</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentor and I communicate more than once a week</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>My mentor and I meet with each other bi-weekly</td>
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<tr>
<td>I can reach out to my mentor for assistance or support when I need to</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Q4 Personal and Identity Development
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can talk to my mentor about issues I face on campus</td>
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<tr>
<td>My mentor cares about my personal well being</td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel like my mentor understands my experience as a Black individual</td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel like my mentor understands my experience as a first-generation student</td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel like I can talk to my mentor about all identities I hold. (Race, gender, sexuality, etc.)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
My sessions with my mentor are helpful for my personal and identity development.

Q5 Please enter any questions or comments you have regarding the quality of mentorship you have received thus far.

End of Block: Default Question Block

SOUL: Mentee Evaluation

Start of Block: Default Question Block
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q1 Academic Achievement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My mentee has shown progression in their courses</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentee utilizes campus resources</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>My mentee asks for assistance when they are struggling</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel like I have supported my mentees academic progress</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q2 Communication</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>I only communicate with my mentee once a week</td>
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<tr>
<td>I communicate with my mentee more than once a week</td>
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<tr>
<td>My mentee and I meet with each other bi-weekly</td>
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<tr>
<td>My mentee reaches out for assistance and support when needed</td>
<td>○</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Q3 How often do these topics come up in discussion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Most of the time</th>
<th>About half the time</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Racism on Campus</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feelings of Isolation</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home Sickness</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concerns of Identity</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discrimination</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q4 College Experience
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My mentee has gotten involved on campus. (Job, Student Organizations, Volunteer etc.)</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
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<td>My mentee has mentioned having healthy friendships and relationships</td>
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<td>My mentee has reported feeling safe and secure on campus</td>
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<tr>
<td>My mentee knows of resources on campus geared towards their identity development (Multicultural Center, LGBTQ, Women's &amp; Gender)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
My mentee knows of resources on campus geared towards their health (Health & wellness, counseling, recreation center)

Q5 Please enter any questions or comments you have regarding the quality of mentorship thus far.

End of Block: Default Question Block
Appendix H

SOUL: End of the Year Survey

Start of Block: Default Question Block

Q1 Please enter your First and Last Name
_____________________________________________________________________

Q2 What is your current major of study?
_____________________________________________________________________

Q3 Please select your anticipated graduation date

○ May 2024

○ May 2025

○ May 2026
Q4 What is your current GPA?

________________________________________________________________

Q5 How has your perspective changed after completing your first year?

________________________________________________________________

Q6 How have you employed lessons learned from summer orientation?

________________________________________________________________

Q7 Please rank the SOUL programs from the 20-21 academic year from favorite to least favorite.

_____ Program 1

_____ Program 2

_____ Program 3
Q8 Please explain your reasoning for your top and last pick.

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Q9 What feedback or comments do you have for the SOUL program?

__________________________________________________________________________

End of Block: Default Question Block