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Queering the University: Implementing a Systematic & Organizational Approach to Equity

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Higher Education Policy and Student Affairs

THESIS

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Queering the University:

Implementing a Systematic and Organizational Approach for Equity

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated queer and trans students finding themselves through education and a

journey of self-discovery – stay strong and stay vigilant in your pursuit to authenticity

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Abstract

Too often higher education educators take a lackadaisical approach to solutions surrounding negative queer and trans student experiences; however, educators hold an obligation to foster student success, retention, catalyze identity development, and maximize the human potential of queer and trans students. This master's thesis develops a systematic and organizational approach to achieving an equitable campus for queer and trans student experience through a critical action research proposal. Utilizing my perspective as queer and trans educator and/or student, I will primarily use the philosophical lens of Friere, hooks, Foucault, and queer theory to support my philosophy of education. Theoretical frameworks from adult learning theory and strategic models of higher education will support the proposed intervention.

The *Queering the University Strategic Imperative* is a structural intervention that aims to mitigate mis-educative, oppressive higher education policy and practices that negatively impact queer and trans populations in American colleges and universities. The intervention will hold four components that will systematically improve the campus climate through shifts in culture and organization. Expectations in leadership for the intervention will be guided by the tenants of *Queer Activist Leadership in Higher Education* (Pryor, 2020) with use of assessment and evaluation to measure success through national self-assessment tools, learning evaluations, and focus groups. Overall, this thesis cultivates a vision for a university where the principles and use of action research are incentivized and fosters an equitable educational experience for queer and trans students.

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Chapter 1

Fostering My Identity as an Educator

Student Leadership and Identity

Since high school, a large aspect of my identity has been rooted in being a student and being a leader in and outside the classroom through involvement in extracurricular and/or cocurricular organizations. The later years of my high school career were spent serving the New Jersey chapter of the Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) as a state officer representing approximately 8,000 student members. When we fast forward to my collegiate journey, the quest for more leadership opportunities continued as I became involved in student government, my major's student organization, and as a student worker. I have always had a desire to serve others and create change for their benefit. My program of study during my undergraduate career was Hospitality and Tourism Management; however, this program of study never felt truly congruent to the passions I held as a leader. Instead, leadership experiences throughout college helped shaped my transition to paving a career in higher education. Coming to college as a first-generation college student did not prepare me for all the workings and support that can be given on a college campus – I came in expecting that I would strictly be devoted to my academics and a few extracurricular activities that would help position me as desirable to future employers.

As previously mentioned, I was involved with my major's student organization, the Hospitality Society, as a secretary and president to help students gain professional development and build their network in preparation for successful careers in hospitality and tourism management. I find in hindsight that what I found to be most enjoyable serving as a leader in the Hospitality Society was helping students develop themselves and their skills through planning

educational experiences and connecting them to resources and services at my alma mater. Serving in my university's student government, both as a student senator and in an executive board position, showed me the impact of collective student action(s), principles of shared governance in a university, and how university student governments hold the power to keep administrators, faculty, and staff accountable in placing students first. Student government developed my identity to solidify myself as an advocate – a leader that provides support and promote positive change. Being employed as a student worker gave me exposure to the discipline of student affairs as a vocation and demonstrated the impact that staff members hold as partners in the educational mission. The combination of experiences in student government and as a student worker opened the path to developing a career plan as an educator in higher education and student affairs.

Connecting the Impact of Student Affairs

Like many others, my final year as an undergraduate college student was teeming with anxiety and an omni-present frustration that my major and original career aspirations in hospitality were not congruent with my passions and values. I was fortunate to have great mentors that advocated for me to do some soul searching and find what career would satisfy my needs to live and find a vocational identity that would nourish my passions. After meeting with career services and speaking to several educators, I discovered the common theme that my undergraduate major would not halt me from successfully entering the discipline of higher education and student affairs. My favorite aspects of being involved in student leadership that became central to my identity were from the impact of student affairs on the university. Student affairs has the opportunity to provide students with formative learning that cannot always occur in a formal, academic setting.

Student affairs has become a field that presents opportunities for scholarly research, activism, and making transformative change that can lead us to a better society. My intention for entering this field was and still is to help create change and serve as advocate for oppressed peoples that are given unequitable circumstances in higher education or halted from access to higher education altogether; yet, the execution of this intention is consistently evolving with new experiences and new knowledge. The common shortcoming in my collegiate experience was an aptitude that I was always cornered into being "more" of a man, especially as an openly queer individual, under the guise of professional standards or other experiences that reinforced the gender binary as a student leader or representative of the university. These moments or experiences of being cornered into a gender role opened me to noticing I never felt fully recognized or represented as a queer "man" and (surprise, surprise) I do not, nor ever will, 100 percent identify as a man (or at least the hegemonic view of a man in today's culture).

I'm Here, I'm Queer, and I (Accidentally) Instill Fear

The In-N-Out Closet of Queerness and Transness

Have you ever heard of In-N-Out Burger? Well, for most of my young life, I lived in the In-N-Out closet for my queer and trans identities. I was always prepared to be able to shift into the façade of presenting as a quiet, heterosexual, cisgender man to satisfy the needs and comfort of others – mostly my family who has not always been the most supportive of being queer. I first came out as a freshman in high school but was faced with unacceptance and rejection of my queer identity from my family. Thankfully, my high school was a welcoming environment for my queer self – an environment where the façade could fade away and I could explore expressing myself in ways that typically remained in the closet. Throughout high school I dedicated myself to my schooling to ensure I could reach college and find a more welcoming

environment to simply be queer in. I lived in the state of being in and out of the closet for my queerness for years to come until I broke free of those constraints in my freshman year of college when I came out to my family again until I was completely public with my gay identity by the end of that year.

Coming to a comfort with my queerness was such a new experience and the college environment provided numerous ways for me to explore my identity in ways that were not always welcomed in my home life. Being out in college was a great experience of being welcomed by many – sometimes in the cliché way of serving as the latest gay BFF. However, I still faced situations where people "didn't agree with my lifestyle" or I had the potential of making men, and sometimes women, uncomfortable with my presence. This was a time where marriage equality was freshly rolled out in the United States and fellow students liked to debate about the validity of having the right to marry as a gay person – asking for my opinion as if I would reject having equal standing to them as heterosexual individuals.

Although being gay filled a diversity mark that colleges like to have in their student leaders, I was proud to serve as an openly gay person and help change the university in favor of students like myself and any other groups that were faced with barriers. Being gay as a student leader held additional obstacles as a person that still felt endlessly confused with their gender. I was often held to professional standards that made me felt boxed into performing as a man as I was directed to wear suits and ties (clothing that can make me feel incredibly dysphoric) and felt restricted by ascribed gender roles to exude masculine behaviors and leadership traits. At the same time, I began to experiment with wearing makeup as an exploration into gender expression and was often met with combative feedback or confusion from peers, superiors, and family. Many could not comprehend how makeup made me feel affirmed and closer to presenting my

outer self with a congruency to my inner self and true identity. Without my close friends encouraging me, I would not have continued expressing myself and furthering myself on discovering my non-binary identity.

Coming to a Crossroads of Gender through Education

Reflecting on memories from my childhood, I can say confidently that I never quite delivered on presenting and expressing myself in ways that were always similar to other boys my age. I was always a bit quirky and I quickly learned that to get by without excess harassment I would be best to hide the parts of myself that could be ridiculed. I now found that those aspects myself were typically described as feminine or gay behaviors – aspects of myself that were once hidden now give me confidence and claim to identities that I am proud to hold. It is no surprise that I have never felt 100% a man and conversations with my siblings have confirmed that I have always been feminine from a young age. Going throughout my life, especially throughout my undergraduate degree, I truly felt I was alone with this struggle I had with my gender identity as I knew about binary transgender people, those that identify as either transgender men or transgender women, but was not aware that a person could identify as outside of the binary of man and woman.

Graduate school became a space where I finally met other non-binary people and faced an incredibly inclusive environment for exploring my gender identity through education and developing relationships and/or mentorships with people who were willing to learn about gender or affirm my journey to discovering my gender identity. I entered a space that immediately prompted for inclusivity with the normalization of gender pronouns and gaining access to university programs that developed my knowledge on queer and trans identity. Through this environment and opportunity, I began to cultivate and piece together that my gender existed

outside the binary and by the end of my first semester of graduate school I began identifying as genderqueer and socially transitioned to using they/them/theirs pronouns. Meeting and conversing with other non-binary people, especially those that used they/them pronouns, gave me strength to claim this part of myself and begin paving a reality where I could fully express the fluidity of my gender. Learning about student development theory, specifically gender identity development, opened me to realizing that I wasn't too late to fully proclaim being transgender and non-binary. I typically always felt lost in my gender as cultural and personal standards prompted me to stick to being a man; however, I felt more at home living in the crossroads of gender than I did identifying within the binary.

Living at the Crossroads of Gender

Living at the crossroads of gender could be described as living in the chaos of gender, yet somehow feeling most at peace in a mix of gender that can often confuse cisgender people. Oddly enough, I have found myself in gender euphoria when I get odd looks from strangers who appear confused and their brain tries to fit me in the box of 'man' or woman when I identify as neither. There are many troubles identifying as non-binary as I endlessly have to explain the nuances of gender identity, being transgender, the importance of pronouns, and the validity of these topics and my use of they/them pronouns. My family is aware of my non-binary identity, but they do not understand the concept and I do not think many see beyond me identifying as a queer individual. Intuitively, I find myself being able to sense the differences in behaviors and attitudes people exhibit when they view me as a very, very gay man or exhibit understanding that I identify as beyond queer and identify as non-binary.

Affirmation does not often come from people for my gender identity and I continually rejoice being in the company of those that seek to understand what being non-binary means to

me and how they can better understand trans people overall. My education brought me to my first professional conference with College Student Educators, International (ACPA) where I encountered countless people that shared the same identities or similar experiences to myself as queer and non-binary person. I was almost in tears to find myself networking and being validated from other bearded, feminine, or androgynous people in a professional setting. I was in an environment where I felt valued for my experience on education and being non-binary in avenues that uplifted my outlook and reignited my hope of changing the world for the betterment of queer and trans people. This professional experience verified that serving as an educator with my identity at the forefront of my practice would be my most effective form of advocacy and activism.

Becoming an Educator and Advocate

Since coming to terms with being non-binary, I have taken opportunities to become a queer educator through internships, public speaker, and serving as a trainer for advocacy trainings or workshops. Most recently, I presented with a colleague at ACPA for a workshop called "Disrupting the Cis-tem: Embracing Gender Diversity in Spaces Built for Womxn." Higher education and student affairs have helped me cultivate a professional identity as a queer educator and advocate. This thesis was another chance to cultivate these parts of vocational identity as this critical action research proposal seeks to meld theory, practice, and my own positionality on education and my thematic concern. My own experiences highlight the urgency of creating a more inclusive and equitable university for queer and trans students to be affirmed and encouraged to explore their identities without the hegemonic standards set on them. Without a welcoming campus, queer and trans students will continue to face situations of bias like I previously shared and can matriculate through a university feeling invisible to others in the

aspects of their queerness and/or transness. Providing an equitable university for queer and trans students can lead to increased retention and fostering a transformative educational structure that helps further liberate students from the standards of an American society that seek to limit their potential.

Chapter 2

Thematic Concern Statement

Trans and queer students face a disproportionate amount of discrimination, harassment, and overall discomfort on university campuses across the United States. The conclusions from the *2010 State of Higher Education for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People* showed that LGBTQ students, staff, faculty, and administrators remain at a significantly higher risk, compared with the study's control group of heterosexual and gender normative counterparts, for harassment at US colleges and universities (Blumenfield, 2014). Along the queer and trans spectrum, a significant portion of students continue to fear for their physical safety and often conceal their identities to avoid harm (Blumenfield, 2014). In addition to these facts, studies show that students who share their queer and trans identity experiences, particularly those who do conform to standards of gender, face a less welcoming classroom climate and more likely to face bias from other collegians (Garvey & Rankin, 2015). Universities hold an obligation to address issues faced by queer and trans students through systematic solutions and avenues of development for faculty and staff that continually impact the student experience.

Conceptual Framework

Philosophical Influences

The philosophical positionality of education I have developed for this thesis was guided by queer politics and queer theory with support from Paulo Freire, bell hooks, and Michael Oakeshott. Cathy J. Cohen's (1997) *Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?* is used to articulate the importance of queer politics to my position on the purpose of education, especially in today's university, with a strong connection to how taking a queer lens holds opportunities to liberate queer and trans people and develop an

intersectional approach. *The Idea of the University* written by Michael Oakeshott (2004) demonstrates my claims on describing the difference between a good educational experience or a bad educational experience and is also used to support numerous claims in my philosophical positionality from other scholars. To further a queer lens on education, philosophy from Paulo Friere's (1968) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is used to explore the value of problem-posing education, principles of democratic education, and concepts of re-invention. bell hooks' (1993) *A Revolution of Values* supports claims made through Friere and demonstrates how universities need to move beyond a single oppression framework for queer and trans students through cultural and social shifts in thinking.

Historical Influences

The historical context of this concern is rooted in providing a concise timeline of the fight for queer and trans rights in American society and the impact of student activism from colleges and universities. A brief description of the fight for queer and trans rights on a national level with connections to the Stonewall Riots and present-day contributions and governmental attacks on equal rights for queer and trans people from the current political climate. A critique of the 1949 edition of *The Student Personnel Point of View* and information from Patrick Dilley's (2002) *20th Century Postsecondary Practices and Policies to Control Gay Students* positions the university's past role in oppressing queer people through their philosophy on students, practices, and policies. The impact of student activism on the queer rights movement is detailed from Brett Beemyn's (2003) *The Silence Is Broken: A History of the First Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual College Student Groups*. The overall historical context of the thesis' thematic concern was guided by the *Special Issue: Stonewall's Legacy--Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Students in Higher Education* (Marine, 2011).

Current Research

The current research on queer and trans issues in the context of higher education and student affairs greatly influenced the work of this thesis and the proposed intervention that will be reviewed in Chapter 4. The following articles are used to reflect what current research stipulates about queer and trans campus climate or queer and trans collegiate experiences:

- *Exploring the Ways Trans* Collegians Navigate Academic, Romantic, and Social Relationships* (Duran & Nicolazzo, 2017)

- *Making the Grade? Classroom Climate for LGBTQ Students Across Gender Conformity* (Garvey & Rankin, 2015)

- *The Influence of Campus Experiences on the Level of Outness Among Trans-Spectrum and Queer-Spectrum Students* (Garvey & Rankin, 2015)

The following articles are used to reflect what current research contributes to fostering systematic and cultural change in universities in favor of queer and trans collegians:

- *Creating Systematic Change Around Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Issues: A Case Analysis and Recommendations* (Golom, 2015).

- *Transgender Inclusion in University Non-Discrimination Statements: Challenging Gender-Conforming Privilege through Student Activism* (Case, et al., 2012).

Unique Factors

Law and policy hold a tremendous impact in effectively addressing concerns for queer and trans people as laws and policies determine the protections afforded to queer and trans populations. Law and policy directly effect the ways in which queer and trans people are able to move throughout society and the university as fully engaged citizens. Therefore, a brief history of oppressive policies and practices are reviewed in Chapter 3. The law and policy drawbacks of

the current Presidential administration are critical to understanding the need of this intervention in universities and colleges as we witness rollbacks on protections from housing, workplace, and healthcare discrimination based on queer and/or trans identity (Fadulu, 2019). The conduct of queer and trans people, especially in an academic setting, is typically policed heavily as they are attempted to be categorized and fixed into a set identity that satisfies the greater culture. Dynamics of power in the university are reviewed and analyzed using ideologies on power from Michel Foucault and Louis Althusser. Power dynamics are a unique factor critical to understanding the challenges that one faces in the university when attempting to implement equity for queer and trans collegians.

Definition of Terms

While I strongly encourage folx to conduct their own research and learn the various of terms used in this thesis and throughout the queer and trans communities as the terms are constantly evolving and have different context to different individuals or groups. I acknowledge the following terms and definitions in my thesis featured in Table 1. The following terms or phrases were adapted from the University of California, Davis LGBTQIA Resource Center Glossary and/or my own definitions of the terms.

Table 1: Definitions of Terms

Term	Definition
Queer	Queer has been used as an epithet/slur in the past. However, it has been re-claimed to describe people whose gender, gender expression and/or sexuality expand beyond dominant expectations and exists in opposition to assimilation.
Transgender or trans	An adjective used most often as an umbrella term. Identifying as transgender, or trans, means that one's internal knowledge of gender is different from conventional or

	cultural expectations based on the sex that person was assigned at birth.
Queering	A verb used to describe how one can take a queer lens of an issue, approach, or research in opposition to hegemonic cultural or societal standards
Cisgender or cis	A gender identity, or performance in a gender role, that society deems to match the person's assigned sex at birth. The prefix cis- means "on this side of" or "not across." A term used to highlight the privilege of people who are not transgender.
Cissexism/Genderism	The pervasive system of discrimination and exclusion founded on the belief that there are, and should be, only two genders and that one's gender or most aspects of it, are inevitably tied to assigned sex. This system oppresses people whose gender and/or gender expression falls outside of cis-normative constructs. Within cissexism, cisgender people are the dominant group and trans/ gender non-conforming people are the oppressed group.
Coming Out	Coming out is the process of voluntarily sharing one's sexual orientation and/or gender identity with others. This process is unique for each individual and there is no right or wrong way to come out. The term "coming out" has also been broadened to include other pieces of potentially stigmatized personal information. Terms also used that correlate with this action are: "Being out" which means not concealing one's sexual orientation or gender identity, and "Outing, " a term used for making public the sexual orientation or gender identity of another who would prefer to keep this information secret.
Discrimination	Inequitable actions carried out by members of a dominant group or its representatives against members of a marginalized or minoritized group.

Gender Expansive	An umbrella term used for individuals who broaden their own culture's commonly held definitions of gender, including expectations for its expression, identities, roles, and/or other perceived gender norms. Gender expansive individuals include those who identify as transgender, as well as anyone else whose gender in some way is seen to be broadening the surrounding society's notion of gender.
Gender Expression	How one expresses oneself, in terms of dress and/or behaviors. Society, and people that make up society characterize these expressions as "masculine," "feminine," or "androgynous." Individuals may embody their gender in a multitude of ways and have terms beyond these to name their gender expression(s).
Gender fluid	A person whose gender identification and presentation shifts, whether within or outside of societal, gender-based expectations. Being fluid in motion between two or more genders.
Gender Identity	A sense of one's self as trans, genderqueer, woman, man, or some other identity, which may or may not correspond with the sex and gender one is assigned at birth.
Gender queer	A person whose gender identity and/or gender expression falls outside of the dominant societal norm for their assigned sex, is beyond genders, or is some combination of them.
Heteronormativity	Attitudes and behaviors that incorrectly assume gender is binary, ignoring genders besides women and men, and that people should and will align with conventional expectations of society for gender identity, gender expression, and sexual and romantic attraction. For example, someone assigned female at birth is expected to 1) have a body that is considered "female" by the dominant culture, 2) identify as a girl or woman, 3) act

	feminine and fulfill the roles associated with girls and/or women, and 4) be romantically and sexually attracted to men.
Hetereosexism	The assumption that all people are or should be heterosexual. Heterosexism excludes the needs, concerns, and life experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and queer people while it gives advantages to heterosexual people. It is often a subtle form of oppression, which reinforces realities of silence and erasure. Homophobia is commonly used to describe this phenomenon.
Heterosexuality	A sexual orientation in which a person feels physically and emotionally attracted to people of a gender other than their own.
Homosexual/Homosexuality	An outdated term to describe a sexual orientation in which a person feels physically and emotionally attracted to people of the same gender. Historically, it was a term used to pathologize gay and lesbian people.
Intersectionality	A term coined by law professor Kimberlé Crenshaw in the 1980s to describe the way that multiple systems of oppression interact in the lives of those with multiple marginalized identities. Intersectionality looks at the relationships between multiple marginalized identities and allows us to analyze social problems more fully, shape more effective interventions, and promote more inclusive advocacy amongst communities.
LGBTQ	Abbreviation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer. An umbrella term that is often used to refer to the community as a whole, but also holds the power to places limitations on identity.
Microaggressions	Brief and subtle behaviors, whether intentional or not, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages of commonly oppressed identities. These actions cause harm through the invalidation of the

	target person's identity and may reinforce stereotypes.
Misgendering	Attributing a gender to someone that is incorrect/does not align with their gender identity. Can occur when using pronouns, gendered language or assigning genders to people without knowing how they identify.
Non binary/nonbinary/non-binary	A gender identity and experience that embraces a full universe of expressions and ways of being that resonate for an individual, moving beyond the male/female gender binary. It may be an active resistance to binary gender expectations and/or an intentional creation of new unbounded ideas of self within the world. For some people who identify as nonbinary there may be overlap with other concepts and identities like gender expansive and gender non-conforming.
Oppression	Exists when one social group, whether knowingly or unconsciously, exploits another social group for its own benefit.
Orientation	Orientation is one's attraction or non-attraction to other people. An individual's orientation can be fluid and people use a variety of labels to describe their orientation. Some, but not all, types of attraction or orientation include romantic, sexual, sensual, aesthetic, intellectual and platonic.
Pronouns	Linguistic tools used to refer to someone in the third person. Examples are they/them/theirs, ze/hir/hirs, she/her/hers, he/him/his. In English and some other languages, pronouns have been tied to gender and are a common site of misgendering (attributing a gender to someone that is incorrect.)
Sex	a medically constructed categorization. Sex is often assigned based on the appearance of the genitalia, either in ultrasound or at birth.

Social Identities	Social identity groups are based on the physical, social, and mental characteristics of individuals. They are sometimes obvious and clear, sometimes not obvious and unclear, often self-claimed and frequently ascribed by others.
Spectrum	a range or sliding scale. Aspects of one's identity like sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression exist on a spectrum. For example, with sexual orientation, the attraction to men, women, or someone of another gender all exist on separate spectrums.
Transition	Transitioning is the process of taking steps to live as one's true gender identity. This is different for every individual – this can potentially involve social, legal, and medical transition.
Miseducation/Miseducative	To educate improperly or without critical reflection; a bad educational experience based on someone's philosophy of education that prevent further human development

ACPA/NASPA Professional Competencies

The ACPA/NASPA Professional Competencies are a joint imitative of the two most prominent professional organizations for higher education and student affairs educators. ACPA represents College Student Educators International and NASPA represents Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education. The professional competencies are crafted to provide validity and guidelines in the professional development of educators in higher education. Overall, there are ten competencies – the work of my thesis and skills needed for implementation of the proposed intervention are rooted in the following competencies: Social Justice & Inclusion, Leadership, Law, Policy, & Governance, and Student Learning & Development. Table

1 provides a brief description of each of aforementioned competencies that uses short

descriptions from the *ACPA/NASPA Professional Competencies (Short Version)* (n.d.).

Table 2: Relevant ACPA/NASPA Professional Competencies

Professional Competency	Description
Social Justice & Inclusion	"Includes the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to create learning environments that are enriched with diverse views and people. It is also designed to create an institutional ethos that accepts and celebrates differences among people, helping to free them of any misconceptions and prejudices."
Leadership	"Addresses the knowledge, skills and attitudes required of a leader, whether it be a positional leader or a member of the staff, in both an individual capacity and within a process of how individuals work together effectively to envision, plan, effect change in organizations, and respond to internal and external constituencies and issues."
Law, Policy, & Governance	"Includes the knowledge, skills and attitudes relating to policy development processes used in various contexts, the application of legal constructs, and the understanding of governance structures and their impact on one's professional practice."
Student Learning & Development	"Addresses the concepts and principles of student development and learning theory. This includes the ability to apply theory to improve and inform student affairs practice, as well as understanding teaching and training theory and practice."

Chapter Three

Philosophical Positionality

Today's university has deviated from developing active citizens and fostering a greater vision for humanity and has transitioned to become a machine that continuously reproduces a new workforce to aid the capitalist foundation of the United States. Yet as Michael Oakeshott (2004) states in *The Idea of the University,* "a university is not a machine for achieving a particular purpose or producing a particular result: it is a manner of human activity" (p. 24). From my own experiences, I believe that a bad educational experience is almost any education that aims to box you into a set of hegemonic standards that don't mutually benefit the students and the common good. Many students continue to only be allowed time dedicated to their program of study that trains "them exactly to fill some niche in society" rather than developing themselves through passions and having the ability to develop their humanity, passions, and sense of citizenship (Oakeshott, 2004, p. 30).

A good educational experience should be one that makes you think critically and develop yourself in the pursuit of learning. Oakeshott (2004) declares the university as "a home of learning, a place where a tradition of learning is preserved and extended, and where the necessary apparatus for the pursuit of learning has been gathered together" (p. 25). It is my belief that the tradition of learning that should be preserved and extended through our universities should be a mode of learning that strives for democracy and liberation. An opportune lens to take when considering how education can facilitate the transformation of individuals, groups, and system, is the lens of queer politics and queer theory. Through the works of Oakeshott (2004), Friere (1968), and hooks (1993) I will further detail my philosophical positionality of education

by connecting the aforementioned philosophers to the principles of queer politics and queer theory.

Queer Politics and Theory

As previously addressed in Chapter 2, queer and trans students existing in higher education often find their avenues of development negated through individual or systematic discrimination. A common narrative from queer students is consistently being heterogendered and unwelcome in the university. The mistreatment and unequitable stance that queer and trans students face leads to a dehumanization of queer and trans people in higher education that reproduces in our society in a cyclical nature. Incorporating queer politics and queer theory into the praxis of higher education has great potential for being transformative for all people – particularly for queer and trans identified students. Queer as a term began being used frequently in the 1990s to describe a new form of politics and academic theory that was critical of society and culture's role in reinforcing heterogendered roles of gender and sexuality (Cohen, 1997).

In *Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?*, Cohen (1997) defines queer politics as "in your face politics" that prompts activists and scholars to use their own queerness, the aspects of their identity seen as destructive to society, to challenge the ways in which those in power and institutions render queer and trans people "invisible and at-risk" (p. 439). However, adopting a queer lens does not hold power to helping only queer, lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender people – it provides a lens that can find commonalties in oppression and an avenue for coalition building between groups of people. Queer politics challenge hegemony in education by questioning the ways in which dominant norms that seek to hinder those at the margins and further oppress groups at all intersections. A queer lens provides a way to reject hegemonic expectations for assigned identities placed on vast

groups of people and recognizes the nuances of being human – that we are ever-changing beings with multifaceted identities. Blurring the binaries or cultural standards is customary to taking on a queer lens that allows an intersectional approach to take root.

Queer politics holds power to aid us in structuring an educational experience in the university that seeks to be transformative for those who engage in the pursuit of learning as a conversation – a mutually beneficial relationship between those educating and those being educated (Oakeshott, 2004). Oakeshott (2004) stipulates that the pursuit of learning is a conversation, one that "is not superimposed but springs from the quality of the voices which speak, and its values lies in the relics it leaves behind in the minds of those who participate" (p. 26). I imagine the university as a conversation that springs from the quality and value of queer and trans voices speaking for liberation and bringing the principles of queer politics as the relics of empowerment to be left in those who participate in the university. A university that takes on this participatory, queer perspective could easily adapt to an intersectional approach as queering the university would mean not boxing our students in but removing fixed barriers or stagnant categorizations that limit their ability to develop their full selves.

Educations as a Means of Liberation

Paolo Friere and Democratic Education. Paulo Freire's (1968) statement that "the more completely they (students) accept the passive role imposed on them, the more they tend simply to adapt to the world as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited in them" (p. 73), imposes a warning for the fractured reality experienced by many students who face mis-educative experiences. Queer and trans students objectified in the face of heterosexism and cissexism in the American university through pedagogy, curricula, and practices are continually educated in perspectives that do not recognize their own realities. The banking concept of

education is commonly used in the university to aid the oppressors in what Freire (1968) describes as "changing the consciousness of the oppressed, not the situation which oppresses them" (p.72). The university has the opportunity to serve as a site of learning that encourages, questions, and provides students with a proactive role in their own education with their peers, the local community, and the world. Instead, ignorance and a passive role are passed onto students through standardization and limiting access to education. Promoting Oakeshott's (2004) idea of a university as a conversation compliments Friere's (1968) philosophy on the high impact of true learning occurring through communicative methods that keeps education relevant and constantly in the pursuit of new knowledge and ways of learning.

Genuine thinking must be welcomed in higher education with discussion-based methodology that aims to have "students concerned about reality through communication" (Freire, 1968, p. 77). Problem-posing education should be used to teach students to question how they exist in the world and, whether they identify as queer or not, they are empowered to think critically about how they find themselves situated in and continually interacting with a reality that is created by cisnormative and heteronormative standards. Freire implores educators to encourage students to view the world as a "reality in process" (Friere, 1968). Having students view the world as a reality in process with a queer lens will allow transformational thinking that holds the potential for students to re-invent themselves and alter the conditions of queer and trans people, as well as other oppressed peoples, throughout the university and society. Embracing human beings as beings "in the process of becoming- as unfinished, uncompleting beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality" should be a core principle of education to allow ongoing adaptability and transformation in how we educate students (Friere, 1968, p. 84). Embracing humans as constantly being in a state of becoming allows education to provide space and a

means of understanding that further benefits the nuances of identity, especially queer and trans identities.

The concepts of re-invention in obtaining knowledge are needed in higher education and student affairs practices as students continually re-invent their own identities. Queer and trans students re-invent themselves in often radical ways to exist beyond the standards placed on them that originate from compulsory heterosexuality and/or binary gender roles (Friere, 1968). Empowering reflection and creativity are imperative to develop the deepened consciousness that is the goal of queer advocacy trainings (Freire, 1968). The development of students speaks to the development of their consciousness and morals in student affairs theories; therefore, democratic education with a queer outlook will elevate the consciousness of queer and trans advocates in recognizing the privilege and power of their own identities while also empowering and including the queer and trans students involved in these struggles.

bell hooks: A Revolution of Values. bell hooks' (1993) philosophy informs how true democratic education can and should be used to "renew minds and transform education institutions" to then change society (p.34). Queer and trans students, however, are currently halted from developing and renewing their own minds in the American university due to negative practices, such as students continually being misrepresented inside and beyond the classroom and a lack of protections from discrimination and violence. To this point, hooks (1993) also discusses how bias fuels and continues to produce oppressive practices in the university that warps educations to provide misinformation and no longer allows education to exist in the practice of freedom.

I believe that to change university practices for transformative education we must call on higher education professionals and institutions to form environments that "reflect diversity, a

passion for justice, and love for freedom" (hooks, 1993, p. 34). Part of this is adopting

democratic educational pedagogy and practices as discussed in the previous section on Friere's

philosophy of democratic education. Much of Friere's work on democratic education remains

compatible with hooks' notions that education maintain "a solidarity that must be affirmed by a

shared belief in a spirit of intellectual openness that celebrates diversity, welcomes dissent, and

rejoices in a collective dedication to the truth" (hooks, 1993, p. 33). The shared beliefs

mentioned are congruent to queering the university to welcome the diversity in queer and trans

realities – this thesis demonstrates how queering the university can employ education in

dedication to welcoming the nuances of identity.

The university and other institutions of power continually limit the potential of queer

politics that halt the possibility of having a revolution of values that reflect diversity and a praxis

of freedom (hooks, 1993). The university has a role to play in employing what Cohen (1997)

describes as a "single oppression framework" that many activists frame their politics by. They

have now come to be expected to adhere to "only one characteristic of their identity, or a single

perspective of consciousness, to organize their politics, rejecting any recognition of the multiple

and intersecting system of power that largely dictate our life chances" (p. 440). Narrowing the

queer community down to the simple acronym, LGBTQ, which is often ridiculed as alphabet

soup, negates inclusion and pits oppressed peoples against each other in the pressure to adhere to

and strictly identify with one letter in the acronym that is LGBTQ. The same can be said when

students are faced with being boxed into one identity for their racial identity as either African,

Caucasian, or other singular identities when racial identity has multiple layers and exists beyond

singularity. Narrowing into a single-oppression framework furthers the idea that the university

must only guarantee safety for one type of oppression and aids their authority in ensuring a harmonious academy where difference is recognized in theory, but not practice.

bell hooks (1993) shares an excerpt from Martin Luther King Jr. that argues for a "true revolution of values" in our society that would require a "rapid shift from a "thing"-oriented society to a "person"-oriented society" (p. 27). Throughout this thesis, queer and trans will be utilized as umbrella terms to help encompass the vast differences in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, asexual, and non-binary communities and those that hold or identify with multiple identities throughout this spectrum of queerness and transness. By adopting a prominent use of queer and trans as umbrella terms, the university can help us move beyond a single-oppression framework placed on queer and trans realities and foster an appreciation of diversity in queerness and transness in their students. Universities must embrace the messiness of welcoming diversity and realize that cultivating identities in students will not always be harmonious or structured by hegemonic standards. Melding queer politics with a praxis of democratic education in the university can lead us to the "possibility of a learning community, a place where difference could be acknowledged, where we would finally all understand, accept, and affirm that our ways of knowing are forged in history and relations of power" (hooks, 1993, p. 30).

Education should be a transformative experience that shapes students to become leaders that craft and execute their own narratives while being lifelong learners within and without the university – particularly those that are marginalized in the greater society. Lifelong learners hold the potential to become the transformational leaders that are needed to achieve a society that values humanity, sustainability, and equity. Education should inspire students to cultivate their best self through self-expression and finding a purpose for themselves that aligns with their full potential. Education should aim to transform individuals that enact radical transformation as a

ripple effect – from rippling change for other individuals or groups to catalyzing transformation in institutions and societies.

Historical Context

Placing a history on queer and trans people can be difficult as history favors the majority of cisgender, heterosexual, white people with studies of queer history not beginning until approximately thirty years ago (McLemee, 2003). In fact, it was not until the "19th century that experts even began to speak of 'the homosexual' as someone whose erotic desire reflected an unusual physiological or psychological condition with any homosexual sexual acts viewed as crimes against nature" (McLemee, 2003). Activism for LGBTQ issues has typically begun from grassroots movements by queer people of color with minimal documentation in academia or general historical accounts. Trans people have held an unbridled history in queer movements with their community being consistently erased from recorded history and academia that is not reflective of their impact on rights for LGBTQA issues. This section will explore the historical context of queer and trans issues that are faced inside the academy and in American society. First, the policies, practices, and guiding documents of early universities will be investigated to how queer and trans students were accounted for. Second, the history of gay student organizations and the Stonewall Riots will be reviewed to lead into setting the issues in the 21st century.

Queer and trans students have been persecuted against and resisted against their oppressors long before Stonewall in 1969. There were numerous counts of discrimination and violence against students that were targeted for their queer relationships or gender nonconformity. Patrick Dilley (2002) explores how colleges and universities reacted to the presence of gay men before the time of the Stonewall movement in *20th Century Postsecondary*

Practices and Policies to Control Gay Students. Dilley (2002) informs us that expulsions, referrals to mental health services to treat gayness as a disease, practices of student surveillance and entrapment, and diminution of free speech and rights to protests for gay and lesbian student issues were four avenues that were instituted by universities to control gay students. Dilley's research also showed that students who were not heterosexual would be limited to develop themselves vocationally, educationally, and socially in the university. The implications of Dilley's research demonstrate the repercussions that stem from marginalizing queer and trans students systematically in the university. This can also be shown from taking a critical perspective on the 1949 edition of *The Student Personnel Point of View*.

The ideology of early student affairs practitioners, formerly known as student personnel, inherently oppressed and reproduced the oppressive behaviors that impact queer and trans students. Much of *The Student Personnel Point of View* can be problematized as being damaging and/or unrepresentative of the queer and trans students that universities served unknowingly at the time of its writing; however, this document is still discussed and referenced in higher education today. The document only references to students using he/him/his pronouns that implies all students are cisgender males. The document also places a strong emphasis on student personnel guiding students to lead successful lives in the institutions of family, organized religion, and marriage with a heterosexist and cissexist lens. How can queer and trans students find congruency with a document that aims to help "students discover ethical and spiritual meaning of life" and "progress towards satisfying and socially acceptable sexual adjustments" when their identities are viewed as immoral and unethical by society? This document has held an impact on higher education professionals to internalize and reproduce the heterosexist and cissexist ideology of the document within the foundation of student affairs pedagogy and

practices. The document serves as a tool to impact how student affairs educators are approaching their practice and giving definition to the field.

The intention of *The Student Personnel Point of View* aims to holistically develop students in the university and, yet, the documents lacks inclusivity and promotes increased bias towards the collegiate journeys of queer and trans students. The policies, practices, and numerous acts of systemic violence for queer and trans students in higher education heeded these students to form groups to fight for inclusion of queer and trans students and their rights as students in the university. Many modern historians credit the birth of the gay rights movement to the organizers of the Stonewall Riots; however, the impact of student advocacy is believed to have paved the way for the success and visibility of the Stonewall Riots in today's accounts of history.

History has always been murky concerning the Stonewall Riots as new information from research reveals additional testimony and details that shift the story surrounding the protests. University students had begun to lay the preliminary advocacy that enabled the Stonewall Riots to become the catalyst the event is credited as (Beemyn, 2003). Columbia University and Cornell University were among the first two universities to form student gay rights group that fostered a sense of pride for being gay and collaborated with fellow radical students to make gay rights an issue of relevance for those that did not identify as gay. The most notable of the groups was Cornell's "Student Homophile League" for being recognized by the university as an official student group (Beemyn, 2003). The Student Homophile League used several methods to bring universities toward gay liberation.

Brett Beemyn's (2003) research showed that student activists used "mass leafleting" and what the group called "zaps." Zaps were described as "sessions at which openly homosexual

people would answer students' questions, trying to raise public consciousness about homosexuality" (Beemyn, 2003). The student activists used their testimony as a tool to educate the students who held more power and privilege in society and the university in efforts to make gay rights an issue at the forefront of students' minds. The actions of the Student Homophile League made strides that resulted in "gay students in more than 175 colleges and universities nationwide" uniting under their own chapters of the League (Beemyn, 2003). The actions of these students under the Student Homophile League increased visibility for gay rights and developed coalitions with other activist groups to make their personal issue a political issue (Beemyn, 2003).

The Stonewall Riots took place in New York City in 1969 as a response to a police raid that targeted the Stonewall Inn as a safe place of gathering for gay, lesbian, and transgender individuals. Stonewall has become known as the "boiling point" that launch varied advocacy efforts for queer and trans people that initially focused on working against police brutality and oppression (Marine, 2011). The laws of the city were not in favor of gay or trans people with New York City statutes criminalizing the "solicitation of homosexual relations" and a law that "authorized the arrests of anyone not wearing at least three articles of gender-appropriate clothing" (The Editors, 2019). The university itself is a microcosm existing in the macrocosm of society; therefore, it is no surprise that similar issues of discrimination and harassment were being reproduced on the university campus. The Stonewall Riots were a catalyst for activist organization and increased advocacy efforts that ignited society; however, the university still mirrored society's repression of queer and trans with small amounts of reform spanning throughout the next century.

Until 1973, the American Psychology Association considered homosexuality a mental illness and gender dysphoria is still viewed as such in their Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) that is a common tool in diagnosing patients with mental illness (Sullivan, 2004). Gay people lacked federal discrimination protections for housing, employment, and health care though some states held their own protections. The United States Congress also brought about the period of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" in military service that became the only law which expressly allowed the military to discriminate against gay and lesbian military members (Douglas Elliott & Bonauto, 2005). "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" became a standard for gay people to hide their identities and keep their identity separate from the workplace. The workplace protections already lacked for gay Americans and the standard of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" placed citizens in a position to not advocate for appropriate rights in the workplace without exposing the identity that required protection; therefore, lending additional power to employers to discriminate against gay employees. A noteworthy piece of legislation was the Defense Against Marriage Act, commonly known as DOMA, that was signed into law in 1996. The law, enacted under the Clinton presidential administration, defined marriage as a union between a man and a woman and legally opposed the union between those of the same sex (Douglas Elliott & Bonauto, 2005). DOMA restricts gay couple's access to the governmental and social benefits of marriage – denying them recognition and the power that can come from recognizing a union on a federal and state governmental level. Although the advocacy for gay rights spanned inside and outside of the university, LGBT Americans still faced oppressive legal structures that either prohibited gay behavior, limited rights as a citizen, or barred protection from discrimination.

Gay student organization numbers and visibility of gay, sometimes transgender, students continued to increase on American universities. The increase in visibility and recognition did not

come without similar or additional barriers for visibly queer students on campuses, the fight for liberation, and new pathways of activism. Universities have become a common site of hopeless tragedies for queer and trans students either through suicides or acts of violence against queer and trans students. A notable loss of life on a university campus took place at Rutgers University in 2010 when a gay student, Tyler Clementi, took his own life after enduring harassment and humiliation from his university roommate – an individual that recorded and distributed an intimate moment Tyler shared with another man. Other instances of queer-targeted violence are seen as a transgender student was spat on and stabbed at a university in California and anti-queer rhetoric is used against individuals in fraternity hazing rituals that advances systemic violence against queer people (Marine, 2011).

Universities that were once punishing or expelling students for homosexual activity in the 20th century are now funding LGBT student centers in the 21st century in an attempt to support queer and trans students. Currently, there is no peer-reviewed research that documents the formation of student services or departments for queer and trans students on universities. The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education's (CAS) (2019) contextual background for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer+ programs and services credits the creation of student groups and campus departments for queer and trans students to the student movements that originated from the 1960s. Many universities across the nation continue to cultivate their services for queer and trans students in the quest to further diversity and inclusion. As of 2018, over 200 colleges and universities have offices or services dedicated to LGBTQ+ students, faculty, and staff (Consortium, 2018).

Current State of Concern

The following overview of recent research relates directly to the work of this thesis as I highlight articles addressing queer and trans campus climate and experiences, as well as articles addressing systematic and cultural change for queer and trans issues. Each article will be briefly summarized and provide a connection to an aspect of this thesis. The philosophy behind the creation of the proposed intervention in Chapter 4 and the assessment and evaluation materials of Chapter 5 have been influenced by the following articles.

Queer and Trans Campus Climate and Experiences

Duran and Nicolazzo (2017), Experiences of Trans Collegians. This article from the *Journal of College Student Development* adds an important contribution to the minimal amount of research that specifically focuses on the experiences of trans* collegians as there is typically a focus on the study of lesbian, gay, and bisexual students. The authors, Duran and Nicolazzo (2017), explore the stories of trans* students' academic, romantic, and social relationships within higher education environments. Using a critical framework guided by transgender theory, this study collected data from testimonies and ethnographic interviews of nine trans* students with diverse backgrounds at a large public research university (Duran & Nicolazzo, 2017). Critical discourse analysis was used to examine how macrosystems of power impacted the individual experiences of the trans* students (Duran & Nicolazzo, 2017).

Results from the study showed that trans* collegians must resist societal standards of educating others on the nuances of their gender identity as a form of protection from further discomfort and/or discrimination. For their classroom experiences, trans* students described the classroom "as a physical location that is bearable only if they remained invisible and as a place they felt forced to share their experiences in order to gain access to conversations" (Duran &

Nicolazzo, 2017, p.539). Other notable findings were the value of cisgender students, faculty, and staff educating themselves on trans* identities, issues, and experiences and a call to increase trans* specific spaces and resources within the LGBTQ communities on campuses to improve trans* experiences (Duran & Nicolazzo, 2017).

Conclusions from this study can help higher education leaders in understanding the experience of transgender collegians and foster the skills and/or create environments that embrace trans* students. The findings from this study further support the need for the proposed intervention in this thesis. Education of cisgender collegians is essential to improving equity for transgender collegians on university campuses through proper relationship building where trans* students are fully seen and affirmed for their identities.

Garvey and Rankin (2015), Classroom Perceptions for Queer and Trans Students Across Gender Expression. This study uses data from the 2010 State of Higher Education for LGBT People survey report to dissect perspectives on campus climate for queer and trans students across levels of gender conformity. Additionally, the study highlights how notable variables impact perceptions of classroom climate (Garvey & Rankin, 2015). The results of the study showed that gender conforming students held a more positive perspective of classroom climate over gender non-conforming, or gender expansive, students (Garvey & Rankin, 2015). Classroom climate was greatly linked to levels of outness as students who were more public about sharing their queer or trans experiences faced a less welcoming classroom environment as well as other forms of bias throughout the university (Garvey & Rankin, 2015). Lack of inclusive curricula and institutional support showed damaging effects for queer and trans students as they internalized a lack of inclusivity and weak university response to bias as indication that trans people were unworthy or invisible (Garvey & Rankin, 2015). Negative perceptions of classroom climate also

demonstrated a low rate of using university resources, as queer and trans students feared facing more bias or lack of access to resources (Garvey & Rankin, 2015).

The authors prompt further partnerships between student affairs and faculty in crafting inclusive and democratic learning environments for queer and trans students whether the learning occurs inside or outside of the classroom in a university (Garvey & Rankin, 2015). Increased institutional support through inclusive curricula, resources specific to trans or gender expansive students, and improving responses to situations of bias or discrimination can greatly improve the experiences of queer and trans students (Garvey & Rankin, 2015). The proposed intervention will prompt university officials to partner in the quest of transforming the university for an equitable campus that affirms queer and trans students inside and outside of the classroom.

Garvey and Rankin (2015), Level of Outness and Campus Experiences for Queer and Trans Students. This study from the *Journal of Homosexuality* explored if and how queer-spectrum and/or trans-spectrum students differ in their levels of outness and experiences. The authors also focus on how students' sexual and gender identities outness related to their campus and classroom experiences. Data used for this study came from the 2010 *State of Higher Education for LGBT People* – a national survey for queer and trans higher education students, administrators, faculty, and staff (Garvey & Rankin, 2015). Level of outness in the study of the survey measured the levels in which a person shared their sexual and/or gender identity in different settings (e.g. with friends, professionally, with family). A higher score on the survey would correspond to a higher degree of outness (Garvey & Rankin, 2015).

The results of the study showed that cisgender LGBQ women were the most out compared to the lowest levels of outness experienced by trans-spectrum students through campus climate, classroom climate, and curriculum inclusion (Garvey & Rankin, 2015). Higher levels of outness

were heavily related to an increased use of college resources, but also poorer views of the campus and less likelihood of having a network of peers (Garvey & Rankin, 2015). The results of this study further support the need for more inclusivity in the academic and student affairs silos of the university through the use of inclusive language and policy, surveying queer and trans student needs, and aiding students in facilitating the coming out process through numerous university units.

This article will give increased justification to my thesis's thematic concern, which is focused on queering universities' practices. The article's research results demonstrates the need to expand the university to accommodate and embrace queer and trans students as they attain higher levels of outness. The structure of my intervention will be informed by applying the article's implications to increase inclusivity inside and outside of the classroom of the United States university.

Systematic and Cultural Change

Golom (2015), A Case Analysis of Systematic Change for Queer and Trans Equity.

This chapter from *Expanding the Circle: Creating an Inclusive Environment in Higher Education for LGBTQ Students and Studies* examines a university's successful attempt at improving the climate and experiences of queer and trans students (Golom, 2015). The chapter gives a summary of "how change occurs in organizational settings, a clear example of the change process as it applies to LGBT issues in higher education." Additionally, the authors provide recommendations to replicate this change on other campuses (Golom, 2015, p. 125). Strategically planning a systematic change requires a thorough understanding of how change works as an organization and how to catalyze progress, which is essential to my overall thesis that seeks to craft an organizational approach to equity for queer and trans students. Planning this change requires leaders to recognize the following factors about change: "change is systematic, change is both revolutionary and evolutionary, and change is both transformational and transactional, and change is quantifiable" (Golom, 2015, p. 111-114). The author, Frank Golom, outlines the following recommendations for impacting university change for queer and trans issues:

1. "Manipulate the context by creating a strong sense of urgency" (p. 119)
2. "Harness and channel momentum by developing a compelling vision for the change effort that sticks" (p. 120)
3. "Involve the right people to communicate and reinforce the vision" (p. 120)
4. "Align day-to-day organizational life with the new vision (and stop behavior that interferes with that alignment" (p.121)
5. "Independently sustain and institutionalize the vision" (p. 121)
6. "Orchestrate, reward, and celebrate small successes" (p. 123)

7. "Evaluate, titrate, and recalibrate the change efforts" (p. 123)

Case et. al. (2012), Higher Education Trans Anti-Discrimination Policies and Activism. The article explores how policy changes as well as activism to change policies that gain protections for transgender students, faculty, and staff in higher education are met with challenges from the power and privilege of gender conformity. Using a case study, the authors research how faculty-student partnerships in activism can work as a team to include gender identity and expression in the university nondiscrimination policies (Case, et al., 2012). The research was a participatory action research project using critical liberatory feminist pedagogy to analyze the psychological, social, and institutional processes influencing the nondiscrimination policies (Case, et al., 2012). The authors also explore how student leadership for change and faculty pedagogy can activate student-initiated activism beyond the academy.

Insights from the study showed that student and faculty change agents experienced obstacles from the prevalence of privilege and power dynamics in the university change process and developed methods to challenge this process. A notable finding was that any efforts to reduce discrimination or rejection were contextualized to first increase efforts in educating the oppressor and that changing discrimination policies requires a cultural shift to accompany any policy change (Case, et al., 2012). This article will be helpful in forming my intervention as I look to foster new pedagogy and practices in higher education that benefit queer and trans students. Affirming that policy change requires cultural change renews the value of education that must be placed in my intervention. Policy, practice, and education are major components in my intervention with this article proving how inextricably linked the three components are to the university's impact on queer and trans students.

Law and Policies

The 21st century bears witness to a number of successes for queer and trans rights. The Defense of Marriage Act was repealed from law under the Obama administration in 2013, allowing same-sex marriages to be recognized on the federal and state level throughout the United States. Public universities in the most recent decade have expanded their protections and acts of inclusion for queer and trans students to prevent the instances previously mentioned. Events and legislation in the university and greater society have inspired an expansion of supporting queer and trans students.

Currently, there is no peer-reviewed research that documents the formation of student services or departments for queer and trans students in universities. The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education's (2019) (CAS) contextual background for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer+ programs and services credit the creation of student groups and campus departments for queer and trans students to the student movements that originated from the 1960s that were previously discussed. Many universities across the nation continue to cultivate their services for queer and trans students in the quest to further diversity and inclusion. As of 2018, over 200 colleges and universities have offices or services dedicated to LGBTQ+ students, faculty, and staff (Consortium, 2018). However, there are still inequalities that permeate from the society into the university for transgender students.

Protections from discrimination in federal and state legislation is still scarce and narrow with some protections for queer and trans people based off of interpretation of current laws. An example of this in recent history takes place in North Carolina in 2016 when legislators "passed a law that required people to use bathrooms that aligned with their birth-assigned gender" (Wheatle & Commodore, 2019). This law is reminiscent of previously mentioned laws that were

in place during the time of the Stonewall Riots, which policed "gender-appropriate" clothing. Today's modern policing of gender-variant people comes in the form of policing the bathroom of their choice. This North Carolina policy was a conflicting policy for institutions of higher education that aim to welcome transgender students as demonstrated by the North Carolina state system of higher education expressed being "caught in the middle of an unenforceable law" (Wheatle & Commodore, 2019). In addition to protests from higher education professionals, the National Collegiate Athletic Association rejected holding tournaments in North Carolina while the bathroom policy was active, and this position proved to be integral to overturning the law in 2017. North Carolina's state government and universities viewed the NCAA's position as a major loss in revenue and activated the overturning of the law.

The incident in North Carolina's bathroom policy shows that governments and universities "often find themselves responding retroactively instead of proactively" for queer and trans students (Wheatle & Commodore, 2019). The passing of North Carolina's bathroom policy shows that transgender citizens are not protected adequately and often targeted through a number of avenues. This particular incident demonstrates how queer and trans students must continually be mindful of the location and local culture of the university they choose to attend as there are consistent inconsistencies for protections of queer and trans people from state-to-state. The work is not over for equality and equity among queer and trans people in the university and society. The 2019 United States Supreme Court docket contains three cases that will determine whether employers can legally fire employees based on their sexual orientation and/or gender identity (Chappell, 2019). The three cases are:

1. Gerald Lynn Bostock v. Clayton County, Georgia,
2. Altitude Express, Inc. v. Zarda,

3. R.G. and G.R. Harris Funeral Homes v. Equal Employment Opportunity

Commission.

The decisions from the three cases will heavily impact the employment practices and protections on the federal level and consequently impact queer and trans students as they gain employment within and beyond the university. News headlines continue to show the death of transgender women of color and other queer-identifying people as they face systemic violence. Since the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States, the queer and trans community has been hit by the several attacks on their rights throughout 2019. The administration as revoked an Obama-era rule that permitted transgender students to use the bathroom of their choice or become involved in athletic teams that align with their gender identity (Fadulu, 2019). The Department of Defense has prohibited and placed restriction on transitioning their gender while serving and calls for an overall ban on transgender troops (Fadulu, 2019). Additionally, there has been a rollback on protections for transgender people in prison and lessened protections for homeless transgender people seeking aid from homeless shelter (Fadulu, 2019).

Most recently, the Trump administration has continued their attempts to rescind healthcare discrimination protections for queer and trans people in 2020 (Diamond, 2020). An Obama-era policy protected queer and trans people from being discriminated by healthcare providers withholding their services based on someone's sexual or gender identity (Diamond, 2020). This is especially abhorrent of a presidential administration to prioritize stripping healthcare protection while we are in the middle of a global pandemic. The actions of the Trump administration continue to demonstrate the amount of work still needed to liberate queer and trans people in a country that continually demonizes them and strips them of human rights. It is

the hope of all queer and trans people that we will live in a time period that makes history by providing an environment that fosters equity for all.

Unique and Relevant Factors: Dynamics of Power

Queer and trans people are often in a struggle of maintaining power within the macrosystem of society; therefore, this struggle of power is recreated in the microcosm of universities as queer and trans students face structures that do not aim to liberate their potential. The public university, as an extension of the government, is an institution that produces expectations of conduct that aren't inherently compatible with the lives that queer and trans students live. However, higher education has become a place where queer and trans students can typically find a more comforting environment to explore their identities without the influence of power that stems from their families, old peers, and local community. Queer and trans students typically conduct themselves in a manner that defies hegemonic norms and can be interpreted by those in power as Foucault's (2014) definition of mis-conduct, "not conducting one's self properly" (p. 201). Being queer or trans in society is viewed as mis-conduct and evolves into counter-conduct when a person openly claims their queer and trans conduct exudes from a sense of pride and struggle against the system that seeks to suppress their conduct (Foucault, 2014). The university is a complex network of power relations within itself that reproduces parts of our larger society's notions of conduct while also serving as a breeding ground for the counter-conduct.

Foucault's (2014) definition of counter-conduct is "the sense of struggle against the process implemented for conducting others" (p. 201). Counter-conduct is continually produced on university campuses by queer and trans advocacy and activism. Attempts at allyship from the university can be seen from queer and trans serving student centers, furthering diversity

initiatives, and inclusion of queer and trans students, but not implementing equity, in policy and procedures. The counter-conduct of queer and trans people through activism and advocacy in the university is almost always occurring on the "borders and edges of the political institution" that is higher education (Foucault, 2014, p. 198). This can be shown by how queer and trans student centers are typically stationed as a small department in student affairs divisions that are prompted to fulfill a loaded purpose of serving their marginalized queer and trans student populations whilst educating the majority on queer and trans issues. A queer and trans student center can often be mandated to maintain the conflicts of conduct on the borders and edges of the university where all issues of queer and trans students that conflict with those in power can be directed to. The lack of chosen name policies in the U.S. university is a common issue for the trans student that mirrors the difficulties of a legal name change that occurs for trans people in society.

Universities often treat chosen name policy creation and implementation as an issue on the edges of the university that only effects a minor portion of the student population. In reality, this issue impacts the trans student experience and limits the student's potential in the university as a lack of a chosen name policy effects how students are interpellated into the perceptions of their faculty, peers, and staff members. An interpellation is described as "small moments with big meanings: they are the concrete practical moments whereby social context weaves through consciousness, connecting with and composing individual subjectivity" (Backer, 2018, p. 5). Professors and staff member using a trans student's birth name, also known as a dead name, can potentially out the student as trans to their peers; therefore, opening the students conduct to being increasingly policed by their peers, faculty, and staff members. In many fashions, trans students must educate and correct those around them often "by violating it [conduct], systematically breaking the law, and in effect overthrowing the reign of the one who created the world"

(Foucault, 2014, p. 196). Trans students must attempt to use their transness as an act of refusal against the conduct expectations made by their cisgender peers and/or professors when misgendered and use this to counter-interpellate or "insult the insult" (Backer, 2018, p. 9). By correcting them, with their chosen name and pronouns, the trans student invites them into the ideology of gender diversity and erodes the power of their privilege in these negative situations. However, queer and trans students shouldn't inherently have to challenge the power of their faculty and staff – a sign that that system of higher education is not truly equitable in a systematic and organizational fashion.

Much of the work and education that is expected from queer and trans student centers is to serve as an interpellation within itself for the university's community. Queer and trans student centers exist as a small center with big interpellative meaning to the campus as a welcoming space and sanctuary for the queer and trans student population and gives a material manifestation of "social context that weaves through [the university's] consciousness, connecting with and composing individual subjectivity" around queerness and transness (Backer, 2018, p. 5). At the same time, queer and trans student centers are charged with educating the university community about queer and trans issues occurring on the campus and throughout society by their university, mostly student affairs, administration. The education that comes from queer and trans centers are interpellative practices that use trainings and discussions to recruit students and transform students to recognize their own privilege(s) and advocate for queer and trans ideology that supports the populations (Althusser, 1971).

The charge of educating the university through trainings and programs from a queer and trans student center is producing counter-conduct within the university against the heteronormative and cisgender ideology that is often reproduced by the university itself. The

university often continues to lack proper development of their own faculty, staff, and administration that reproduces unequal power dynamics for queer and trans students to face in their student experiences. Challenging power dynamics in how the university structures itself forger barriers that halt equitable change to occur that favors the experiences of queer and trans populations. Many universities are using queer and trans student centers as an official arm of the university that uses two of Foucault's (2014) five main forms of counter-conduct: nullification and discreditation. Queer and trans student center aim to nullify and discredit the mainstream ideology that surrounds gender identity and sexual identities in homophobia and trans oppressive rhetoric through student affairs function of the university. The aim to nullify and discredit damaging ideology for queer and trans people bleeds into the academic side through Women's and Gender Studies curricula and other programs of education that are inclusive to queer and trans recognition.

Queer and trans inclusion in student affairs and academia complete the "duplicate mirror-structure of ideology" that is discussed in Althusser's (1971) *On Ideology* (p.191). The duplicate mirror-structure ensures that ideology effects individuals through recognition, subjection, and a guarantee (Althusser, 1971). Prospective queer and trans students are interpellated to believe that universities are completely welcoming and inclusive spaces for their identities (although this often is not the reality). Queer and trans student centers are used as a function that stimulates the recognition portion of Althusser's duplicate mirror-structure by having university employees and peers that recognize their queer and/or trans identity as a university student. However, the university also poses a situation where they continually adopt a singular oppression framework (Cohen, 1997) and cause mis-recognition (Althusser, 1971) of queer or trans students by narrowing them into a singular oppression or singular identity. The third portion of the duplicate

mirror-structure is "the absolute guarantee that everything is really so… if the subjection of the subjects to the Subject is well respected, everything will go well for the subjects" (Althusser, 1971, p.191).

This is the one portion that the university will continue to fail in ideology production for queer and trans students as the conflict of ideologies remains in contention with queer and trans lived experiences. As previously mentioned, universities often do not allow for the nuances and multiple factors in queer and trans students' realities. The university is in a consistent relationship of influencing the society and being influenced by the society. Students can be interpellated towards a university for its inclusivity and provide means of recognition for queer and trans students; nonetheless, the university cannot protect queer and trans students from reproduction of dueling ideology that erodes queer and trans students' ideology and experiences. The university should be implored to continue their efforts of being inclusive of queer and trans people and realize that the work will ultimately influence society's main ideologies towards the inclusivity that is needed to provide the "absolute guarantee" for the positive, transformative queer and trans student experience (Althusser, 1971, p. 191).

Impactful Professional Experiences

I have had several impactful experiences as a young professional through my graduate assistantship, internships, professional presentations, advocacy, and professional conferences. In relation to my thesis' concern, the experiences that are most relevant would be my internship with a university queer and trans student center and my participation in the 2020 College Student Educators International Convention as a workshop presenter. My internship with a queer and trans student center at a mid-sized, public, liberal arts university afforded me a double-edged opportunity of advocating for queer and trans students by serving as an educator while also

helping propel me on my own self-discovery in my gender identity. Participating in an internship that directly supported queer and trans students confirmed my trajectory of maintaining myself as a queer and trans advocate, regardless of my job title, throughout my career. A common philosophy among this department was to prioritize educating and supporting queer and trans students first and educate the university majority secondarily. Working as an intern under this philosophy has impacted how I have structured my intervention to prioritizing developing an equitable university for queer and trans students as a system and by developing the largest stakeholders in the student experience – university administration, faculty, and staff.

My personal and professional development excelled recently when I attended my first ACPA convention. ACPA provided a space where I felt recognized and represented in ways that I have never felt before as a queer and non-binary person. I felt affirmed in my gender and held minimal worry that I would be targeted for my feminine-leaning, yet androgynous appearance in a professional setting. The work that I was doing with my co-presenter in our session was valued and praised on levels that can typically be tempered by the politics surrounding university campuses. Presenting, "Disrupting the Cis-tem: Embracing Gender Diversity in Spaces Built for Womxn," opened avenues to expand my network and my own knowledge about queer and trans issues through the knowledge and testimony provided by other queer and trans professionals. This experience was incredibly impactful by re-invigorating the drive that focusing on queer and trans issues in higher education is the correct path for my career trajectory and goals for future academic or social research.

Chapter 4

Introduction

The previous chapter demonstrated how trans and queer students face a disproportionate amount of discrimination, harassment, and overall discomfort on university campuses across the United States. The conclusions from the *2010 State of Higher Education for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People* showed that LGBTQ students, staff, faculty, and administrators remain at a significantly higher risk, compared with the study's control group of heterosexual and gender normative counterparts, for harassment at US colleges and universities (Blumenfield, 2014). Universities hold an obligation to address issues faced by queer and trans students through systematic solutions to foster student success, retention, and maximize the human potential of queer and trans students. The University places queer and trans students at an inequitable stance and hinders their educational experiences within and beyond graduation when issues that are faced by these students are lackadaisically remedied.

As demonstrated in the previous chapter I believe equity is best brought forth through education, advocacy, and action, therefore, my intervention takes a systems-based approach to facilitate education, advocacy, action from administration, faculty, and staff, the positions that have power and influence in cultivating the student experience. The overall goal of the intervention is to implement a systematic and organizational approach to equity for queer and trans students that is rooted in the development of administration, faculty, and staff as advocates for queer and trans students, across the silos of the university. The *Queering the University (QTU): Strategic Imperative* intervention will primarily root itself in the Queer and Trans Advocacy Board with three main projects to implement:

1. Queering the University Digital Storytelling

2. Queer and Trans Advocacy Onboarding Training

3. Inclusive Language Audit

Purpose

Overall Intervention Goals

1. To improve the student experience of queer and trans students on a college campus

2. To limit and/or eliminate the negative impacts from traditional higher education practices and pedagogy have on queer and trans students

3. Create a campus culture of advocacy and support for queer and trans university citizens

Queer and Trans Advocacy Board Objectives

1. Collaborate with university offices, departments, and programs to meet the needs of the queer and trans student populations

2. Conduct a self-assessment of the university using CampusPride© Index on a bi-yearly basis

3. Advocate for and maintain a listing on the CampusPride© Index National Listing of LGBTQ-Friendly Colleges and Universities

4. Review, evaluate, and enact change on University policies, procedures, programs, and services impacting queer and trans students in accordance to the CampusPride© Index

5. Conduct the bi-yearly Inclusive Language Audit

6. Aid, finalize, and distribute the Queering the University Digital Storytelling Project on a bi-yearly basis

7. Plan and execute at least one service project benefiting queer and trans students each semester

8. Plan and execute a yearly outreach project highlighting a queer and trans concern that extends beyond the university through community service or fundraising

9. Plan, market, and facilitate queer and trans advocacy trainings and professional development of faculty, staff, and administration

10. Ensure queer and trans representation is encouraged and maintained throughout the university's academic and co-curricular curriculum

Queering the University Storytelling Project Objectives

1. Provide students with an opportunity to critically engage and connect how being queer and/or trans impacts their student experience.

2. Establish a digital narrative of queer and trans student experiences for the University to act as a recruitment tool for transformative action.

Queer and Trans Advocacy Onboarding Training Learning Outcomes

1. Attendees of the Queer and Trans Advocacy Onboarding Training will be able to differentiate between allyship and advocacy for queer and trans students.

2. Attendees of the Queer and Trans Advocacy Onboarding Training will be able to understand the nuances and importance language for the queer and trans community.

3. Attendees of the Queer and Trans Advocacy Onboarding Training will be able to apply at least two strategies as a queer and trans advocate.

Inclusive Language Audit Objectives

1. Examine university policies and practices that limit equity and opportunities for queer and trans students

2. Audit university forms to eliminate genderism and inequities for queer and trans students

3. Enact change to policies, practices, forms, and university documents that contain exclusive language towards queer and trans students

Theoretical Frameworks

Adaptive Model of Strategy in Higher Education

Any intervention for queer and trans students must be adaptable and prepared to change their approach to reflect the external nuances that impact queer and trans individuals socially and culturally as a system. Systems theory is a "broad conceptual framework that permits the identification of key, inputs, outputs, and transformative processes in organizations such as colleges and universities at both the institutional and individual levels" (Bess & Dee, 2007, p. 726). Systems theory provides the framework that models of strategy for the Adaptive Model of Strategy explored in *Understanding College and University Organization: Theories for Effective Policy and Practice; Volume II: Dynamics of the System*. This model views institutions as "living organisms capable of making multiple, simultaneous adjustments in processes, practices, and policies" (Bess & Dee, 2012, p. 726). The adaptive model holds the university to consistently assess their external environment and internal conditions for the proposed intervention to thrive (Bess, & Dee, 2012). The proposed board structure would be continually engaged in activating change; therefore, making the "organization more agile – better able to shift processes and practices to capitalize on changes in the external environment" (Bess & Dee, 2012, p. 726).

Transformative Learning

An adult learning theory commonly used in higher education is transformational learning theory – popularized by Jack Mezirow in the 1990s. In *Transformative Learning as Discourse*, transformative learning is defined by as: "learning that transforms problematic frames of

references – sets of fixed assumptions and expectations (habits of mind, meaning, perspectives, mindsets) – to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change" (Mezirow, 2003, p. 58). Transformative learning is a key theory to support the intervention that will be proposed as the intervention aims to gain a university community understanding of queer and trans identities within the student population. There is a critical lack of understanding from faculty and staff on the nuance of queer and trans identities. In transformative learning, that the role of the educator is "both as a facilitator of reasoning in a learning situation and a cultural activist fostering the social, economic, and political condition required for fuller, freer participation in critical reflection and discourse by all adults in a democratic society" (Mezirow, 2003, p. 63). Professional development opportunities pursued in this intervention will use pedagogy that fosters skill-building, increased sensitivity, and further insight into the queer and trans community for an equitable, inclusive campus through dialogue and reflection. A primary goal of the intervention is to develop a communicative learning environment; therefore, an environment where university members will understand what queer and trans students are communicating as needs through learning based in critical reflection and critical self-reflection (Mezirow, 2003). The digital storytelling project also provides an avenue for students to critically engage with how their queer and trans identities impact their student experience on university campuses. Mezirow's tenants of transformative learning sync well with my philosophical positionality discussed in Chapter 3 for Paolo Friere's position on democratic learning and critical reflection through dialogue.

Program Proposal

Queer and Trans Advocacy Board

The Queer and Trans Advocacy Board would be the representative body and change agents of the *Queering the University Strategic Imperative*. The three other components of my proposed intervention would all stem as suggested interventions enacted by the Advocacy Board as a governing body that would report directly to the office of the president (or highest ranking office in the university). The Advocacy Board would report directly to the president to ensure effectiveness in their work as a means to diffuse power relations that can halt transformative change within the university. Strategically placing the Advocacy Board as a body that reports directly to a central source of power in the university can hold the potential to prioritize and expedite solutions that queer and trans students continue to face in their university experiences. The mission and purpose of the Advocacy Board is featured in Appendix A.

The Advocacy Board will be responsible for assessing, strategizing, and implementing solutions from queer and trans student needs. Needs assessments and research on the external conditions for queer and trans citizens must be accounted for to appropriately strategize and implement solutions. The Advocacy Board will conduct and partake in service projects that benefits the queer and trans students within their university and service projects that benefit queer and trans people in the university's local or national communities. The Advocacy Board will also be responsible for implementing the other three proposed interventions as a governing body. All the unique objectives of the Queer and Trans Advocacy Board can be found in Appendix A. ask forces and/or ad hoc committees may be formed to complete the proposed projects. Task forces and/or adhoc committees should not be limited to the Advocacy Board

makeup and extend outwards to the university community to gain increased involvement in university-based advocacy for queer and trans students.

A self-assessment tool to be used by the Advocacy Board would be the CampusPride© Index self-assessment. CampusPride is a national non-profit organization that works primarily with student leaders and campus groups to create safe and friendlier university environments for queer and trans people. The CampusPride© Index is the leading national queer and trans benchmarking tool for assessing and setting a standard for queer and trans friendly policies, programs, and practices. The Advocacy Board Makeup is shown in Table 1. The Advocacy Board makeup and solutions will be influenced by the eight factors set by the CampusPride© Index to ensure a "more inclusive, welcoming and respectful" queer and trans friendly campus. The eight factors will designate the primary role that Advocacy Board members will contribute to fostering a more equitable campus for queer and trans students. For example, an undergraduate student Advocacy Board representative would have a role to provide input on all eight factors; whereas, housing and residence life staff's primary role as an Advocacy Board member would be in fostering queer and trans friendly campus housing. The eight factors are as follows:

1. Policy Inclusion

2. Support & Institutional Commitment

3. Academic Life

4. Student Life

5. Housing

6. Campus Safety

7. Counseling & Health

8. Recruitment & Retention Efforts.

Advocacy Board Makeup

Table 3: Advocacy Board Makeup

Representing Body	*Frequency*	*Primary Role*
Undergraduate Students	3	• To represent the queer and trans student experience(s) and needs on an undergraduate level • Factors 1-8
Graduate Students	3	• To represent the queer and trans student experience(s) and needs on a graduate level – both master's level and doctorate level students • Factors 1-8
Faculty	3	• To represent the experience and needs of the University faculty and provide insight on recruitment of faculty in enacting change for queer and trans students • Factors 2, 3, and 8
Office of the President	1	• To represent and ensure a collaborative, responsive relationship with the Office of the President that maintains advocacy for queer and trans students • Factors 1-8
Queer and Trans Student Center/Support Services	1	• To represent and strengthen the relationship between the Advocacy Board and the department to ensure equitable conditions for queer and trans students • Factors 1-8
Student Affairs Administration	1	• To provide insight for supporting queer and trans students through student affairs policy, procedures, and practices • Factors 1-8

Academic Deans and/or Academic Affairs Administration	1	• To provide insight for supporting queer and trans students through academic affairs policy, procedures, and practices • Factors 1, 2, 3
Office of Student Conduct	1	• To represent and provide input on maintaining inclusive policy and ensure campus safety for queer and trans students • Factors 1, 2, 4, 7
New Student Programs	1	• To represent and instill institutional support for queer and trans students as they transition into the university through new student programs • Factors 2, 4, 8
Office of Admissions	1	• To ensure recruitment and institutional support of queer and trans students as prospective students • Factors 1, 2, 8
Housing and Residential Life	1	• To ensure equitable housing policy and practices for queer and trans students that provides a safe, comfortable environment to express and nurture their identities • Factors 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8
Campus Public Safety	1	• To ensure a safe campus for queer and trans students to express and nurture their identities through equitable policies and practices • Factors 1, 2, 4, 6
Counseling Center and/or Wellness Promotion	1	• To ensure inclusion and representation of queer and trans identities in counseling and wellness practices and/or programs • Factors 1, 2, 6, 7

Registrar	1	- To ensure inclusive language and sensitivity to queer and trans student needs in university documents and/or forms (particularly for chosen names) - Factors 1, 2, 8
Total Number of Representatives	20	Although this board is large, the representatives and frequency of each representing body aligns with the factors set by the CampusPride Index and helps buttress through the silos in many universities' organizational structures.

Queering the University Digital Storytelling Project

From my perspective, a widely known fact throughout the queer and trans community is being misrepresented or ignored when attempting to address concerns that stem from these marginalized identities that consequently leads to underestimated reporting for student concerns, issues, or unjust circumstances. Queer and trans people do not often have the opportunity to share their experiences in communities that are not catered towards their lives – including the university. Generally, digital storytelling is any combination of digital media (e.g. images, audio, video) and presenting information on a topic and/or story (Robin, 2006). A digital storytelling program for queer and trans students could provide an avenue for students to critically engage in sharing and advocating for issues that impact them on their campus. Johnson and Rosario-Ramos (2012) argue that "educational institutions can serve as production spaces for counter-narratives about communities, pedagogy, and student experiences" (p.51). Digital storytelling provides a medium for students to have their lived experiences acknowledged and used to further transformative change as FPAR strives to achieve. Portraying the lived realities of queer and trans students deconstructs negative narratives of these communities and contributes to a

university's efforts towards equity and social justice in transformative education and/or action(s) (Johnson & Rosario-Ramos, 2012).

Queering The University Digital Storytelling, could take place singularly or as a combination of the following methods, depending on the university's structure and ability:

1. as a part of a class rooted in the study of queer theory and/or gender studies with the facilitation of a faculty member,

2. as an annual project facilitated by a queer and trans student center, preferably with student leaders or student employees leading the project, or,

3. as an annual project facilitated by a diversity, equity, and/or inclusion department, preferably with student leaders or student employees leading the project.

The digital storytelling project should serve an avenue to construct narratives from queer and trans students that provides a recruitment piece for university members to become active in the overall intervention and also challenge narratives that seek to minimize the challenges queer and trans students face. Questions or prompts for queer and trans students would differ for each university or method chosen to facilitate the project as each university's story for queer and trans communities will differ.

Queer and Trans Advocacy Onboarding Training

Two of the most critical university groups that are committed to student success in higher education are faculty and staff members that continue to hold daily interactions and assist students throughout their collegiate journeys. However, faculty and staff are not often prepared for the nuance and inclusivity needed to help queer and trans students excel. A study conducted by Garvey and Renkin (2015) on queer and trans student classroom experiences in higher education demonstrated that students who were more open about their queer and trans identities

generally had a "less accepting classroom climate." Although there is a currently a lack of research on co-curricular engagement that recognizes trans students, one can surmise that students who are more open about their queer and trans student experiences in co-curricular spaces can also face an unaccepting climate. A proposed solution for mitigating a less inclusive climate for students would be to create, maintain, and require professional development on queer and trans student populations for university faculty and staff.

An aspect of the Advocacy Board would be developing and facilitating a staff and faculty training on queer and trans student populations that would be required for onboarding of new staff and faculty members. The onboarding training would provide faculty and staff with basic knowledge of queer and trans people, inclusive language for queer and trans people, the importance of pronouns, and provide tools for serving as advocate for queer and trans students. The lesson plan for onboarding can be reviewed in Appendix B. CampusPride© and Trans Educational Student Resources (TSER) have incredibly informational websites and resources to help develop and compliment any training or workshops facilitated on queer and trans students. Tenants of transformative learning will be incorporated into this onboarding training through the use of activities and discussions that center critical dialogue and reflection (Mezirow, 2003). The proposed one-day training can also be split into separate workshops and/or webinars as I recognize the difficulty of gaining a mandatory status for an onboarding training for new faculty and staff members in the face of union negotiations and other political barriers. Cultivating skills for working with queer and trans students can exceed beyond an onboarding by fostering new development opportunities through student-led trainings, opportunities from professional higher education associations, guest speakers or trainers, and other avenues.

Inclusive Language Audit

The importance of language and the queer and trans community have always held a complex relationship as terminology and ways of knowing continue to evolve for queer and trans people. Language holds power and influences the university experience in countless methods – particularly through institutional policy and procedures. Non-discrimination statements in many universities and colleges do not include protections for transgender or gender expansive individuals. Discussion from *Transgender Inclusion in University Nondiscrimination Statements: Challenging Gender-Conforming Privilege through Student Activism* demonstrates "adopting transgender inclusive language in nondiscrimination statements for colleges and universities should not be mistaken as a brief process" (Case et al., 2012, p.160). The authors of the article state that adopting inclusive language for transgender students requires a major cultural shift and coalition building across the typical barriers of power and privilege in university structures (Case et al., 2012). Although the university cannot influence all language impacting queer and trans students, the university can prioritize maintaining inclusive language throughout all university policies and procedures, forms, marketing, publications, program materials, assessment instruments, co-curricular engagement platforms, and digital learning platforms. The Queer and Trans Advocacy Board would help buttress traditional barriers in power and privilege to instill inclusive language through the support of the university president and the proposed inclusive language audit.

The Queer and Trans Advocacy Board would conduct an inclusive language audit on university documents on a bi-yearly basis. With a mid-sized public university in mind, this audit would be best performed by a task force assembled by the Queer and Trans Advocacy Board. The process would enable task force members to review and make recommendations to

university documents on the inclusivity of their language from the standards set in Appendix C: Inclusive Language Audit Rubric. The audit process would start from the macro level of higher education, the administrative, and trickle down to the micro level, depending on the university's needs. If a university does not hold protections for queer and trans students in their non-discrimination statements and/or policies, the first task of the Inclusive Language Audit should be to prioritize and add protections for queer and trans populations on their campuses. University policy and procedures for protections from discrimination hold tremendous power by setting a standard for the university community to abide by and establishes channels for cases of discrimination to be investigated and rectified.

The Inclusive Language Audit Form would differ for the type of documents being reviewed and the level of the university that the document being reviewed would be targeting. For example, reviewing a university non-discrimination statement for inclusive language would drastically differ from reviewing a university's form to apply for on-campus housing. Although adopting more inclusive language can seem like a minor act of advocacy for queer and trans students, the language used in university documents perpetuates into a larger culture. By making positive changes for more inclusive language, this intervention can begin the process of transforming campus climate and culture for queer and trans equity.

Implementation

Resources Needed

The *Queering the University Strategic Imperative* is primarily a structural intervention; therefore, the intervention as currently proposed would not require a large budget and would rely on the resources in play in the university. Funding needed for the intervention's success could possibly be allocated from a number of different sources, including the office of the president,

student affairs funding, diversity, equity, and inclusion funding, or a fusion of the aforementioned sources. Recognizing that no labor should be free, a stipend or professional development funds for key leaders, particularly Queer and Trans Advocacy Board members, in the *Queering the University Strategic Imperative* must be allocated. Small recurring expenses that must be addressed when implementing this intervention would be printing and marketing, refreshments for events and trainings, exterior professional development, and guest speakers or trainers. Additional resources may need to be established as this intervention continues to gain momentum at a university. A notable resource that would become necessary when the intervention grows larger in impact would be personnel. If this intervention grows beyond the capacities of the Queer and Trans Advocacy Board, I would hiring a professional staff member(s) and graduate assistant(s) to help establish pointpersons and more detailed oversight of the intervention's multiple components.

Recruitment

Recruitment can occur from various methods though the recruitment process for any aspect of this intervention should be collaborative and democratic with a prioritization in recruiting members that hold queer or trans identities and hold various backgrounds and perspectives. Recruitment for the Queer and Trans Advocacy Board will likely be a collaborative process between the Office of the President, student affairs administration, and educators from the university's queer and trans student support unit and student organization(s) to invite potential board members. Recruitment for the digital storytelling component of the intervention will differ between the three aforementioned methods of conducting this intervention component. The digital storytelling component of the intervention provides an easily used marketing tool to garner investment and recruit involvement from faculty, staff, and administration. The stories

and testimony from both positive and negative student experiences of queer and trans students can help convey the impact faculty, staff, and administration have on their experiences. Stories provide a recruitment tool that uses empathy and real-life situations to connect the personal lives of students to the political aspects of transforming a university to an equitable campus.

Timeline

The timeline of the *Queering the University Strategic Imperative* will continually adapt to the needs of a university, the sociocultural climate of the university's local community, and from various challenges that can be faced by pursuing this intervention. A large factor that will impact the timeline of this intervention is the size of the university that the intervention will be implemented in. Smaller sized universities or colleges could successfully implement all components of this intervention within two years whereas a large university could take four or more years to fully implement all components of this intervention. However, this intervention was not crafted to "end" – this is an intervention that should demonstrate a continual presence and impact the university. Chapter 5 will explore how this intervention should have a cyclical use of assessment and evaluation to improve and modify their objectives annually.

When implementing this intervention, the Queer and Trans Advocacy Board should be formed first and allow at least one semester to organize their strategy and perform assessment of their campus climate before implementing the other components of the intervention. Summer sessions should be used as opportune time to plan the strategy of the intervention as this will be a time-consuming process to craft a systematic and organization approach for any institution. After the Advocacy Board has crafted their strategy, the onboarding training should be crafted and facilitated for the next onboarding of faculty and staff. The various components of this intervention have the potential to be implemented simultaneously; therefore, the digital

storytelling project can occur in conjunction with launching the onboarding training or be implemented after. The inclusive language audit will be labor-intensive and hold challenges when giving recommendations towards university documents throughout different units within the university. To this point, the inclusive language audit should plan to be implemented after the Queer and Trans Advocacy Board has built an established presence within a university to help prevent challenges and allow time for the Advocacy Board to strategize the facilitation of the audit.

Potential Challenges

No intervention can be crafted to instantly situate in any university as there are almost endless factors to consider when crafting and implementing a structural intervention. The proposed intervention was created with a public, mid-sized university in mind. A challenge for implementing this intervention could be implementing the proposed structure with a small-sized university and/or a private university, particularly a university with a strong religious association and conservative positionality. This intervention was also created with the assumption that a queer and trans student center or support services was already active and established a clear role on campus for supporting queer and trans students. Universities without a queer and trans student support department would be at a disadvantage when implementing the proposed intervention. Another challenge that could be confronted is a lack of urgency around queer and trans issues that can stem from an unsupportive environment. A lack of urgency can display itself in a myriad of ways; however, from my experiences, the lack of urgency usually displays itself through a call for political neutrality as a public university or immediate action to issues will be stalled for group consensus. Frank Golom (2015) states that "organizations often do not change unless the challenges presented by their current state of affairs becomes greater than the fear and other

restrictive emotions that follow any proposed change effort" (p. 119). State and federal government law and policy also play an impact on the lack of urgency for queer and trans issues due to many policies having no mention of queer and trans people or laws that actively discriminate against queer and trans people. Renn (2017) urges higher education leaders to not wait for government mandates to create inclusive policy and practices that include protections for sexual orientation and gender identity. Leaders involved with the proposed intervention have to confront this challenge by creating a strong sense of urgency for queer and trans issues. Creating this sense of urgency creates a call-to-action that if properly executed build momentum for the change efforts in this intervention (Gollom, 2015).

Recognizing the unique power dynamics of universities, challenges may arise where higher education leaders must combat against groups to fulfill the goals of this intervention. There is a congregation of power in faculty and/or staff unions; therefore, challenges may arise for institutionalizing a mandatory onboarding training for faculty and staff. Leaders should build partnerships with key stakeholders in faculty or staff unions to demonstrate the importance and value of an onboarding training to the student experience and overall development of the faculty and staff. With the Queer and Trans Advocacy Board as a recommending body in a university, there will likely be resistance to changes put in motion by the Advocacy Board - particularly for the Inclusive Language Audit. Leaders must continually articulate the mission of the intervention and serve as educators on the justification of recommended changes. Chapter 5 will explore a leadership model that can help those who wish to actualize this intervention foster a leadership style that utilizes principles of queer activism and a disruption of power dynamics in the university as an organization that can assist in overcoming potential challenges

Chapter 5

Higher Education, Student Affairs, and Leadership

Students typically come to universities in droves for the advantages that the academy can give them through traditional classes to attain a degree. However, institutions of higher education are often expected to develop the leadership skills of their students inside and outside of the classroom. From my experience, Principles of leadership and leadership development theories have become a staple in the field of student affairs to catalyze students' leadership development through co-curricular engagement. Although the work of student affairs is often diminished, student affairs educators continue to produce programs grounded by student and/or leadership development theory and legitimize the outcomes of co-curricular experiences through assessment and evaluation of learning. Effective leadership in higher education and student affairs (HESA) is social justice oriented and consistently aligns with tenants of critical action research and transformative education (Rodricks & McCoy, 2015). In my opinion, effective leadership in HESA works to foster student affairs as critical pedagogy (as previously mentioned in Chapter Three) and works by the tenants of servant leadership.

The effective leader in student affairs would instill a leadership style that actively identifies them as an educator. The generalized titles used to reference people who work in the discipline of student affairs are often 'professional' or 'practitioner'; however, I would make a plea that we do not diminish our role in the academy with generalized title. Student affairs leaders must continually claim the title of educator to recognize the growth of the discipline of student affairs and our continued educational impact on students alongside the academy in American colleges and universities.

Effective leadership in higher education would position student affairs and academic educators as servant leaders with a critical lens and liberatory framework influencing their choices and attitude towards their role as a leader. Leaders in HESA hold the opportunity to make servant leadership transformative by embracing a servant leader's mission to lead by cultivating the development of students and on their own development as servant leaders to their students (Rodricks & McCoy, 2015). Recognizing that the arena of higher education can be increasingly political and structured by hierarchical power structures, HESA leaders must take the time to become versed in being congruent with student needs, particularly those that are failed by lack of access and inclusion, and raise the voices of individuals that do not feel served by the university (Rodricks & McCoy, 2015). Diffusing power relations in the university and properly serving students requires developing criticality and sensitivity for how an educator's own sense of leadership style and leadership attributes fuels damaging dynamics that miseducate and negate the human potential of students (Rodricks & McCoy, 2015). Effective leadership can be envisioned as leaders raising their own consciousness on the nuances of race, gender, sexuality, and other cultures. Leaders in higher education should always be in a position of increasing their cultural competence and recognize that cultural competence contain ever-adapting skills that must always be re-learned and re-articulated.

Leaders engaging in criticality and sensitivity through their own personal and professional development hold vulnerability and authenticity for their students and peers in their practice, position themselves to foster empowerment to students and combat hegemony in education (Rodricks & McCoy, 2015). Advocating for increased representation and shared governance can be an example of empowering student narratives in the field. Leaders in higher education, especially those in student affairs, can be inspired by new assumptions on creating

change in systems. According to Allen & Cherry (2003), to become transformative servants for

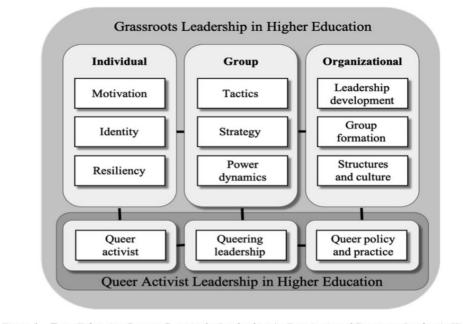students higher education leaders can embrace these concepts:

- "Change occurs from anywhere" – meaning we each hold the power to create

  change from any position or role in the university

- "One person can make a difference" – developing persistence for change forms a

  transformational leader with the ability to sway complex systems

- "Change occurs organically" – any system is capable of serving as a partner in

  change and results from the leadership of educators implementing change at the

  intersection of issues in a system (p. 39).

Overall, ideal leadership in higher education is a combination of the aforementioned

attributes and recognizing that effective leadership impacts one's own behaviors, other people's

behaviors, and relationships. Being a servant leader in higher education holds vast potential in

being transformative by turning the relationship between student and educator into a mutually

beneficial relationship (Rodricks & McCoy, 2015). Tempered critical actions and liberatory

behaviors towards serving students can cultivate leadership that fulfills the goal of transforming

higher education into an opportunity that maintains access and equity for all.

Leadership and Queering the University Strategic Imperative

Leadership will play an integral role in actualizing my proposed intervention as it is a

structural intervention that positions university leaders, particularly faculty and staff, as queer

and trans advocates. Leading this intervention successfully would require participants to take on

fusing activism, advocacy, and their professional obligations in their leadership style and overall

approach. A model of leadership that can effectively be relied on to execute this intervention is

queer activist leadership. Queer activist leadership is a leadership framework adopted from the

grassroots leadership in higher education model that emphasizes leadership categorized as

phenomenon from individuals, groups, and organizations (Kezar & Lester, 2011). The grassroots

leadership model was further developed by Jonathon Pryor (2020) by placing queer perspectives

on the phenomenon that can be seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1. From *Enhancing Campus Capacity for Leadership: An Examination of Grassroots Leaders in Higher Education* (p. 40), by A. J. Kezar and J. Lester, 2011, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. Copyright 2011 by Stanford University Press. Adapted with permission.

Figure 1. From *Queer Activist Leadership for Higher Education: An Exploration of Queer*

Leadership in Higher Education (p. 4), by Jonathon T. Pryor, 2020, *Journal of Diversity in*

Higher Education.

This framework is primarily developed to serve higher education leaders that identify as

queer; however, the principles and skills in this model should be used to guide the leadership

used for my intervention as we continue to position queer experiences and voices to the forefront

of higher education. Serving as a queer activist requires including one's identity and motivations

for queer and trans advocacy into one's leadership and remain authentic to those values with a

sense of resiliency (Pryor, 2020). Queer activists are often met with resistance to their efforts to

catalyze change and must be resilient in balancing the use of activism, which requires additional risks, or employing advocacy to achieve their goal diplomatically (Pryor, 2020). Members of the Queer and Trans Advocacy Board must find their own balance as they seek to operationalize the goals of the intervention when facing resilience and stressing the urgency of queer and trans issues in higher education. Findings from the use of this model determined that "advocacy was a tool that allowed participants to navigate institutional dynamics" and "activism was the tool that allowed queer individuals to remain persistent and find success" (Pryor, 2020, p. 7).

Queering leadership advances the notion of leaders centering their queer identities or identities as a queer advocate to challenge the hegemonic cultures in higher education and dismantle power structures that do not serve equity (Pryor, 2020). Work relating to queer and trans equity is often met with resistance by those in power as being queer and trans is in opposition to a university culture that fosters compulsory heterosexuality and trans oppression through policy, procedures, and practices. An expected barrier through the Inclusive Language Audit is garnering the same support from departments across the silos of the university to adhere to the recommendations for their marketing or documents. As Figure 1 depicts, queering leadership in this model involves queering group leadership through tactics and strategies that effect power dynamics. Queering leadership provides strategies for leaders implementing my intervention to link the institutional strategic plan to queer and trans equity and educating peers or colleagues on queer and trans people on the importance of centering queer and trans students in their practices (Pryor, 2020, p. 8). Queering leadership has the power to transform attitudes and perceptions of queer and trans people in the educational setting and enact change by serving as educators on queer and trans realities for our peers and colleagues.

Combining dimensions of being a queer activist and queering leadership brings us to modifying and implementing queer policy and practices. Figure 1 depicts the importance of leadership development, group formation, and transforming institutional cultures and structures in organizational leadership for queer policy and practices. Grassroots leadership has always emphasized the importance of organizing through groups and pursuing collective action – an important dimension of leadership when you are supporting the objectives of the proposed intervention. Group formation in higher education organizations can present itself through partnerships and collective action with other university departments, university unions, campus partners, and/or student governments. The other aspects of queer activist leadership come together when one implements the organizational changes from holding a queer lens to transforming the university by consistently developing oneself as a leader or activist and impacting the culture and power dynamics of a university. Queer policy and practices will differ for each institution; however, a common theme of equity and empowerment for queer and trans students should be omnipresent through the leadership of this intervention.

Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education and Student Affairs

The political state, from my experiences, continues to demonstrates a continual decline in federal and state funding for American higher education; therefore, universities and colleges attempt to remedy this concern through several unequitable methods that results in lower access for low-income populations through increases in the cost of tuition and/or university fees. I have witnessed, in my experiences, universities facing the possibility of adopting performance-based budgeting, particularly for student affairs departments or student-facing services. My experiences have found external pressures from state governments for public universities to perform better with less resources and increased accountability for the outcomes in learning. Leaders in higher

education continue to face obstacles from key stakeholders who question the validity, contributions of, and budgets allocated to the work of student affairs. The response to concerns of budgeting and validity in the field of higher education and student affairs has triggered a cultural shift towards increased use and proficiency in assessment and evaluation of student learning and student satisfaction. My professional experience as a graduate assistant, working with student affairs senior administration, prompted me to become proficient in assessment and evaluation quickly while revealing the importance of assessment and evaluation at all levels of the university.

Assessment provides university leaders with a scope of what students need and should reveal key information needed to make strategic and equitable decisions for the university community. Evaluation reveals results and gains feedback on experiences, services, and other practices in higher education to guarantee success and continual improvement. These two modes of research can be quantitative and/or qualitative, although I have witnessed a large skew towards quantitative research in the overall assessment and evaluation of student affairs practices and experiences that can contradict the aims of action research or the practice of transformative education. I have observed higher education leaders often prioritizing outcomes of learning that are only beneficial for future employers, making students "marketable" to candidates rather than skills that are beneficial as a common good (e.g. placing impotence on career readiness over the cultivation of identity and citizenship), and prioritizing support for business and STEM curricula over the arts and humanities. The aforementioned priorities in learning outcomes demonstrates a routinely capitalistic outlook on the purpose of higher education; which, leads to positivist assessment and evaluation methods (which are typically quantitative) being viewed as more credible than a constructivist or interpretivist outlook (which favor qualitative methods).

To remedy the previously mentioned outlook on learning in assessment and evaluation, I would suggest educators use the praxis of action research as a guide to fostering outcomes of learning that capture the learning in student affairs that does not directly subscribe to the outputs of capitalism. A quote from *Why Action Research?* (2003) captures the multi-dimensional benefits of using action research in higher education assessment and evaluation:

> …action research moves on to the affirmation that action research is much more able to produce 'valid' results than ordinary or conventional social science. This is because expert research knowledge and local knowledges are combined and because the interpretation of the results and the design of actions based on those results involve those best positioned to understand the processes: the local stakeholders. Further, action research meets criteria of validity testing more effectively than do most other forms of social research. Action research projects test knowledge in action and those who do the testing are the interested parties for whom a base result is a personal problem. Action research meets the test of action, something generally not true of other forms of social research. (Brydon-Miller et al., 2003, p.25)

Student affairs educators are on the correct trajectory to transition towards action research methodology in our practices through the cyclical nature of the assessment cycles many universities employ. Educators using assessment and evaluation already aim to improve their outcomes in benefit of higher education's largest stakeholder--the student. I believe if educators incorporate action research into their praxis, we can maximize the potential of assessment and evaluation in our field to produce social research and action that transforms higher education and by extension, our own society.

Assessment, Evaluation, and Queering the University Strategic Imperative

Assessment and evaluation will be critical to the planning, implementing, and measuring the success of the *Queering the University Strategic Imperative* as self-assessment of the university's climate for queer and trans collegians will be used to inform the intervention's purpose for the differing cultures in each campus through CampusPride© Index's self-assessment tool. The culture of assessment and evaluation and the climate for queer and trans collegians differs between each university and college; therefore, the capabilities and methods to evaluate the success of this intervention and what will be considered success has the potential to greatly contrast between institution. For example, a conservative, small-sized public university located in the southern region of the United States would measure success in methods that would not align or be similar with a large private university located in the west coast of the United States. Various assessment and evaluation methods can be used for planning and measuring the success of the different components of my intervention, including:

- university self-assessments

- learning evaluations for digital storytelling project(s) and training(s)

- campus climate surveys

- focus groups for gaining testimony and gauging campus climate for queer and trans collegians

As previously mentioned in Chapter 4, the CampusPride© Index self-assessment tool for colleges and universities will be used to guide the goals set to be reached for the *Queering the University Strategic Imperative*. The CampusPride© self-assessment tool was chosen because it is an accessible, free tool to gain valuable information on rating and improving campuses in areas that lack support for queer and trans collegians. The self-assessment uses approximately 50

questions, which correspond with the eight factors mentioned in Chapter 3, to generate a confidential report for the university to use for recommendations to improve campus climate (Campus Pride, 2020). The assessment tool is takes into account the size of the university or college when calculating results and holds a solid theoretical foundation that has been tested and developed by notable queer researchers in higher education (Campus Pride, 2020). The self-assessment tool should be used every year to continue guiding the goals and outcomes of the intervention. The CampusPride© self-assessment tool does not account for the perceptions of students and was created to improve the policies, practices, and programs of universities- this tool should be used to guide the overall work of the intervention and not replace assessing and evaluating student perspectives on each campus.

A key component of evaluating success from training experiences is verifying that outcomes of learning are reached with your attendees. Evaluating the learning outcomes set in Chapter 4 for the Queer and Trans Advocacy Onboarding Training is an essential task for any university to ensure their training is successfully facilitated and the content reviewed remains relevant for attendees. An example evaluation for the Queer and Trans Advocacy Onboarding Training can be reviewed in Appendix D. The evaluation questions in Appendix D are based on the learning outcomes and specific content featured in the onboarding training's lesson plan included in Appendix B. Both the learning outcomes and corresponding evaluation questions are framed from Bloom's Taxonomy (Armstrong, 2020) . Educators implementing the onboarding training are strongly advised to create narrative questions to gain increased reflection and develop an improved frame of feedback for improving and measuring the usefulness of the training's facilitation and content.

Campus climate surveys hold tremendous value for assessing and evaluating the overall campus climate for marginalized groups that link to the work of diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives in higher education. Many universities use data from third-party campus climate surveys that take a broad assessment of the university's climate for a number of marginalized groups; however, a majority of universities do not often home in on and assess the climate in great detail for queer and trans people. Either method can provide useful data on perceptions and experience of queer and trans people, perceptions about queer and trans people and their experiences, and the status of academic, living, and work experiences of queer and trans people (Renn, 2010). Assessing campus climate for queer and trans collegians, a group that deserves a positive climate, and the data gathered can be used as support for improving and expanding the work of the intervention(s) (Renn, 2010). Campus-specific and frequently updated campus climate survey instruments are integral to keeping colleges and universities accountable to their goals and will aid in measuring the success of the *Queering the University Strategic Imperative* in improving the overall campus climate (Renn, 2010). Appendix E serves as a detailed outline for creating and implementing a mixed-methods campus climate assessment instrument for a university community. The questions in the instrument are used to assess the aforementioned data aimed to be collected in a campus climate survey and also includes questions that relate to overall and specific goals of the intervention proposed in Chapter 4. Assessment and evaluation of campus climate should occur at least every four years; a bi-yearly basis would be preferable if the university has the resources to maintain this frequency.

In conjunction with the campus climate survey, focus groups can be used to capture elaborate data that cannot Focus groups are a commonly used data collection tool for generating data that cannot be captured objectively by gaining insight on feelings, attitudes, and testimony

through group dialogue (Marrelli, 2008). Focus groups are incredibly useful for collecting data on the organizational change my intervention aims to achieve by by creating a sense of involvement and incentive for participants (Marrelli, 2008). The focus group for the *Queering the University Strategic Imperative* will seek to find data that aids the overall goals of organizational development and aiding in the Advocacy Board's strategic planning. In the spirit of action research, I have developed a focus group primarily created to assess student perceptions; however, I would strongly advise also developing focus groups to ascertain the perceptions of faculty, staff, and administration in the campus climate and the *Queering the University Strategic Imperative*.

The focus group(s) should be performed at least every two years to assess strengths, weaknesses, and articulate an understanding of the student experience and effectiveness of implemented changes from varying perspectives. The focus group should preferably be facilitated by a queer and/or trans identified individual to ensure comfort in providing honest and critical answers from fellow queer and/or trans identifying collegians. The selection process for the focus group should be facilitated by the Queer and Trans Advocacy Board – primarily using marketing to all students and also aiming to include students interacting with the queer and trans student support department as focus group participants. A focus group outline can be found in Appendix F. The focus group outline is primarily positioned for student observations; however, the outline can easily be adapted to facilitate focus groups for faculty, staff, and administration.

Limitations

This intervention has great limitations depending on the culture, size, and institutional type of university that this proposal would be implemented in. Private universities, specifically religiously affiliated universities, would face additional barriers in achieving equity for queer and

trans communities as there are several federal mandates and protections for queer and trans people that aid public universities in the proposed intervention. Given the unevenness in protections for queer and trans people, leaders can serve as the catalyst for making one's campus a protective space. I would encourage any person meeting resistance to implementing this intervention to remain resilient and not be discouraged by local laws or culture that may impede on producing change. Any small changes produced by leaders cause ripples of change and provides more opportunities to foster the equitable campus for queer and trans students envisioned in this proposal.

In future development of this work, I would like to use feminist participatory action research (FPAR) for the guiding framework of this intervention. FPAR accounts for intersectionality to help grapple the nuances that can exist with queer and trans students that operate within various salient social identities in addition to being queer and/or trans. FPAR advocates for open, communicative dialogue that helps identify commonalities in social justice goals through intersectional conceptualization (Reid & Frisby, 2008). The use of participatory research honors the multitude of voices and experiences among the struggles of queer and trans students by connecting "the articulated and contextualized personal with the often hidden or invisible structural and social institutions that define and shape our lives" (Reid & Frisby, 2008, p. 98). I believe that FPAR as a framework is the ideal goal universities should strive to abide by when using this intervention; however, there must be increased involvement of students in the development and evaluation of this intervention and the research that would result from the intervention's impact. This intervention does not hold as much student involvement that I typically strive for when thinking of solutions for higher education issues. However, I strongly believe intervening on the systematic and organizational issues of higher education can greatly

impact the student experience without placing the burden of institutional change on students we serve.

Looking to the Future

Looking forward I would like to further develop myself as a scholar by pursuing more opportunities to pursue research, write articles, and publish in periodicals or journals. Once my professional career is in a stable position I will be attaining a Ph.D or Ed.D. I face the future knowing I will continue to cultivate myself as a scholar-activist and queer educator through a number of avenues. This thesis serves as a call-to-action for myself and all leaders in higher education and student affairs to prioritize fostering equity for all on our campuses as we continue to hold a high impact on our society by propelling the development of college and university students across the nation. Queering the university provides a path for liberation as queering anything means blurring binaries and opening up space for people to express their full humanity and potential without restriction.

We must remain vigilant in establishing a university that values the entire spectrum of identities in the queer and trans community with enriched, equitable policy, practices, pedagogy, and resources. The development of faculty and staff is integral to this vision as they are key stakeholders in effecting the experiences of queer and trans students. Queering the university can lay a foundation for a renewed culture of openness and equity through higher education. Remaining vigilant that queer and trans students have the capability to fully exist and be affirmed for their identities throughout all silos of a university. We must begin a revolution of queer and trans people being valued in higher education by queering the university.

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Appendix A

Queer and Trans Advocacy Board Mission and Purpose

Mission

Uniting University students, faculty, staff, and administration to strategically enact advocacy and support for the University's queer and trans students

Purpose

1. Collaborate with University offices, departments, and programs to meet the needs of the queer and trans student populations

2. Conduct a self-assessment of the university using CampusPride© Index on a bi-yearly basis

3. Advocate for and maintain a listing on the CampusPride© Index National Listing of LGBTQ-Friendly Colleges and Universities

4. Review, evaluate, and enact change on University policies, procedures, programs, and services impacting queer and trans students in accordance to the CampusPride© Index

5. Conduct the bi-yearly Inclusive Language Audit

6. Aid, finalize, and distribute the Queering the University Digital Storytelling Project on a bi-yearly basis

7. Plan and execute at least one service project benefiting queer and trans students each semester

8. Plan and execute a yearly outreach project highlighting a queer and trans concern that extends beyond the University through community service or fundraising

9. Plan, market, and facilitate queer and trans advocacy trainings and professional development of faculty, staff, and administration

10. Ensure queer and trans representation is encouraged and maintained throughout the

University's academic and co-curricular curriculum

Reporting Line

The Queer and Trans Advocacy Board tri-chairs will report directly to the Office of the President

(or highest ranking office in the university).

** Task forces, sub-committees, or adhoc committees will be formed, as needed, that may

contain members outside of the Queer and Trans Advocacy Board

Appendix B

Onboarding Training Lesson Plan

1. Introductions

2. Learning Outcomes

    a. Attendees of the Queer and Trans Advocacy Onboarding Training will be able to differentiate between allyship and advocacy for queer and trans students.

    b. Attendees of the Queer and Trans Advocacy Onboarding Training will be able to understand the nuances and importance language for the queer and trans community.

    c. Attendees of the Queer and Trans Advocacy Onboarding Training will be able to apply at least two strategies as a queer and trans advocate.

3. The Importance of Cultivating an Inclusive and Equitable Campus

    a. This will be a brief overview that cites research on why queer and trans student equity is a concern to be addressed through this training.

4. Review of Basic Terms Activity

    a. This activity will begin the session by reviewing basic identity terms or descriptors in the queer and trans community. This activity will give presenters a chance to gauge the room and evaluate the attendee's familiarity with the queer and trans community. A handout of the terms is recommended for distribution after this activity.

5. Allyship versus Advocacy

      a.   *Reflective Prompt:* What do you find to be the difference between being an ally versus being an advocate? What would it look like to be an advocate for queer and trans students?

      b. This section will demonstrate the differences between allyship and advocacy for queer and trans students. This can be a section to articulate the urgency of advocating for queer and trans students in all spaces of the university and illuminate the impact the attendees hold on educational experiences in their positions.

6. Exploring Sexual and Gender Identities

      a. This section of training will serve as an open forum. The facilitators will field questions from attendees to help faculty and staff understand the nuances of sexual and gender identities in the queer and trans community. Open dialogue about these topics can help cultivate further understanding over lecturing about the nuances of queer and trans identities.

7. Pronouns 101 and Gender Grammar

      a. *Reflective Prompt*: Why is using correct pronouns important for ensuring students' motivation?

      b. This section will review gender pronouns and how to use them appropriately as faculty and staff. This section will also overview outdated language used for the transgender community (e.g. gender reassignment surgey is outdated language and gender affirming surgery is now commonly used).

8. Chosen Name Policy

    a. Overview of the university's chosen name policy and how faculty and/or staff can support this policy through their actions.

9. Queering the University Strategic Imperative

    a. This will be an overview of the Queering the University Strategic Imperative's purpose and objectives. Faculty and staff will be presented with avenues to get involved with the work being done by the Queer and Trans Advocacy Board and other parties.

10. Call To Action

    a. Facilitators will instruct attendees to pair up and quickly discuss two strategies they can implement to serve as advocates for queer and trans students in their roles. Each pair will share one strategy with the larger group.

11. Training Evaluation Form

12. Closing Remarks

    a. Facilitators will share contact information, avenues of involvement, and resources for faculty and staff.

Appendix C

Inclusive Language Audit Rubric

Criteria						Recommendations and Feedback
	1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 agree	4 Strongly disagree	N/A Not Applicable	
The document asks for a chosen name and only asks for a legal name when necessary						
The document is free of gender stereotypes						
The document does not focus on the gender and/or sex binary						
The document uses current language to address minoritized groups						
The document uses they/them/theirs pronouns or gender inclusive alternatives when the person's gender is unknown						
The document uses language that is accessible and understandable to all						
The document provides an accurate portrayal of history that is mindful of all people						
The documents uses person first language						

The document provides an expansive list of gender identities to identify as and includes a write-in option						
The document does not contain "Other" as an option for self-identification						

Appendix D

Queer and Trans Advocacy Onboarding Evaluation

Evaluation Question					
	1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 agree	4 Strongly disagree	N/A Not Applicable
As a result of attending this training, I am able to differentiate between allyship and advocacy for queer and trans students.					
As a result of attending this training, I have gained a greater understanding of the nuances in gender and sexual identities.					
As a result of attending this training, I have gained a greater understanding of the importance of inclusive language as an educator.					
As a result of attending this training, I have gained at least two strategies to serve as a queer and trans advocate.					
As a result of attending this training, I have gained a greater understanding of gender pronouns.					
As a result of attending this training, I have gained increased comfort in using language and pronouns correctly for queer and trans people.					

1. *(Open Response Question)* Please describe the difference between allyship and advocacy for queer and trans students

2. *(Open Response Question)* Please list two strategies you can employ as a queer and trans advocate.

3. (Open Response Question) Please provide feedback and recommendations for future

   trainings. Was there any content or questions that were not answered about queer and

   trans students?

Appendix E

Climate Survey Instrument Outline

The following climate survey instrument outline was developed from the survey instrument featured in "University of North Florida's Campus Climate for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression" (2011). The instrument has been formatted with no specific university name or associations to easily transition to any university's needs. Survey software should be used to implement and collect data for the climate survey with proper protections in place to ensure digital security and privacy. Be sure to include a glossary of terms for the survey questions to help all participants understand the questions. Some survey softwares have the capability to display definitions of words if the user hovers over specific words that could be used. Portions of the survey instrument prompts survey creators to build in skip logic or display logic into the flow of survey questions to achieve increased accuracy in results. Excluding the consent form, no survey question should force a response from participants as forcing responses can halt completion from participants and impede on gaining data. The outline provides three sections of the overall survey: the consent form, demographics, and the questionnaire.

Consent Form

Purpose

To measure the campus climate of (university name) for queer and trans people and inform the policies, practices, and other strategies used to achieve a welcoming, equitable environment for queer and trans collegians

Confidentiality

The information you provide is anonymous. Your responses will only be available to the study team.

Security

Data from this evaluation will be stored on equipment and software programs purchased by the university. Access to individual's responses will be limited to the study team.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation is entirely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating in the study or for withdrawing from the study. Your decision to participate/not participate in the evaluation will not affect your relationship with the university.

Risks

There is always some level of risk when submitting information online. To minimize this risk, please clear your internet history and close your browser after submitting the evaluation. Additionally, participants are asked sensitive questions relating to discrimination, harassment, and/or violence that may illicit negative emotional responses.

Benefits

There are no direct benefits for participants, however, your responses may be used to improve the campus climate for future queer and trans university citizens and visitors.

Study Coordinators

For questions about the study, please contact (name) at (email) and (phone number). For questions about your rights as a study participant, please contact (name) at (email) and (phone number)

- I am at least 18 years old and I agree to participate in this study.

   o Yes *(Use survey skip/display logic to continue to climate survey)*

   o No *(Use survey skip/display logic to exit out of survey)*

Campus Climate Survey Questionnaire

Demographics

1. What is your primary affiliation/status at (university name)?

- First year undergraduate student

- Second year undergraduate student

- Third year undergraduate student

- Fourth year undergraduate student

- Graduate student

- Faculty

- Staff

- Administration

- If your affiliation is not included, please specify. (free response field)

2. In what year did you first arrive at (university name)?

- *Utilize a pull-down menu with options from university's opening to current year.*

3. How do you define or what identities do you use to describe your sexual identity? Please check all that apply.

- Gay

- Lesbian

- Bisexual

- Pansexual

- Asexual

- Queer

- Questioning

- Heterosexual

- Heteroflexible

- If the above options do not resonate, please describe your sexual identity *(free response field)*

4. Do you identify as cisgender?

   - Yes *(Use survey skip/display logic to direct participants to Question 5)*

   - No *(Use survey skip/display logic to direct participants to Question 6)*

5. Please designate your identity as a cisgender person. Check all that apply.

   - Cisgender man

   - Cisgender woman

   - Intersex man or woman

6. How do you identify your gender? Please check all that apply.

   - Transgender man

   - Transgender woman

   - Transmasculine

   - Transfeminine

   - Non-binary

   - Genderqueer

   - Two-Spirit

   - Gender non-conforming

   - Gender-fluid

- Agender

- Bigender

- If the above options do not resonate, please describe your gender identity *(free response field)*

7. What pronouns do you use? Please check all that apply.

    - They/Them/Theirs

    - He/Him/His

    - She/Her/Hers

    - Ze/hir/hirs

    - If your pronouns are not listed, please share them. *(Open Response Field)*

8. Do you identify as person with disabilities that substantially limits major life activities either physically, mentally, cognitively, or socially?

    - Yes

    - No

9. What categories would describe your racial identity? Please check all that apply.

    - Asian

    - African

    - Black

    - Biracial

    - Caucasian

    - Hispanic

    - Latinx

    - Middle Eastern

- Native American

- Pacific Islander

- White

- *Free response*

- Prefer not to answer

10. What is your age?

- 18-24

- 25-34

- 35-44

- 45-54

- 55-64

- 65 or above

11. **(Student Only)** Where do you live currently?

- On campus residence halls

- Off campus housing (independently)

- Off campus housing (with parents, family, or guardians)

- Homeless and/or housing insecure

12. **(Student Only)** Are you an international student?

- Yes

- No

13. **(Student Only)** Are you a first-generation college student? (meaning your parent(s) or

primary guardian(s) did not receive a bachelor's degree)

- Yes

- No

Campus Climate Survey

1. How would you describe the overall campus environment for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, and non-binary people at (insert university name)?

    - Very accepting

    - Somewhat accepting

    - Somewhat unaccepting

    - Very unaccepting

    - Do not know

2. In your opinion, how likely are each of the following groups to experience prejudice and inequities based on the following sexual or gender identities/expressions?

    - Queer-identifying persons (e.g. gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual)

        i. Very likely

        ii. Somewhat likely

        iii. Somewhat unlikely

        iv. Very unlikely

        v. Do not know

    - Transgender identifying persons

        i. Very likely

        ii. Somewhat likely

        iii. Somewhat unlikely

        iv. Very unlikely

        v. Do not know

- Non-binary and gender expansive identifying persons (e.g. genderqueer, gender non-conforming, gender-fluid)

    i. Very likely

    ii. Somewhat likely

    iii. Somewhat unlikely

    iv. Very unlikely

    v. Do not know

- Queer and trans people of color

    i. Very likely

    ii. Somewhat likely

    iii. Somewhat unlikely

    iv. Very unlikely

    v. Do not know

- Queer and trans people with disabilities

    i. Very likely

    ii. Somewhat likely

    iii. Somewhat unlikely

    iv. Very unlikely

    v. Do not know

3. Since you arrived at (university name), would you say that the treatment of queer-identifying people has become:

- Better

- Worse

- About the same

- Do not know

4. Since you arrived at (university name), would you say the treatment of transgender identifying people has become:

    - Better

    - Worse

    - About the same

    - Do not know

5. White attending or employed at (university name), have you personally experienced any of the following because of your actual or perceived sexual identity or gender identity/expression? Please check all that apply.

    - Verbal harassment

    - Physical assault

    - Sexual harassment

    - Threats

    - Damage to property (vandalism, graffiti, theft, destruction of property)

    - Issues with employment

    - Pressure to keep silent

    - Refusal of friends, peers, or colleagues to associate with you

    - Denial of services

    - Pressure to change research, academic prospects, or vocational tasks

    - Preferential treatment

    - None of the above

- *(Free response field)*

6. White attending or employed at (university name), have you witnessed any of the following occur because of a person's sexual identity or gender identity/expression? Please do not include any actions directed at you personally addressed in Q5.

    - Verbal harassment

    - Physical assault

    - Sexual harassment

    - Threats

    - Damage to property (vandalism, graffiti, theft, destruction of property)

    - Issues with employment

    - Pressure to keep silent

    - Refusal of friends, peers, or colleagues to associate with you

    - Denial of services

    - Pressure to change research, academic prospects, or vocational tasks

    - Preferential treatment

    - None of the above

    - *(Free Response Field)*.

7. Have you experienced or witnessed discrimination based on sexual identity or gender identity/expression at the following locations?

    - Your residence (residence hall, apartment, home)

    - Classrooms and classroom buildings

    - Student Union

    - Campus recreational facilities

- Athletic facilities

- Campus Quad

- Satellite and/or island campuses

- Other location on campus *(open response field).*

- None of the above

8. Have you experienced or witnessed discrimination based on sexual identity or gender identity/expression?

    - From students

    - From faculty

    - From staff

    - From administration

    - From campus safety officers

    - From others *(open response field).*

9. Please use Yes/No/Do not know to indicate your understanding of the follow issues.

    - Do you believe that harassment on campus at (university name) is serious enough to cause queer-identifying students/faculty/staff to fear for their safety?

        i. Yes

        ii. No

        iii. Do not know

    - Do you believe that harassment on campus at (university name) is serious enough to cause transgender-identifying students/faculty/staff to fear for their safety?

        i. Yes

        ii. No

      iii. Do not know

- Do you believe that being openly queer or trans would harm a faculty/staff
  member's chances of promotion at (university name)?

      i. Yes

      ii. No

      iii. Do not know

- Do you believe that (university name) gives enough attention to queer and trans
  students' issues?

      i. Yes

      ii. No

      iii. Do not know

- Do you believe that (university name) provides enough training and professional
  development for university employees on queer and trans people?

      i. Yes

      ii. No

      iii. Do not know

- Are you aware of the university's (queer and trans support department/services
  name)?

      i. Yes

      ii. No

- Have you have used any service or attended any program/event by the (queer and
  trans support department/services name)?

      i. Yes

        ii. No

10. I found the services, programs, and events that the (queer and trans support

    department/services name) provides helpful.

- Strongly agree

- Agree

- Neutral

- Disagree

- Strongly disagree

- Not Applicable

11. Are there any gaps or language used in university policies, procedures, or critical

    university documents that you find exclusive towards queer and/or trans people?

- *(Free response field)*

12. How could (university name) improve the campus climate for queer and trans people?

- *(Free response field)*

Provide contact information about departments and services available to queer and trans

students.

Provide information on how to report incidents of discrimination and harassment on your

campus.

Appendix F

Focus Group Outline

Agenda

1. Welcome

    a. Review of Focus Group Goal

    b. Review of Confidentiality and Ground Rules

2. Introductions (name, pronouns, position (if applicable))

3. Question and Answers

4. Conclusion and Thank You

Goal of Focus Group

To collect testimony and perceptions of campus climate and congruence with the purpose of the

Queering the University Strategic Imperative.

Confidentiality

The focus group will be recorded. Only descriptors will be used in the final report. Names will

not be included in final reports.

Focus Group Guidelines

- Be respectful and embrace controversy with civility.

- Allow people to finish their thoughts and do not interrupt others.

- Participation will be encouraged by the facilitator. Everyone will be asked to raise their

    hand to participate.

- Respect and remember that other's experiences can differ from your own.

- Be honest with your answers. Your answers impact the strategic planning for improving

    campus climate.

Focus Group Questions

- Guiding Questions:

  - What is the campus climate like here at (college or university name) for queer and trans students?

    - Breakoff Questions

      - What are your general observations?

      - What do you notice about the language used through university marketing or documents?

      - What is your experience in the classroom? In common areas?

      - Do you have any personal stories that connect to your experience with the campus climate in a negative light?

      - Do you have any positive experiences as a queer and/or trans person on the campus?

  - What would you change about the campus climate?

    - Breakoff Questions

      - What would you change in the classroom? In your employment?

      - Are there any policy or procedures you would change?

      - What would the university advocating for queer and trans students look like to you?

- Detailed Questions on the *Queering the University Strategic Imperative* (if time allows)

  - *Share your university's Queer and Trans Advocacy Onboarding Training outline or lesson plan with the focus groups.* Do you find any weaknesses or gaps in

content that faculty and staff should be versed in that is not included in the
training?

- o *Share your university's Queer and Trans Advocacy Board purpose and goals set by the board.* Do you believe the Advocacy Board's purpose and goals align with improvements needed for queer and trans students on this campus?

- Concluding Question
  - o Are there any issues or concerns that you want covered that have not been addressed?